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Congressional Inaction Exacerbates Hardship Effective Tools Are Available and Should Be Used

By Stacy Dean, Crystal FitzSimons, Zoë Neuberger, Dottie Rosenbaum, and Etienne Melcher Philbin¹

As evidence of profound hardship resulting from the COVID-19 health and economic crises mounts, powerful tools to mitigate suffering and bolster economic activity will be unavailable to state and local government without congressional action. A prime example is Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) — a new program, enacted in March 2020 and set to expire at the end of September 2020, that gives families benefits they can use to buy groceries to replace the free or reduced-price breakfasts and lunches their children missed while schools were closed due to the pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year.² Although it was optional, every state implemented P-EBT, providing families with school-age children benefits ranging from approximately \$250 to \$450 per child to replace meals missed during the spring.

Extending P-EBT in combination with other measures to provide additional food assistance, increase income, and stabilize housing would provide ongoing, needed relief. But congressional inaction has stymied P-EBT's extension and other federal supports that would mitigate hardship, including:

- Providing a temporary 15 percent increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) benefits, akin to a 2009 increase that helped lessen food insecurity (the lack of consistent access to nutritious food because of limited resources) during the Great Recession.³

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² See Families First Coronavirus Response Act, P.L. 116-127, <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr6201/BILLS-116hr6201enr.pdf>.

³ For more information about the 2009 increase and a discussion of the importance of providing a temporary 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits now, as well as several other important improvements in federal nutrition programs, see Dottie Rosenbaum, Stacy Dean, and Zoë Neuberger, "The Case for Boosting SNAP Benefits in Next Major Economic Response Package," CBPP, updated May 22, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/the-case-for->

- Extending the federal supplement to unemployment benefits through January 2021 along with policies that expand eligibility and increase the number of weeks that unemployed workers can receive benefits.⁴
- Providing assistance to meet the housing needs of people with low incomes, including funding for Housing Choice Vouchers targeted to people with the lowest incomes and highest long-term housing needs; rental assistance funding to prevent evictions once federal, state, and local moratoriums end; funding for existing federal rental assistance programs to protect current recipients; and additional funding for homeless services programs to ensure people are safe during the pandemic.⁵

Hardship is falling disproportionately on Black and Latino families as a result of longstanding inequities and structural racism, so programs that mitigate hardship would especially help these households.

Families of Millions of Children Are Struggling to Afford Rent and Food⁶

Tens of millions of people are out of work and struggling to afford adequate food and pay the rent, data from the Census Bureau and the Department of Labor show. The impacts of the pandemic and the economic fallout have been widespread, but are particularly prevalent among Black, Latino, Indigenous, and immigrant households. These disproportionate impacts reflect harsh, longstanding inequities — often stemming from structural racism — in education, employment, housing, and health care that the current crisis is exacerbating.

More than 23 million people who want to be working are jobless or working reduced hours.⁷ Moreover, the majority of jobs lost in the crisis have been in industries that pay low average wages. The resulting loss of income is making it harder for families to afford basics like housing and food.

[boosting-snap-benefits-in-next-major-economic-response-package](#). For more information on the positive impacts of prior SNAP boosts on health and the economy, and why SNAP boosts are needed now, see <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/snap-initiatives-to-make-snap-benefits-more-adequate.pdf> and <https://frac.org/blog/this-labor-day-america-needs-heroes>.

⁴ For a discussion of the importance of these changes to unemployment benefits and their potential to mitigate racial and ethnic unemployment disparities, see Chad Stone and Sharon Parrott, “Many Unemployed Workers Will Exhaust Jobless Benefits This Year If More Weeks of Benefits Aren’t in Relief Package,” CBPP, August 6, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/many-unemployed-workers-will-exhaust-jobless-benefits-this-year-if-more-weeks-of> and Chad Stone, “Robust Unemployment Insurance, Other Relief Needed to Mitigate Racial and Ethnic Employment Disparities,” CBPP, August 5, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/robust-unemployment-insurance-other-relief-needed-to-mitigate-racial-and-ethnic>.

⁵ For a discussion of the importance of providing housing assistance, see Peggy Bailey and Douglas Rice, “Pandemic Relief Must Include Comprehensive Housing Assistance for People Experiencing the Most Severe Hardship,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 27, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/pandemic-relief-must-include-comprehensive-housing-assistance-for-people>.

