

Nebraska's P-EBT Plan

March 25th, 2021

Thank you for joining us today for our P-EBT webinar. Before we get started, we want to review a few ground rules. You have all been placed on mute. This helps cut back on background noise. Please feel free to type in your questions into the chat box at any time and we will do our best to address your questions. We greatly appreciate all of you joining us today. We understand that our schools are under a great deal of stress. We hope that we can all work together to help our students to receive these P-EBT benefits.

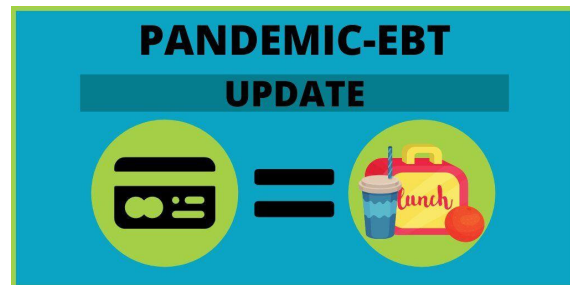
Outline

- What is P-EBT
- Review Nebraska's P-EBT Plan
- Review LEA Responsibilities
- P-EBT Questions and Contacts

In today's presentation we will review:

- What is P-EBT
- Nebraska's P-EBT plan – student eligibility determination
- The responsibilities of LEAs – Launch Nebraska and the NDE Data Upload Portal
- Who to contact with questions

What is P-EBT?



Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) is part of the U.S. government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (PL 116–127), as amended by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (PL 116-159), provides the Secretary of Agriculture authority to approve state agency plans to administer P-EBT. On January 22, USDA announced that it is increasing the P-EBT benefit by approximately 15 percent, providing more money for low-income families and millions of children missing meals due to school and childcare closures.

Through P-EBT, **eligible** school children can receive temporary emergency nutrition benefits loaded on EBT cards that are used to purchase food. These funds are intended for all school children who would have received free or reduced - price meals under the National School Lunch Act if their schools were not closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance for at least 5 consecutive days between August 2020-May/ June 2021. These benefits have been made available to F/R priced students regardless of the availability of meals to-go at the school. are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits.

Throughout this presentation we will further examine P-EBT.

P-EBT Review

- Round 1 – March – end of school year May/June 2020
- Round 2 – August/September 2020
- Round 3 – October 2020 – end of school year May/June 2021

Today we are discussing the P-EBT Round 3 benefits.

To review, the Family First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 approved the first round of P-EBT which was issued for the months of missed school at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

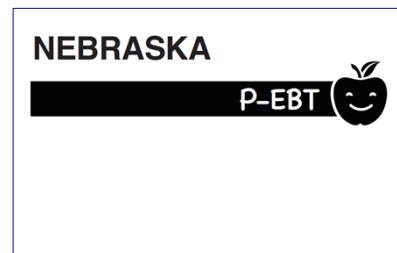
The second round of P-EBT was distributed for the months of August and September 2020

On January 22, USDA announced the approval of the P-EBT round 3 benefits. Round three is a little different than rounds one and two. For Round three, USDA is allowing states to apply simplified assumptions which allow for states to issue benefits to a wider range of eligible students for the months of October through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Today's webinar relates only to round 3 benefits. We understand that our schools have already submitted data for various rounds of P-EBT and we greatly appreciate you all helping us ensure that students receive the benefits they are eligible for.

Students who are eligible for these benefits are students who qualify for free or reduced-priced meals and who have been forced to miss school because the school has been closed, operating at reduced attendance or reduced hours or have opted into remote learning.

Nebraska's P-EBT Plan

- Utilize school learning status mode information in Launch Nebraska
- Identify eligible students in NDE Portal



Based on updated USDA guidance, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have teamed up to simplify the administration and distribution of P-EBT funds. The simplified approach aims to identify eligible students by using the [Launch Nebraska website](#) in addition to student eligibility data provided by school districts to the P-EBT File Upload App in the [NDE Portal](#). To simplify P-EBT distribution, individual student attendance data will ONLY be collected for enrolled students that have opted-in for remote learning during the 2020-2021 school year and for students who have been quarantined and therefore unable to attend in-person classes. All other eligible students will be issued benefits based on the school's identified classroom learning mode in Launch Nebraska.

