# Pandemic-EBT Benefits Begin Rolling Out to Eligible Alabama Students

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MONTGOMERY, AL – The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) announced on Wednesday that Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) benefits were received by more than 115,000 Alabama households over the weekend in Phase 1 of the multi-phase rollout.

P-EBT benefits are being provided to households that have children in grades K-12 who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These benefits are designed to cover meals missed since the onset of statewide school closures on March 18th through the end of the school year on May 29th.

Nearly $55 million in benefits, helping more than 208,000 eligible children in Alabama, became available on Sunday, May 3rd. Phase 1 included families that are currently enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and have a child receiving a free or reduced-price school meal as a participant in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Phase 2 of the P-EBT rollout includes Alabama children whose families are not currently active SNAP recipients but are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals based on the family's income. Those recipients will receive their new P-EBT cards in the mail over the next few weeks.

Phase 3 is also underway. This group includes students who attend a community eligible school as defined by the Community Eligibility Provision of the NSLP but are not otherwise income-eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Phase 3 includes nearly 74,000 Alabama school children. Letters to this group have already been sent requesting them to verify certain information. Once those verifications are returned to DHR, the new P-EBT benefits card will be sent on an ongoing basis over several weeks.

Alabama DHR Commissioner Nancy Buckner said, "This phased approach is successfully getting nutritious, healthy food into the hands of those that need it most. The P-EBT program, through the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, is giving Alabama the opportunity to assist more than 400,000 Alabama school children and their families, who depend on free or reduced-price

meals served at school. Our staff is working hard to get these benefits to children across the state to ensure that no child goes hungry during this time."

There is no application for the P-EBT benefit. Those eligible are already on file with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). DHR is utilizing the ALSDE data to identify eligible households for the benefit.

The P-EBT program allows children to receive benefits equal to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) reimbursement rates, which is $5.70 per day, per child. Eligible households will receive benefits retroactively for the months of March, April, and May.

P-EBT benefits will allow households to receive an estimated (per child): $68.40 for March, $125.40 for April, and $119.70 for May, depending on the family's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.

Children may continue to access meals distributed by local school districts while receiving P-EBT benefits.

The P-EBT benefits are active for 365 days from the date of issuance and are non-transferable.

P-EBT benefits may be used at any store that accepts SNAP and can be used to purchase SNAP eligible food items.

This is a multi-phase project that is expected to take several weeks to complete. After May 31st households who did not receive P-EBT and believe that they were eligible and possibly omitted during the automation process, may contact DHR P-EBT Customer Service at: 1-800-410-5827 or email DHR with inquiries at: PEBT@dhr.alabama.gov.

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