



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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## Over 250,000 San Diego students eligible for \$365 in P-EBT benefits *\$91,250,000 in grocery money available to San Diego families!*

**San Diego, May 26, 2020** – The State of California has launched the Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) program to address increased food insecurity due to COVID-19 amongst San Diego children. Students who received free or reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches are eligible to receive a one-time payment of \$365 for groceries in addition to *grab-n-go* meals currently served by schools and community-based organizations while schools are closed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased food insecurity throughout San Diego County. It has especially impacted the 250,000 children from households with low incomes who regularly rely on free or reduced-price school meals for up to 15 meals per week. While schools now offer *grab-n-go* meal service during school closures, some students continue to have limited access to school meals. The State of California has launched the USDA's P-EBT program to meet the increased need.

*“Children because of this pandemic are missing out on many enriching benefits that schools provide, but this program ensures students and their families have access to the money for nutritious meals,”* said Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, Co-chair of the County's COVID-19 Subcommittee. *“Let's prevent kids from going hungry and join the San Diego Hunger Coalition in educating families about the Pandemic-EBT benefits.”*

### What is P-EBT?

P-EBT is a one-time payment to children who received free or reduced-price school meals and whose schools have closed due to COVID-19. P-EBT is meant to offset the cost of meals purchased for children from low-income households while schools are closed. Every eligible child will receive \$365 on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. This card may be used like any debit card at grocery stores, farmer's markets, and online at Walmart.com and Amazon.com to purchase food.

P-EBT was authorized under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 which allows for states to apply to the Secretary of Agriculture to run a P-EBT program to meet children's nutritional needs. California's P-EBT program was approved in April 2020 and began implementation in May 2020.

### How do I get P-EBT?

Children who are enrolled in CalFresh, Medi-Cal, or foster care benefits will have automatically received their P-EBT card in the mail by May 25, 2020. If a card was not received by a student believed to be eligible, an application must be submitted online at [ca.p-ebt.org](http://ca.p-ebt.org) no later than June 30, 2020.

**P-EBT is not considered when determining Public Charge status and will not affect immigration status.**

*P-EBT may be used together with CalFresh and WIC. Families are encouraged to use all available food assistance.*

*More information on Pandemic EBT is available at [sdhunger.org/p-ebt](http://sdhunger.org/p-ebt).*

### School meals during COVID-19

San Diego County School Districts are still serving meals to children while schools are closed. Most districts changed to a *grab-and-go* meal delivery model as soon as district closures were announced. Currently there are over 180 meal delivery sites located throughout San Diego County. Meals are available to children ages 2-18. Parents may pick up meals without their children present. More information and meal locations are available at [sdhunger.org/meals-for-kids](http://sdhunger.org/meals-for-kids).

***Children are encouraged to continue picking up meals from schools in addition to P-EBT benefits.***

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*The San Diego Hunger Coalition team is available for interviews, information, and to facilitate connections with any of our over 150 local hunger relief partners and their clients.*

*Continually updated information on the current crisis is available at [sdhunger.org/covid19](https://sdhunger.org/covid19) and [sdhunger.org/meals-for-kids](https://sdhunger.org/meals-for-kids).*

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