⁶ The information in this section is drawn from CBPP, “Tracking the Covid-19 Recession’s Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Outcomes,” updated September 11, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and>.

⁷ See Bureau of Labor Statistics data through August at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.a.htm>.

Renters who are parents or otherwise live with children are nearly twice as likely to be behind on rent compared to adults not living with anyone under age 18. Approximately 8 million children lived in a household that was behind on rent for the week ending July 21.

In addition, 11 to 20 percent of adults with children reported that their children sometimes or often didn't eat enough in the last seven days because they couldn't afford it, well above the pre-pandemic figure. This translates into an estimated 9 to 17 million children who live in a household in which the children were not eating enough because the household couldn't afford it. More than two-thirds of those children (70 percent) were enrolled in school. Appendix Table 1 shows *state-by-state* estimates of the low end of our estimated range of children who live in a household in which the children were not eating enough because the household couldn't afford it.

These data illustrate that households with children are facing especially high hardship rates, which research has shown can have serious detrimental effects on children's long-term health and financial security. In the short run, parents are reporting worsening mental health for themselves⁸ and worsening behavioral health for their children,⁹ in tandem with worsening material hardship. Approximately 19 million children, or 1 in 4 children, live in a household that isn't getting enough to eat, is behind on rent or mortgage payments, or both.

These levels of hardship are substantially higher among Black and Latino children, reflecting longstanding inequities that the current crisis has exacerbated; 42 percent of Black children and 36 percent of Latino children live in a household that's behind on rent or mortgage and/or didn't get enough to eat. Appendix tables 2 and 3 show state-by-state estimates by race of children who live in households below 130 percent of the federal poverty line and 185 percent of the federal poverty line, the income limits for free and reduced-price meals respectively. These children would benefit from extending P-EBT and other benefits that alleviate hardship.

Notably, these hardship data predate the expiration of the \$600 weekly supplemental Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation on July 31, but key measures of hardship were already rising in mid-July. Future hardship trends will depend on several factors including the incidence of COVID-19 and the status of the job market. Congress could mitigate hardship by providing additional assistance through proven programs.

Pandemic EBT's Successful Implementation Gives Reason to Extend the Program

The concept of P-EBT is simple: while schools are closed, provide to families with children approved for free or reduced-price meals the funds that otherwise would have gone to schools to provide them with breakfast and lunch. But this was an entirely new program requiring cross-agency collaboration, data matching, and mailing benefit cards to millions of families, all while schools were

⁸ For a discussion of findings of various recent studies on parents' mental health during the pandemic, see Jessica Grose, "The Pandemic Is a 'Mental Health Crisis' for Parents," *New York Times*, September 9, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/09/parenting/mental-health-parents-coronavirus.html>.

⁹ Between March and June 2020, 27 percent of parents in a national survey reported worsening mental health for themselves, and 14 percent reported worsening behavioral health for their children. See Stephen W. Patrick *et al.*, "Well-being of Parents and Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A National Survey," *Pediatrics*, <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2020/07/22/peds.2020-016824.full.pdf>.

closed and state agencies were operating remotely and helping low-income families cope with the pandemic in multiple other ways.

Yet every single state developed a mechanism to get benefits to more than half of all school-age children in the country in a matter of weeks or months.¹⁰ Over the past couple of months, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Food Research & Action Center have surveyed and interviewed state officials to document how they implemented P-EBT. As is evident in the profiles we developed of each state's program, our compilation of state materials, and the state-by-state summary of implementation plans in Appendix tables 4 and 5, implementation took tremendous effort, creativity, and agility by state officials and other stakeholders.¹¹

P-EBT Reduced Children's Food Hardship

State efforts paid off. Researchers at the Brookings Institution used the variation in when states issued P-EBT benefits to SNAP recipients to examine the impact of those benefits on food hardship.¹² They found that P-EBT reduced food hardship faced by the lowest-income children by 30 percent in the week following its disbursement and lifted an estimated 2.7 to 3.9 million children out of hunger.¹³

Despite these striking findings, food hardship among children and their families remained high even after P-EBT benefits were issued, which shows the severity of hardship families are facing and that extending P-EBT alone is not sufficient. But extending P-EBT in combination with other measures to increase income, stabilize housing, and provide additional food assistance would provide relief on a more ongoing basis.

