



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

Frequently Asked Questions on Child Nutrition Provisions in the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* (H.R. 6201)

As schools continue to experience prolonged closures, children who rely on free or reduced-price lunches at their public schools are at risk of losing a vital source of nutritious food. The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* includes several provisions to prevent children from going hungry during this public health crisis.

Pandemic EBT

H.R. 6201 creates a Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT) that provides families emergency food assistance in the event of a prolonged school closure.

What is Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)?

Pandemic EBT is a state option to provide food benefits to all children who would have otherwise received a free or reduced-price meal at school in the event of school closures lasting 5 or more days.

Who is eligible for P-EBT?

All children who would have otherwise received free or reduced-price meals are eligible for P-EBT if their school is closed for five or more days due to COVID-19, if their state takes up the program. This includes all children in schools implementing the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

How will the P-EBT benefits be received?

For children in households that already receive SNAP, the benefits will be added to their existing EBT card. For children who do not already receive SNAP, state agencies will provide these children with new EBT cards.

Would P-EBT benefits be retroactive to an application date, or some other date, as they are now with SNAP?

Yes, benefits may be issued retroactively.

What kinds of foods will be available for households to purchase with P-EBT?

Households will be able to purchase the same foods that are available through the SNAP program. Details are available on the FNS website.

Do states need to submit a plan for P-EBT?

Yes, states will need to submit a plan to USDA for implementation of P-EBT in order to utilize the program. States may wish to begin thinking about their plans at this time.

School Meal Programs

H.R. 6201 grants the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), states, and schools greater flexibility to enact emergency measures to provide students with nutritious food.

What new flexibility does the legislation provide to support child nutrition?

The bill grants the USDA nationwide waiver authority so that states and schools can enact emergency measures to provide students with nutritious food. This includes the ability to send children home with food and the flexibility to loosen requirements for what food is served, similar to how schools operate Summer Food Service Programs.

The bill also gives the USDA new authority to approve state waivers for school meal plans that increase costs to the federal government, which will allow states to explore options such as meal delivery or transportation to get food in the hands of students.

Will children only be able to access school meal programs at non-congregate Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites if their schools have been closed for five or more days?

No. Along with pre-existing waiver authority, H.R. 6201 authorizes additional flexibility for non-congregate feeding and other flexibilities through SFSP, Summer Seamless Option (SSO), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and these flexibilities are available immediately upon passage of the bill.

Will federal funding pay for all children at a SFSP open site, or only children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals?

USDA has authority to approve state waiver requests to serve and be reimbursed for all meals served at an SFSP open site, including in areas that are not “area eligible.”

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

H.R. 6201 makes critical changes to allow individuals to access WIC services without jeopardizing their health.

How does H.R. 6201 change the way WIC benefits are available?

Under H.R. 6201, USDA may waive the requirement for individuals to be physically present in order to be certified or recertified to receive WIC benefits. Additionally, it provides broad flexibility for USDA to waive WIC administrative requirements.