

# **Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) in Illinois Information for School Food Authorities (SFAs) Summer 2024**

## **What is Summer EBT?**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 ([P.L. 117-328](#)) (the Act) authorized a permanent, nationwide Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) Program beginning in 2024. Summer EBT is designed to reduce childhood hunger by providing families with a monthly grocery benefit to feed their students during the summer months when the students are not receiving meals at school. Beginning in summer 2024, Illinois will participate in this new nationwide permanent Summer EBT program.

Eligible students will receive a one-time benefit of \$120 per summer on an Electronic Benefit Transfer card to purchase food for each school-age child who is eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. ISBE, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) will implement this program, with support from National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participating schools. These benefits will help ensure that students have a hunger-free summer and return to school well-nourished and ready to learn.

## **Who is eligible for Summer EBT?**

In general, students who are income-eligible, able to be directly certified, or categorically eligible for free or reduced price (FRP) school meals are eligible for Summer EBT. There are two main pathways to eligibility for Summer EBT: streamlined certification and Summer EBT application. Streamlined certification is intended to capture the bulk of the participating population, because it enables families to receive benefits automatically.

In Illinois for the Summer EBT issuance for 2024, the following data sets will be used:

- All children that receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Income Eligible Medicaid (Free and Reduced Price eligible) as well as foster children (Youth in Care) within the compulsory school age (age 6 on or before Sept. 1 through age 17), during the preceding school year (July 1 through current annually)
- Students that are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
  - For public schools, including CEP approved schools, this data will be captured from the SIS low-income indicator, for enrolled students.
  - For nonpublic schools, including CEP approved schools, this data will be uploaded in WINS. (Similar to the P-EBT upload)
- A Summer EBT statewide application will be available for students that are enrolled in an NSLP participating school, but not otherwise known to ISBE via the SIS indicator or the WINS uploaded data.
  - Schools and/or ISBE will process submitted Summer EBT applications.

## **Are all students who attend a CEP approved school eligible for Summer EBT?**

No. Unlike P-EBT which operated during the public health emergency, only students that meet the free or reduced-price socioeconomic criteria are eligible to receive Summer EBT.

## **Do students in CEP approved schools need current individual eligibility determinations for Summer EBT?**

Yes. Under the program requirements established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Summer EBT, schools approved under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) require students who are not directly certified or categorically eligible, that wish to receive Summer EBT benefits, to reside in a household that is at or below the NSLP income threshold for reduced price meal benefits. (185% of the federal poverty level) and complete a Summer EBT application.

For Summer 2024, flexibility exists for Illinois schools to use the low-income indicator in SIS if a household and income form was used to determine individual eligibility. For Summer 2024, only those students who are not already determined low income and marked as such in SIS will need to complete a Summer EBT application to be eligible for benefits.

## **What is the Summer EBT benefit amount for Summer 2024?**

Summer EBT 2024 issuance will be a one-time issuance of \$120 per eligible student. Summer EBT benefits are subject to the same rules as regular SNAP benefits. Benefits can be used to buy food for the household only.

## **Action for SFAs related to Summer EBT for Summer 2024**

### **1) Determine Student Eligibility**

- a. For CEP Approved Public Schools Participating in NSLP: For any student that is NOT currently marked as low income in the state's Student Information System (SIS), please encourage those households to complete the Summer EBT application for summer 2024 issuance, should they believe that they qualify. Please be prepared to upload eligible student data, including student mailing addresses to WINS. (Schools will be notified once the system is available.)
- b. For Non-CEP Approved Public Schools Participating in NSLP: Please make sure that student data (low-income indicator and student mailing address) is current in the state SIS.
- c. For Nonpublic Schools Participating in NSLP: Please be prepared to upload eligible student data, including student mailing addresses to WINS. (Schools will be notified once the system is available.)

## 2) Submit Student Eligibility Data to ISBE

The general deadline for Summer EBT 2024 data to ISBE is planned for May 15, 2024. More detailed guidance will be shared once available.

## 3) Distribute Outreach Materials regarding Summer EBT

In May 2024, prior to the end of the school year, distribute a state developed Summer EBT Fact Sheet to eligible students with complete program guidelines. This can be posted on social media, distributed to eligible students via email, or included in school newsletters.

To provide additional guidance for school staff about Summer EBT, a webinar, Summer EBT and Illinois Schools – Summer 2024, is planned for [March 6, 2024, at 1 p.m.](#) This webinar will be recorded and posted on the ISBE Summer EBT webpage, [www.isbe.net/sebt](http://www.isbe.net/sebt).

In addition, additional Summer EBT and Illinois Schools – Summer 2024 webinars are planned for [March 20 and April 10 at 1 p.m.](#) Pending the USDA approval of the Illinois Summer EBT plan, additional information will be shared with schools.

**Important Note:** This program is to supplement the operation of the Summer Food Service or Seamless Summer Option Programs that will offer meals for all children aged 18 years and younger across the state at participating locations. During the summer months, families in need of meals can call 800-359-2163, text "FOOD" (or "COMIDA") to 304-304, or view the [USDA online map](#) to find nearby meal sites not located at their school that are open to all children and youth age 18 and younger. ISBE partners with the Illinois Hunger Coalition and No Kid Hungry to operate the hotline and text service.