States Are Prepared to Offer P-EBT Again

This new initiative required states to hastily design and implement a program to deliver substantial benefits to millions of families quickly at a time of enormous need. To deliver benefits, states had to develop a new infrastructure, which typically entailed multiple steps. They had to build a statewide list of children approved for free or reduced-price meals, sometimes drawing on data maintained by hundreds of school districts. They matched student data against SNAP data to issue benefits on existing cards to eligible families that were already receiving SNAP benefits. They identified current mailing addresses for other eligible families to mail them new cards. Some states collected address information directly from families via a new application. States took additional steps to reach groups

¹⁰ Guam did not apply to offer benefits. Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa were not eligible to apply. The District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands are providing P-EBT benefits.

¹¹ See www.cbpp.org/pebt for links to a profile for each state (which includes how the state identified eligible children, issued benefits, and responded to inquiries from families) and our compilation of state materials (including websites, benefit applications, and outreach materials). A report summarizing our findings, case studies of eight states, and state-by-state tables describing implementation features will soon be available at that site.

¹² The researchers focused on households receiving SNAP benefits because states generally issued P-EBT benefits to these households first. Lauren Bauer *et al.*, "The Effect of Pandemic EBT on Measures of Food Hardship," July 2020, https://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/P-EBT_LO_7.30.pdf.

¹³ This study examined three measures of food hardship — food insecurity, the share of households reporting sometimes or often not having enough to eat, and the share reporting very low food security among children in their households. The 30 percent reduction was in the share reporting very low food security among children in their households.

especially likely to be experiencing additional hardship, such as families that were homeless when the pandemic hit. Meanwhile, states had to explain the new program to school districts, county SNAP offices, and families, and establish call centers or web-based systems to respond to inquiries from families or troubleshoot when eligible children didn't receive benefits.

Outside of a pandemic, states and school districts might have spent more time debating their ability to implement a P-EBT program. Discussions about costs and responsibility might have slowed the process. But in every state, leaders responsible for ensuring schoolchildren's access to healthy food — both through school food programs and SNAP — resolved tough implementation challenges and jurisdictional issues to launch P-EBT. This is a remarkable achievement and demonstrates that we can continue this fall to meet the food needs of children who are learning virtually.

Having implemented the program for the 2019-2020 school year, states have the structure in place to deliver benefits again for the 2020-2021 school year, during which many schools are offering virtual instruction to some or all students as a result of COVID-19. To be sure, states encountered challenges and learned lessons in the spring, and schools are operating under more complicated schedules of in-person and virtual learning than they were in the spring. But states are now well-positioned to offer benefits for the 2020-2021 school year for as long as some students are not able to return to school buildings.

Legislation Extending P-EBT Is Needed

The original P-EBT authority extends to September 30, allowing approved states to provide benefits for the early weeks of the new school year. The Department of Agriculture, which oversees P-EBT, has notified states that they can submit a plan for approval to offer benefits through September.¹⁴ However, the program expires in just a few weeks — even though many school districts have already announced that some or all students will be learning virtually long past September 30.¹⁵

To address this gap, the next COVID-19 relief package should extend and expand P-EBT benefits through fiscal year 2021 to mitigate children's food hardship, ease the budgets of millions of families that have lost income, and infuse local economies with additional spending. Without such an extension, states will be deprived of a proven tool to help families struggling with severe hardship. Further, such an extension is needed quickly to provide states the opportunity to develop plans for issuing new benefits before the current authority runs out and to reduce the gap between when school meals are missed and when benefits arrive.

The P-EBT rules quickly adopted in March need to be updated to facilitate administration and access in light of the various ways that schools are operating in the 2020-2021 school year. Some schools are open fully for in-person instruction, allowing students to receive school breakfast and lunch each school day and eliminating the need for P-EBT benefits. Other schools are using a full virtual-instruction model. Still others are using a hybrid approach, providing in-person instruction to

¹⁴ The Food and Nutrition Service's Regional Offices provided guidance, which is still evolving, to states via email in late August and early September.

¹⁵ Education Week, "Map: Where Are Schools Open?" updated September 3, 2020, <https://www.edweek.org/cw/section/multimedia/map-covid-19-schools-open-closed.html>.

some students some of the time while offering virtual instruction for students at higher health risk or to create enough space in the building for social distancing, limiting access to school meals.

