



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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VIRGINIA RECEIVES APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT PANDEMIC EBT PROGRAM

*Virginia departments of Social Services and Education working collaboratively
to issue benefits to eligible households*

Richmond, VA (May 8, 2020) – The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) will provide Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits to families of school-age children who no longer have access to free or reduced-price school meals due to public school closures. Virginia is one of 20 states approved by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Services to implement the P-EBT program, which provides temporary food assistance to cover the cost of meals missed while schools are closed.

Eligible Virginia households include students who receive free or reduced-price school meals, as well as students enrolled in schools that provide free meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision. Families are not required to be current SNAP participants or complete an application to qualify for P-EBT benefits.

“We appreciate the dedicated efforts of our school districts and their amazing food service workers who have been working diligently to operate meal sites to support the nearly 592,000 children in Virginia who receive free or reduced-price meals,” said VDSS Commissioner S. Duke Storen. “However, data indicates that these sites, which also operate during extended school closures, only serve half as many breakfasts and one-third the number of lunches compared to a typical school day. The P-EBT program will enable us to help fill this gap and provide critical food assistance to families so that children in Virginia do not go hungry during this crisis.”

VDSS is working with the Virginia Department of Education to operationalize the program. Eligible households that are currently receiving SNAP benefits can expect to have P-EBT benefits added to their EBT card within the next two weeks. P-EBT cards will be mailed to households that do not receive SNAP benefits within the next four to six weeks.

"School nutrition programs across the state are doing an amazing job feeding children and delivering meals to students and families," Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane said. "But we know that even with these heroic efforts, many children need much more support. The P-EBT program will connect more children with nutritious meals while schools are closed."



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Families and community partners are encouraged to visit <http://www.pebtva.com/> for more information about the P-EBT program and answers to frequently asked questions, which will be updated regularly over the coming weeks.

To learn more about food assistance resources and other COVID-19-related programs, visit [COVID.Virginia.Gov.](https://www.virginia.gov/covid-19)

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