**Pandemic-EBT**

Earlier this year, New York State issued nearly $1Billion in food benefits through the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program to children who lost access to free/reduced price meals when school buildings were closed in March to June 2020. A child was eligible for P-EBT if they were qualified for free/reduced price meals through the National School Lunch Program, and were between the ages of 3-18. Children received the one-time $420 benefit on a SNAP or Medicaid card, or on a new EBT card.

If a family did not receive a benefit that they believe they are eligible for, please refer them to the [NYS P-EBT FAQ page](https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Pandemic-EBT.asp). Many questions can be answered by this page. If an address needs to be updated or a replacement Medicaid or P-EBT card needs to be requested, this web page provides instructions on how to do so.

On October 1, Congress approved an extension of the P-EBT program for the 2020-21 school year. States are currently in the process of analyzing the USDA guidance and developing state plans. New York State expects that this next round of benefits will be issued ***no sooner than*** March 2021. More details about specific benefit levels and eligibility will be available once the state plan is approved by USDA.

You can read the most recent updates on the [NYS P-EBT FAQ page](https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Pandemic-EBT.asp).

**How PTAs Can Help: Outreach to Newly Eligible Families**

Many families lost income due to COVID-19, and may be newly eligible for P-EBT benefits in the 2020-21 school year. Those families should submit a free/reduced-price meal application to their school district as soon as possible – even if their school is offering free meals to all this school year. Doing so may qualify families for the next round of P-EBT, and can help schools and communities qualify for additional funding and nutrition programs. PTAs can help spread the word using [this flyer](https://hungersolutionsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/School-Meals-parent-flyer-10_13_20.pdf) and additional resources from our new [school meals marketing toolkit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ww-f16cIX4GdoBojY33UOgZ4mxHVlau2V1lcguTIACg/edit).

It will be important for NYS PTA members to keep updated on P-EBT in order to educate our school communities and provide people accurate and reliable information. Hunger Solutions New York – a partner to NYS PTA – is here to help. Our website will provide program updates and resources like flyers, social media messaging and outreach tools when the next round of P-EBT benefits are announced. Keep up to date on our [P-EBT webpage](https://hungersolutionsny.org/covid-19/pebt/).

# ****School Meals Marketing Toolkit****

**New Resource: Use this toolkit to promote school meals during COVID-19**

During COVID-19, school meals are more important than ever as families face new economic hardships. At the same time, less children are participating in school meals. programs are struggling with reduced participation and free or reduced-price meal applications.

Many school nutrition departments have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to ensuring children's continued access to school meals, yet many schools have reported struggling with decreased participation. Less children participating in school meals translates to lost federal and state revenue, threatening the financial viability and sustainability of these programs. In response, in partnership with No Kid Hungry New York, Hunger Solutions New York has developed a new marketing toolkit with resources to help schools promote school meals to families.

[School Meals Marketing Toolkit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ww-f16cIX4GdoBojY33UOgZ4mxHVlau2V1lcguTIACg/edit?usp=sharing)**:**  This toolkit makes it easy for schools to encourage families to participate in school meals. Use these resources to get the word out:

* Customizable flyers and graphics
* Sample social media posts
* Template email, text, and robocall scripts
* Resources for publicizing free school meal applications.

Questions? Email Jessica atjessica.pinogoodspeed@hungersolutionsny.org or Emily at egartenberg@strength.org for assistance