P-EBT benefits are a critical way to help prevent children from going hungry when they can't consistently get meals at school. P-EBT benefits would also help ensure that decisions about whether to keep schools open are driven by public health considerations around COVID, rather than by a concern that children will go hungry. School districts worked valiantly to provide grab-and-go meals in the spring and are likely to do so again, but those programs reached only a fraction of the children who would have received free or reduced-price school meals if schools had been open. Picking up several days of prepared meals might not be feasible for working parents, or families living in rural areas or otherwise a long distance from the school pickup site, and might not be advisable for those at higher health risk.¹⁶ States need the flexibility to ensure that children who are not consistently getting meals at school receive P-EBT without having to determine each child's school schedule.

P-EBT also must be expanded to two groups who were left out. P-EBT should be extended to Puerto Rico, which operates the federal school meals programs on the same basis as the states but was inadvertently left out, resulting in close to 300,000 children in Puerto Rico's public schools missing out on P-EBT benefits.¹⁷

P-EBT should also be extended to low-income children who are too young to be enrolled in public school. Families with young children, including infants and toddlers, are disproportionately represented among those that haven't received a SNAP benefit increase during the pandemic because they were already poor enough to receive the maximum SNAP benefit. As a result, families with young children who were receiving free or reduced-price meals in child care might actually be receiving less food assistance now than they were before the pandemic.

The House-passed Heroes Act would extend P-EBT through 2021, allow Puerto Rico to offer P-EBT if feasible, and allow states to provide benefits to younger low-income children.¹⁸ Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell introduced two coronavirus relief packages, the HEALS proposal and a narrower relief package. Neither of these includes any nutrition assistance provisions, such as an extension or expansion of the P-EBT program or enhanced SNAP benefits, to help struggling households afford food. Neither package has advanced in the Senate, with the HEALS proposal not being considered and the narrower relief package failing to advance on a procedural vote.

As Congress and the Administration negotiate a bipartisan relief package, they must address this omission and extend and expand the P-EBT program, while making technical changes to facilitate implementation in school districts offering a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning.

¹⁶ Cory Turner, "Children Are Going Hungry?: Why Schools Are Struggling To Feed Students," NPR, September 8, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/08/908442609/children-are-going-hungry-why-schools-are-struggling-to-feed-students>.

¹⁷ See Javier Balmaceda, "Without Boost in Next COVID-19 Relief Bill, Puerto Rico Faces Deep Food Aid Cuts," CBPP, July 28, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/without-boost-in-next-covid-19-relief-bill-puerto-rico-faces-deep-food-aid-cuts> and Rosenbaum, Dean, and Neuberger, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ See H.R. 6800, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6800>.

Conclusion

Although sobering data about the suffering caused by the health and economic crises associated with COVID-19 continues to emerge, there are proven mechanisms to reduce hardship. P-EBT is a striking example because states had to develop a new program swiftly under difficult circumstances; although P-EBT was optional, every single state implemented it. With the support of the federal government, states and school districts helped millions of families meet their food needs. This proven solution can continue to play this role so long as schools are offering virtual learning.

P-EBT is just one example of how federal COVID-19 relief effectively helped families with low incomes before the pandemic or that lost income as a result. Other effective mechanisms include increasing SNAP and unemployment benefits, providing additional rental assistance, and helping people currently experiencing homelessness.

Congress must act now to deploy much-needed help to millions of struggling Americans. Every day that Congress fails to act, it fails families that are scraping together rent to avoid eviction and children who are not getting enough to eat, including children in Black and Latino families who are disproportionately suffering the health and economic consequences of the pandemic. Congress must give states effective tools to mitigate hardship.