Simplifying Assumptions

- All elementary, middle, and high schools within a district are following the same classroom learning mode
- A split/hybrid schedule is 3/2 with 3 days in school during week one and 2 days in school during week two
- Students did not have access to school meals – even if the district provided the opportunity to receive meals

The updated USDA guidance for P-EBT round 3 allows states to make simplifying assumptions to help ease the distribution of these benefits. Nebraska's simplifying assumptions include:

- All elementary, middle, and high schools within a district are following the classroom learning mode identified on the Launch Nebraska status website.
- A split/hybrid schedule is 3/2 with 3 days in school during week one and 2 days in school during week two.
- Students who follow a split/hybrid learning mode or are fully remote - did not have access to school meals – regardless of the district providing the opportunity to receive meals.

Student Eligibility

- Disrupted learning environment for **5 consecutive** days at any point during 2020-21 school year
 - 5 remote learning days
 - 5 hybrid learning days
 - 5 days shut down for cleaning/staffing concerns
 - Special case student
- Must be **eligible for free or reduced-price meals** for the 2020-2021 school year
 - Household Application
 - Direct Certification

As I mentioned earlier, eligible students are those who:

- Qualify for F/R priced meals
- AND

•Attend a school which has been closed or operated at reduced attendance or hours for at least 5 consecutive days during the 2020-21 school year. This 5-day disruption to the learning environment can take place any time during the 2020-2021 school year. Once the school meets this five day threshold, the F/R priced students become eligible for P-EBT benefits for the months between October and the end of the school year in which they experience a disrupted learning environment. The Disrupted learning environment threshold can be met via 5 remote learning days, 5 hybrid days, 5 days with reduced hours, 5 days shut down for cleaning, etc. For example, if the school was operating at a reduced capacity or a hybrid learning mode for at least 5 consecutive days in August 2020, and continued to operate under the hybrid learning mode for August, September, October, and November, the schools Free and Reduced priced students would be eligible for P-EBT benefits for October and November. The students are not eligible for August/September benefits because they were issued under the P-EBT Round 2. Remember, the threshold can be met any time during the school year, but round three benefits are only for the months of October-end of the school year.

REMEMBER: The student must be eligible for free or reduced-price meals for the 2020-2021 school year *either based on an application or direct certification*. If 2020-2021 data is unavailable, 2019-2020 free and reduced-priced meals data can be used.

Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals are also eligible for P-EBT benefits even if they received free meals through the SFSP or the NSLP for the 2020-2021 school year.

****NOTE:** Eligible students can received P-EBT EVEN if schools were providing meals to them as remote or quarantined students.

*****NOTE:** There will be students who fall into the "special case" category.. we will describe these cases in the next few slides

Special Cases

- Students who have opted for 100% remote learning
- Students in quarantine

- Remember, these students must also be eligible for free or reduced-priced meals for the 2020-21 school year

Students that have opted-in for remote learning during the entire 2020-2021 school year and students who have been quarantined for at least five consecutive days may qualify for P-EBT benefits. These are the students that have been identified as "Special Case Students" and may require special attention in the P-EBT File Upload App in the NDE Portal. All other eligible students will be issued benefits based on the school's identified classroom learning mode in Launch Nebraska.

If 2020-2021 data is not available, you can use 2019-2020 data.

**Quarantine students – any absence – sick, positive, exposure, travel related, etc. for more than 5 days. Full classroom, entire grade level and school-wide quarantines are also included in this special case group.

P-EBT Distribution Rates

- **P-EBT Distribution Rates:** Enrolled eligible students will be issued P-EBT benefits based on their classroom learning mode:
 - Split/Hybrid: **\$62** per month, per eligible student
 - Benefit issued to Special Case Quarantine students
 - Fully Remote: **\$116** per month, per student

P-EBT Distribution Rates: Enrolled eligible students will be issued P-EBT benefits based on their classroom learning mode:

- Split/Hybrid: **\$62** per month, per eligible student
 - Whole school is split/hybrid delivery mode
 - Students who are in quarantine for at least five days
 - This benefit amount is 50% of the monthly benefit issued to fully remote students.
- Fully Remote: **\$116** per month, per student

NOTE: Benefits will be distributed for which ever learning mode the school is using for the majority of the days in the month.

