

Dept. of Health Services: Families with children who did not receive free or reduced price meals at school due to COVID-19 will receive food benefits

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This past weekend, Wisconsin issued \$3 million in benefits to more than 44,000 families for almost 62,000 children under the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Program for the 2021-2022 school year. Created by Congress in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the School P-EBT program provides vital food benefits for children who, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, miss the free or reduced priced meals they would normally have gotten at their school. Only children who are enrolled in the free or reduced price meals program and who attend schools that participate in the USDA's National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program are eligible for P-EBT.

Significant changes to the federal P-EBT guidelines caused the state to rework program operations for the 2021-2022 school year. Benefits can only be provided for the exact number of days each month that a student was either learning from home or absent due to a COVID-19-related reason. DHS relies on data provided by participating school districts to issue these benefits. Because of this, school districts have played a crucial role in providing DHS with the information needed on each student in their free and reduced price meals program, at a time when schools are still grappling with other challenges caused by the pandemic. DHS is continuing to work with schools to submit information this month for the benefits that will be issued in early April 2022. No child will miss out on P-EBT benefits for the days their school reports the child was learning from home or absent due to a COVID-19-

related reason, no matter when the school provides this information.

[View the entire news release.](#)