Appendix

APPENDIX TABLE 1

Number of schoolchildren in households with children where the *household* sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat in the last 7 days and *children* sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat because the adults couldn't afford enough food

State	
Alabama	114,500
Alaska	12,500
Arizona	132,200
Arkansas	74,100
California	657,700
Colorado	51,200
Connecticut	52,200
Delaware	14,900
District of Columbia	17,600
Florida	353,500
Georgia	247,100
Hawai'i	23,400
Idaho	33,000
Illinois	237,300
Indiana	115,800
Iowa	34,700
Kansas	32,300
Kentucky	79,300
Louisiana	136,800
Maine	14,900
Maryland	102,400
Massachusetts	69,800
Michigan	186,500
Minnesota	82,400
Mississippi	87,000
Missouri	69,200
Montana	15,900
Nebraska	20,300
Nevada	101,400
New Hampshire	15,700
New Jersey	118,300
New Mexico	67,100
New York	241,400

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Number of schoolchildren in households with children where the *household* sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat in the last 7 days and *children* sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat because the adults couldn't afford enough food

State	
North Carolina	225,700
North Dakota	4,900
Ohio	156,900
Oklahoma	57,500
Oregon	42,200
Pennsylvania	137,100
Rhode Island	17,800
South Carolina	110,300
South Dakota	24,900
Tennessee	145,400
Texas	729,100
Utah	34,600
Vermont	6,500
Virginia	120,400
Washington	105,100
West Virginia	19,600
Wisconsin	90,500
Wyoming	7,000
Total	5,647,700

Note: Data collected July 2 to July 21, 2020 for children enrolled in a public or private school in February 2020. Figures are a three-week average. As recommended by the Census Bureau, the estimates exclude persons not replying to the question. Totals may not match due to rounding.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey public use files for survey weeks 10 - 12, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/datasets.html>.

APPENDIX TABLE 2

Three-year averages of the number of children between 5 and 17 years of age in households at or below 130% of the federal poverty level, by race/ethnicity, 2016-2018

State	Asian, not Latino	Black, not Latino	Latino (of any race)	White, not Latino	Another race or multiple races, not Latino
Alabama	1,700	114,400	30,300	87,500	10,600
Alaska	*	*	2,500	6,400	11,200
Arizona	4,000	18,100	200,100	72,500	43,300
Arkansas	1,200	44,100	29,000	75,400	9,500
California	107,400	113,300	1,180,700	210,400	65,000
Colorado	4,400	10,000	87,000	56,100	9,700
Connecticut	3,200	17,900	47,600	26,500	4,500
Delaware	*	12,100	8,600	8,200	1,900
District of Columbia	*	20,600	3,900	*	*
Florida	13,600	244,600	330,800	216,400	38,700
Georgia	10,400	239,600	114,500	128,400	25,800
Hawai'i	3,800	*	6,500	3,200	19,800
Idaho	*	*	21,800	45,900	3,600
Illinois	13,600	135,800	172,200	145,200	18,900
Indiana	6,500	58,400	47,600	146,800	19,700
Iowa	2,300	13,200	15,900	56,700	6,100
Kansas	2,400	10,600	31,400	51,400	9,600
Kentucky	2,300	31,100	20,000	146,700	11,400
Louisiana	2,500	165,900	19,500	80,800	13,200
Maine	*	2,800	1,000	31,200	2,500
Maryland	6,100	73,100	33,300	37,600	10,300
Massachusetts	10,500	25,100	75,100	55,300	9,900
Michigan	8,900	120,100	49,500	195,000	27,000
Minnesota	11,200	39,300	28,500	61,700	15,900
Mississippi	700	119,300	9,400	50,700	7,400
Missouri	2,700	59,500	22,500	146,100	20,700
Montana	*	*	1,500	23,900	10,100
Nebraska	2,400	7,800	24,200	28,800	4,400
Nevada	5,400	19,900	69,300	24,100	10,500
New Hampshire	*	1,200	3,200	17,200	*
New Jersey	12,300	59,400	122,100	64,500	10,000
New Mexico	*	1,900	85,900	16,100	21,300
New York	61,300	156,500	281,900	234,100	32,000

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Three-year averages of the number of children between 5 and 17 years of age in households at or below 130% of the federal poverty level, by race/ethnicity, 2016-2018