LEA Responsibility

School's Responsibility Breakdown

1. Keep [Launch Nebraska School Classroom Learning Mode](#) updated
2. Upload Eligible Students into the [NDE Portal](#)
3. Notify Families

Learning Mode

The screenshot shows the 'LAUNCH NEBRASKA' website interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the logo and a 'Toggle Contrast' button. Below the header, the page title is 'DISTRICT STATUS'. A note states: 'If your status has changed multiple times, please submit this form once per each status change, setting the effective date to the date when that change took effect.' The form is divided into several sections:

- Search Section:** A green box contains the text 'Enter district name or ID; click Search.' Below it is a search input field with 'Lincoln' entered and a 'SEARCH' button. A note below the field says 'Use this field to search for your district by name or agency id.'
- Select District Section:** An orange box contains the text 'Select your district from the list.' Below it is a dropdown menu titled 'Select District' with four options: 'LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (55-0001-000)', 'LINCOLN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (55-0704-000)', 'LINCOLN LUTHERAN MS/SR HIGH (55-0706-000)', and 'CHRIST LINCOLN SCHOOLS (55-0764-000)'.
- Review Section:** A purple box contains the text 'Review previously entered data.' Below it is a table for 'LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (55-0001-000)'.

Date	Elementary	Middle	High
11/04/2020	In School	In School	Split
- Effective Date Section:** A red box contains the text 'Effective Date *' and 'Select the date when you began using this mode of operations.' Below it is a date input field. To the right of the field is a red box with the text 'Add any additional dates and complete remainder of online form for classroom learning mode changes.'

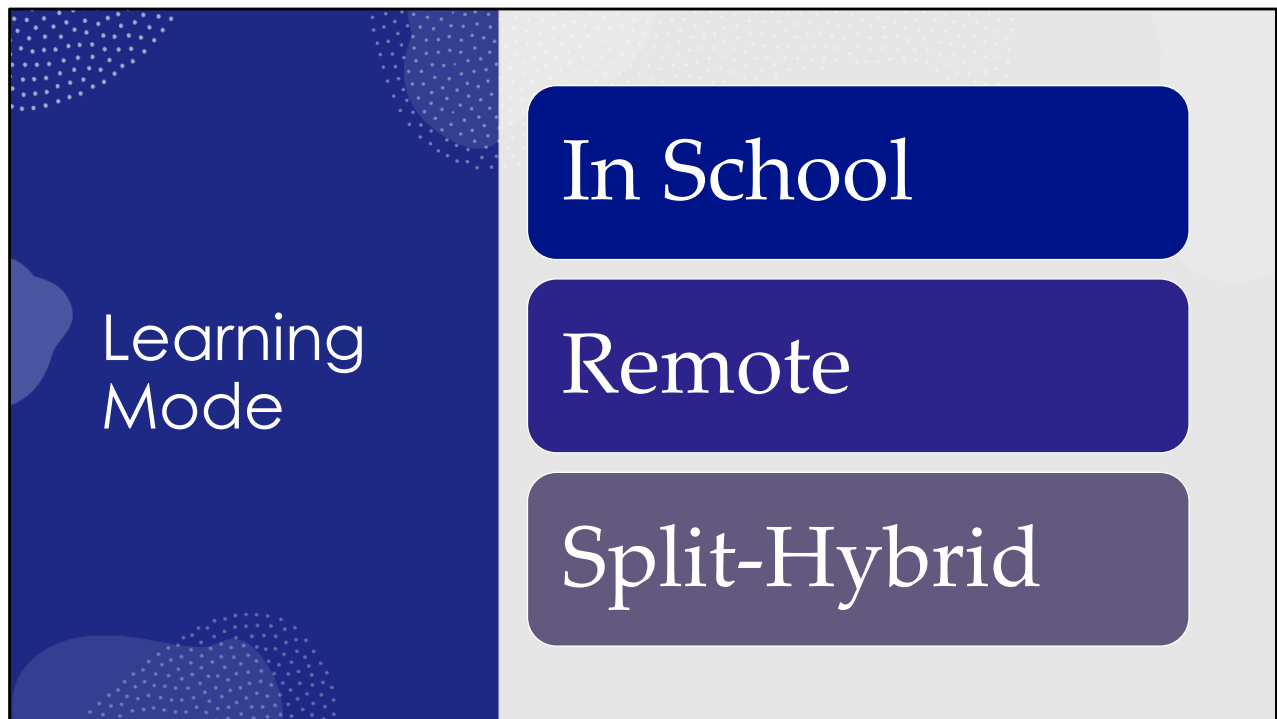
Districts are required to update the [Launch Nebraska Status website](#) as classroom learning mode changes. It is important that districts make sure the information in Launch Nebraska is accurate and up to date for all months of the 2020-21 school year.

