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LOUISIANA REOPENS 2019-2020 P-EBT APPLICATIONS FOR FAMILIES WHO DID NOT APPLY IN MAY AND JUNE

Program Benefits Families of Children Who Normally Receive Free or Reduced-Price Meals at School

BATON ROUGE, La. -- Louisiana is giving families another opportunity to receive financial benefits from free and reduced-price school meals missed when schools closed in 2019-2020 due to the pandemic. Eligible families who did not apply for the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program in May and June can take advantage of the second application window that opens for three weeks, beginning at 8 a.m. September 8.

Families of children who normally receive free or reduced-price meals are eligible for the program. This includes all children who attend a [Community Eligibility Provision school](#) where all children receive free and reduced-price meals regardless of income. This second application period of the 2019-2020 P-EBT is only for families of the estimated 264,111 students who did not apply to receive P-EBT benefits during the initial window in the spring. When the original application window closed June 15, the families of nearly 470,800 eligible children signed up to receive benefits.

These one-time benefits, which total \$285 per child, intend to cover 50 school days, from the onset of statewide school facility closures in March through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year. Parents who applied for free meals in May, after the P-EBT program was announced, will receive \$91.20 per eligible child, which covers the cost of meals for 16 school days in May.

Local school systems will notify families they might be eligible for P-EBT. The families must then apply if they wish to receive the benefits. The application will be available in a [P-EBT portal](#) on the [Louisiana Department of Education website](#). The portal opens September 8 at 8 a.m., and the deadline to apply is September 29 at 5 p.m. State officials expect considerable interest in the program and ask applicants to be patient in trying to access the portal.

The [online application](#) is simple, requiring only a name, address, date of birth, school district and

school. Social security numbers, while helpful, are not required. The information submitted by the family, however, must exactly match the information on file with the school system in order for the application to successfully submit.

Once families complete an [application](#) in the portal, the computer system will notify them of their successful submission. Upon verification, the [Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services](#) will then request a P-EBT debit card for the household to be loaded with a one-time benefit. Applicants can expect their cards within 30 days of their application. Benefits will be available for 365 days.

P-EBT is different from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is issued on a Louisiana Purchase EBT card to approved low-income households. However, the P-EBT card can be used to purchase the same eligible food for the household as can be purchased with a SNAP card. All SNAP families with qualifying students are also eligible to receive P-EBT benefits if they apply, and P-EBT also is available to non-SNAP families if they meet the P-EBT guidelines.

P-EBT is not related to loss from Hurricane Laura. Eligibility is solely based on student participation in the free or reduced-price meal program.

Louisiana was approved by the federal government to offer the P-EBT program on May 15, and the original online application launched on May 18. At that time, 611,430 children were deemed eligible. After the program began and additional families applied for free and reduced-price meals, the number of eligible children increased to 729,507.

Various factors could have influenced the number of families who were eligible but who did not submit an application. Unlike other states offering the federal program, for example, Louisiana could not automatically provide benefits to eligible families because of the state's restrictive data privacy laws for students, so every eligible family was required to submit an application. In addition, Louisiana has a large number of [Community Eligibility Provision](#) schools at which every child, regardless of their family's income, receives free and reduced-price meals at school.

The P-EBT program was authorized by Congress in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020. In obtaining federal approval for P-EBT, Louisiana joined more than 22 other states participating in the program.

For more information, consult a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or contact the LAHelpU Customer Service Center at LaHELPU.DCFS@la.gov or 1-888-524-3578. Families who need food assistance can also call 211 to inquire about food pantries and other available resources in their communities.

LDOE and DCFS are partnering with numerous non-profit organizations to connect these benefits with eligible families who did not apply for the program during the original application period. Those organizations are [Feeding Louisiana](#), [Food Research & Action Center](#), [Louisiana Association of United Ways](#), [Louisiana Budget Project](#), [Louisiana Partnership for Children & Families](#), [Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry America](#) and [Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry Louisiana](#).