State	Asian, not Latino	Black, not Latino	Latino (of any race)	White, not Latino	Another race or multiple races, not Latino
North Carolina	9,300	160,200	129,100	147,200	29,800
North Dakota	*	*	1,500	9,000	5,800
Ohio	5,800	133,500	46,500	247,100	41,800
Oklahoma	2,000	26,500	52,900	75,300	45,700
Oregon	3,700	5,700	54,500	68,400	11,500
Pennsylvania	13,300	105,000	96,900	204,800	27,600
Rhode Island	600	3,500	15,600	10,700	2,200
South Carolina	1,700	114,900	35,900	73,900	13,000
South Dakota	*	1,700	2,800	13,500	15,400
Tennessee	3,500	96,400	44,900	147,500	14,200
Texas	30,200	218,300	1,025,800	217,200	33,900
Utah	1,900	3,700	36,200	54,500	7,800
Vermont	*	*	*	13,400	*
Virginia	8,300	89,200	45,800	89,000	16,000
Washington	10,000	17,600	86,700	84,000	29,900
West Virginia	*	4,500	2,000	70,100	5,500
Wisconsin	6,700	40,600	37,500	83,600	16,300
Wyoming	0	*	3,600	10,900	2,100
Total	405,000	2,959,700	4,895,900	4,170,900	825,100

* Sample size would be insufficient even with three years of data.

Note: Totals may not match due to rounding.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of 2016-2018 American Community Survey public use microdata samples.

APPENDIX TABLE 3

Three-year averages of the number of children between 5 and 17 years of age in households at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, by race/ethnicity, 2016-2018

State	Asian, not Latino	Black, not Latino	Latino (of any race)	White, not Latino	Another race or multiple races, not Latino
Alabama	2,400	151,500	38,900	135,100	14,400
Alaska	2,900	*	3,200	10,500	16,200
Arizona	6,900	26,200	290,900	114,800	59,300
Arkansas	1,800	59,100	41,700	117,700	14,400
California	169,200	147,200	1,728,600	313,900	93,300
Colorado	7,500	16,000	139,500	88,900	15,000
Connecticut	6,000	26,200	69,600	43,800	8,300
Delaware	*	17,900	12,300	13,100	2,700
District of Columbia	*	27,700	4,700	600	*
Florida	22,900	348,600	479,600	346,900	56,200
Georgia	17,300	322,000	155,800	206,800	37,400
Hawai'i	6,800	*	11,500	5,300	30,000
Idaho	*	*	33,500	79,400	6,300
Illinois	20,600	177,400	266,000	225,800	28,300
Indiana	8,300	80,200	72,600	235,600	26,400
Iowa	4,800	17,000	24,000	96,700	9,900
Kansas	3,200	16,300	51,000	84,700	14,600
Kentucky	4,200	41,100	24,500	209,900	16,400
Louisiana	4,000	203,400	27,400	117,800	17,300
Maine	*	3,500	1,700	48,500	3,600
Maryland	10,400	108,700	54,300	59,900	14,900
Massachusetts	16,000	35,700	97,900	83,700	13,700
Michigan	11,300	155,000	73,200	303,200	39,400
Minnesota	18,500	52,300	42,600	111,700	24,000
Mississippi	1,600	149,900	13,300	77,100	9,400
Missouri	4,500	77,800	33,500	227,300	28,500
Montana	*	*	2,900	39,200	14,000
Nebraska	3,500	9,700	35,800	54,500	7,700
Nevada	8,100	26,400	105,500	39,800	15,100
New Hampshire	1,700	1,200	4,200	29,500	1,400
New Jersey	19,100	83,700	173,100	103,600	14,000
New Mexico	900	2,300	118,500	24,800	29,000

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Three-year averages of the number of children between 5 and 17 years of age in households at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, by race/ethnicity, 2016-2018

State	Asian, not Latino	Black, not Latino	Latino (of any race)	White, not Latino	Another race or multiple races, not Latino
New York	87,300	210,900	379,200	344,600	44,900
North Carolina	14,100	219,600	174,100	227,300	43,900
North Dakota	*	1,900	2,100	17,000	7,100
Ohio	8,700	176,400	61,400	386,200	55,400
Oklahoma	4,400	34,900	71,700	116,400	66,400
Oregon	5,900	7,200	77,300	106,600	16,100
Pennsylvania	19,700	135,600	129,700	317,600	35,400
Rhode Island	1,000	5,300	21,400	16,600	3,400
South Carolina	3,100	151,300	46,700	124,000	17,600
South Dakota	*	2,100	4,100	22,800	17,900
Tennessee	5,300	126,800	61,000	234,300	21,100
Texas	46,600	303,400	1,450,100	349,200	50,900
Utah	2,500	3,900	54,200	105,800	12,300
Vermont	*	*	*	21,600	1,700
Virginia	15,400	121,000	72,400	140,400	24,000
Washington	16,100	23,700	130,000	141,400	43,600
West Virginia	*	5,600	2,900	99,100	7,600
Wisconsin	9,100	51,800	52,100	142,100	22,300
Wyoming	0	*	5,400	19,400	2,900
Total	627,700	3,969,200	7,027,900	6,582,500	1,176,100

* Sample size would be insufficient even with three years of data.