This is because once a school is operating at reduced hours or attendance for 5 consecutive days, the free and reduced-priced students become eligible for P-EBT. NDE will use the learning mode identified on the Launch Nebraska Status Website to determine learning status eligibility for all non-special case students. After the initial status is entered, schools need only update their classroom learning status when a change is made. This data is used for many purposes including for research on student success and may be used for eligibility purposes in the future. To that end, please ensure that your data is complete and accurate for the whole school year.

School can go back and backfill for previous school days. The effective date should be set to the date when that change took effect. For example, if your school district switched from remote to in-school learning on February 1, 2021, the online form would need to be completed indicating this change with an effective date of 2/1/2021.

Many Nebraska districts have been in school since the start of the 2020-2021 school year and have not experienced a learning mode change. Those districts would need to ensure Launch Nebraska reflects this learning status for the entirety of the year.

NOTE: Even if your district was only closed for one week, you need to make sure it is represented in the Launch Nebraska.



The Launch Nebraska website lists three classroom learning modes: in school, remote, or split. Districts that are operating with 100% of their students in the building (excluding students who have opted to be fully remote or are quarantined) are listed as “in school.” Districts that have 100% of students remote learning 100% of the time are listed as “remote.” Districts that are operating under a hybrid delivery model are listed as “split.” Launch Nebraska should represent the school wide learning status mode.

****NOTE:** Discuss “Special Cases”

Special cases such as students who have opted to remain fully remote, or students who are quarantined do not depend the Launch Nebraska Classroom Learning Mode classification.

Any Questions?

P-EBT

Student Eligibility

Launch Nebraska

Uploading Eligible Students into the NDE Portal

- P-EBT File Upload App Now Available
- Data should be entered monthly
 - By the 5th of the month
- NDE encourages schools to upload data as soon as it is available

The P-EBT File Upload App is now available in the NDE Portal for schools to begin uploading student data. Student data should be entered monthly to account for students that have transferred in or out of the district or have become newly eligible (i.e., new free or reduced determinations through applications or direct certification). For families to receive the first issuance of funds, schools should upload student data for October and November 2020 by April 5, 2021.

Schools CAN upload multiple files per month to account for students that might have been accidentally left off the file, classroom learning mode changes and other unexpected situations. A rolling deadline is in place for schools, meaning previous month data can continue to be uploaded throughout the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year as needed.

NDE Portal Upload Instructions

1. Login with credentials
2. Navigate to the Data Collections Tab
3. Add Activation Code for the P-EBT File Upload
4. Click on the collection name in the Available Table to enter the P-EBT Data Upload Portal

Questions related to Portal access or use should be sent to:

ADVISERHelp@NebraskaCloud.org

Public and nonpublic schools are required to add student data to the NDE Portal monthly to ensure all eligible students are being issued P-EBT benefits.

The portal can be accessed [here](#). Returning users can enter their credentials; new users will need to complete the registration process. New users can follow the instructions listed on the [Setting Up a Portal Account Guide](#) to establish their account.