Note: The estimates in grey have low unweighted sample sizes. Totals may not match due to rounding.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of 2016-2018 American Community Survey public use microdata samples.

APPENDIX TABLE 4

Children eligible for P-EBT benefits, the maximum benefit per child, and the potential total amount of benefits to households statewide, 2019-2020 school year

State	Number of eligible children	Maximum P-EBT benefit per child	Potential total benefits to households
Alabama	420,395	\$313.50	\$132 million
Alaska	73,000	\$458.00	\$33 million
Arizona	703,000	\$313.50	\$220 million
Arkansas	303,120	\$319.00	\$97 million
California	3,927,173	\$365.00	\$1,433 million
Colorado	356,099	\$279.00	\$99 million
Connecticut	289,407	\$364.80	\$106 million
Delaware	61,602	\$370.50	\$23 million
District of Columbia	86,415	\$387.60	\$33 million
Florida	2,065,374	\$313.50	\$647 million
Georgia	1,100,000	\$256.50	\$282 million
Hawai'i	93,297	\$360.00	\$34 million
Idaho	130,000	\$302.00	\$39 million
Illinois	1,099,786	\$342.00	\$376 million
Indiana	588,127	\$319.00	\$188 million
Iowa	249,404	\$307.80	\$77 million
Kansas	169,795	\$291.00	\$49 million
Kentucky	601,551	\$313.50	\$189 million
Louisiana	732,204	\$285.00	\$209 million
Maine	84,000	\$383.00	\$32 million
Maryland	430,954	\$370.50	\$160 million
Massachusetts	467,319	\$399.00	\$186 million
Michigan	829,722	\$376.00	\$312 million
Minnesota	349,952	\$425.00	\$149 million
Mississippi	345,827	\$267.90	\$93 million
Missouri	454,690	\$302.00	\$137 million
Montana	48,385	\$330.00	\$16 million
Nebraska	156,257	\$281.00	\$44 million
Nevada	334,000	\$296.00	\$99 million
New Hampshire	45,190	\$376.00	\$17 million
New Jersey	594,207	\$416.10	\$247 million
New Mexico	245,000	\$399.00	\$98 million
New York	2,077,711	\$420.00	\$873 million
North Carolina	903,320	\$370.00	\$334 million
North Dakota	39,760	\$273.00	\$11 million

APPENDIX TABLE 4

Children eligible for P-EBT benefits, the maximum benefit per child, and the potential total amount of benefits to households statewide, 2019-2020 school year

State	Number of eligible children	Maximum P-EBT benefit per child	Potential total benefits to households
Ohio	850,000	\$302.10	\$257 million
Oklahoma	312,021	\$250.80	\$78 million
Oregon	351,000	\$384.00	\$135 million
Pennsylvania	991,843	\$370.50	\$367 million
Rhode Island	74,622	\$387.60	\$29 million
South Carolina	467,000	\$330.00	\$154 million
South Dakota	62,000	\$285.00	\$18 million
Tennessee	615,610	\$250.80	\$154 million
Texas	3,641,635	\$285.00	\$1,038 million
Utah	75,000	\$308.00	\$23 million
Vermont	39,000	\$387.60	\$15 million
Virgin Islands	13,000	\$379.00	\$5 million
Virginia	594,494	\$376.00	\$224 million
Washington	560,267	\$399.00	\$224 million
West Virginia	204,542	\$313.50	\$64 million
Wisconsin	438,000	\$324.90	\$142 million
Wyoming	36,271	\$285.00	\$10 million

Source: The number of eligible children is from publicly available information on state websites or in press releases. The maximum P-EBT benefit per child amounts are from USDA FNS P-EBT approval letters and SNAP agencies. The potential total benefits to households are calculated by multiplying the number of eligible children by the maximum benefit amount per child. State SNAP agencies were offered an opportunity to review each element in this table to confirm or update information. We will update this information to reflect any corrections or clarifications we receive from states.

APPENDIX TABLE 5

Overview of states' P-EBT implementation for the 2019-2020 school year

State	Plan approval date	Benefit issuance date range	Method for issuing P-EBT benefits to eligible children not receiving SNAP (or other selected benefits) ^a	
			Direct issuance	Application
Alabama	4/21/20	May - September	X	X ^b
Alaska	6/5/20	August - September		X
Arizona	4/17/20	May - August	X	X ^c
Arkansas	5/21/20	June - September	X	X ^d
California	4/23/20	May - August		X
Colorado	5/18/20	July - September		X
Connecticut	4/24/20	May - June	X	
Delaware	4/30/20	May - June	X	
District of Columbia	5/19/20	May - August	X	
Florida	5/27/20	June - September	X	
Georgia	6/5/20	July - September		X
Hawai'i	5/28/20	June - July	X	
Idaho	8/14/20	August - September	X	
Illinois	4/17/20	April - September		X
Indiana	5/14/20	May - Unknown	X	
Iowa	5/5/20	July - August	X	
Kansas	4/25/20	May - September	X ^e	X ^f
Kentucky	5/19/20	May - September		X
Louisiana	5/14/20	June - September		X
Maine	5/5/20	May - July		X
Maryland	4/28/20	May - June	X	
Massachusetts	4/29/20	May - June	X	
Michigan	4/9/20	April - September	X	
Minnesota	5/27/20	June - September		X
Mississippi	6/2/20	June - August	X	
Missouri	5/15/20	May - September		X
Montana	6/26/20	July - September	X	X ^g
Nebraska	6/16/20	July - September		X
Nevada	6/10/20	July - September	X	
New Hampshire	5/12/20	Unknown - September		X
New Jersey	5/8/20	July - September	X	
New Mexico	4/28/20	June - September	X	
New York	5/6/20	May - September	X	

APPENDIX TABLE 5

Overview of states' P-EBT implementation for the 2019-2020 school year

State	Plan approval date	Benefit issuance date range	Method for issuing P-EBT benefits to eligible children not receiving SNAP (or other selected benefits) ^a	
			Direct issuance	Application
North Carolina	4/16/20	May - June	X	
North Dakota	5/1/20	May - September		X
Ohio	5/11/20	June - September	X	
Oklahoma	6/26/20	July - August	X	
Oregon	4/29/20	May - September	X	
Pennsylvania	5/8/20	May - August	X	
Rhode Island	4/10/20	April - June	X	
South Carolina	6/17/20	July - September	X	
South Dakota	6/18/20	June - August		X
Tennessee	5/19/20	June - September		X
Texas	5/8/20	May - September		X
Utah	7/9/20	July - September		X
Vermont	5/4/20	May - September	X	
Virgin Islands	6/10/20	August - September	X	
Virginia	4/25/20	May - June	X	
Washington	5/22/20	June - September		X
West Virginia	4/30/20	May - September	X	
Wisconsin	4/22/20	May - September		X
Wyoming	4/16/20	June - July		X

a All states except Louisiana and Wyoming directly issued benefits to children in households receiving SNAP benefit without requiring a parent/guardian to take any action, such as submitting an application. Some states referred to this as "automatic issuance." It includes benefits loaded onto existing SNAP cards and benefits loaded onto new P-EBT cards that were mailed to families. Some states directly issued benefits to children in households receiving other benefits, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash assistance, Medicaid, Foster Care, services for homeless, runaway, or migrant students, or Head Start.

b Opt-in letter for children attending schools operating under the Community Eligibility Provision who were not directly certified

c For newly eligible children and those missed by direct issuance

d For private schools that do not report on the E-school platform

e Direct issuance was provided to some households; additional information was needed for most and collected through the registration portal

f Referred to as a registration portal

g For children missed by direct issuance

Sources: Plan approval dates are from the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service P-EBT approval letters and SNAP agencies. Benefit issuance dates are from publicly available information on state websites or in press releases. Whether an application was required was confirmed through a nationwide survey. State SNAP agencies were offered an opportunity to review each element in this table to confirm or update information. We will update this information to reflect any corrections or clarifications we receive from states.