Upon successful login, users will need to navigate to the Data Collections tab and *ADD* an activation code for the P-EBT File Upload collection. Detailed instruction for both retrieving the activation code (District Admins only) and entering the activation code (all users) can be found in the [Activation Codes](#) guide. You will know that you have correctly activated the P-EBT File Upload collection when the collection name moves up to the top Available table on the main Data Collection tab page. Error messages you might encounter during this process are found on page 7 of the [Activation Codes](#) guide.

Users can click on the collection name in the Available table to enter the data upload portal. Navigate to the Instructions link in the top right corner of the screen for more information of the data upload process. This [PEBT Instructions](#) webpage includes details of file types for uploading, required data column headers and a template file.

All questions related to access the portal or data uploads can be directed to the NDE HelpDesk at ADVISERHelp@NebraskaCloud.org or **888-285-0556**.

For assistance with the Portal, please contact ADVISERHelp@NebraskaCloud.org.

NDE Portal Upload Demo

Max

Monthly Submission and Issuance Schedule

P-EBT benefits will be issued monthly following this schedule:

- By the 5th of the Month: Schools upload eligible student list
- 5th -15th of the month: Files are prepared by NDE and given to DHHS
- On or about 15th of the month: Benefits are issued by DHHS

*Note: Distribution of October and November benefits might be delayed due to the time required to distribute P-EBT cards for non-SNAP households

Data Upload Reminders

Districts are encouraged to submit October 2020 - March 2021 student data to the P-EBT File Upload App within the [NDE Portal](#) as soon as it's available

- The monthly benefit issuance will follow the issuance schedule regardless of when data is received
- If a district misses the submission deadline one month, the data will be picked up with the next month's benefit issuance

Districts are encouraged to submit October 2020 - February 2021 student data to the P-EBT File Upload App within the [NDE Portal](#) as soon as it's available

- The monthly benefit issuance will follow the issuance schedule regardless of when data is received
- If a district misses the submission deadline one month, the data will be picked up with the next month's benefit issuance

Communicating with Families

- Robo Calls
- Webpage Notifications
- Email Blasts
- Text Messages
- Social Media posts

It will be the responsibility of the school to communicate information about P-EBT benefit issuance to families. Eligible families will receive P-EBT benefits on an EBT card. Refer to DHHS's [EBT Website](#) for resources on P-EBT card issuance, how to use the card and FAQs.

This Toolkit contains templates for schools who are communicating with families through robo-calls, email blasts, webpage updates, text messaging and social media posts. Please feel free to modify these templates as you see fit.

Review

School District Responsibilities

1. Ensure the Launch Nebraska Status is up to date
2. Upload the list of eligible students by the 5th of the month to the P-EBT File Upload App in the NDE Portal
3. Communicate with families

School District Responsibilities

1. Ensure the [Launch Nebraska Status](#) reflects your schools' classroom learning mode from August 2020- May/June 2021.

- Once a school meets the minimum 5 consecutive day threshold, that school does not need to meet the threshold again.
- Continue to update Launch Nebraska as your school's classroom learning mode changes.
- For assistance with Launch Nebraska, please complete the [contact form](#).

2. Upload the list of eligible students by the 5th of the month to the P-EBT File Upload App within the [NDE Portal](#).

- Contact your district portal administrator for your activation code for access.
- A student file is uploaded for each month individually. Multiple months of student data may be submitted at the same time.
- For assistance with the Portal, please contact ADVISERHelp@NebraskaCloud.org.

3. Notify and communicate with families about P-EBT.

Tracking Quarantined Students

- Is your district tracking this data?
- If no, how can you collect this data?

If you are interested in participating in a focus group related to quarantined student data, please email jenna.Hilligoss@nebraska.gov.



Who to contact with questions

- Portal or data upload questions can be sent to the NDE Help Desk
 - ADVISERHelp@NebraskaCloud.org or 888-285-0556.
- Launch Nebraska website and classroom learning mode
 - [NDE's Online Form](#).
- P-EBT cards and benefit issuance should be submitted to DHHS
 - 800-383-4278 or 402-471-9043.
 - DHHS.NebraskaPEBT@nebraska.gov.
- Student eligibility can be directed to NDE Nutrition Services
 - nde.nsweb@nebraska.gov



Thank you!