

September 4, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) and stakeholders with information regarding the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

September 4, 2020

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JENNIFER HERNANDEZ
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: PANDEMIC EBT

REFERENCE: FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (HR 6201)

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) and stakeholders with information regarding the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program.

In response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic emergency, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 provided the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to approve state plans for the issuance of temporary emergency nutrition benefits, known as P-EBT benefits, to children who would otherwise receive free or reduced price school meals under the federal School Breakfast Program and/or National School Lunch Program if not for school facility closures resulting from the pandemic emergency. In response, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Department of Education (CDE) jointly submitted a plan to the United States Department of Agriculture and were approved to implement P-EBT.

This unprecedented effort resulted in over 3.7 million eligible children receiving P-EBT benefits totaling nearly \$1.4 billion. In the coming weeks, CDSS will finalize and share final P-EBT outcomes data.

California launched P-EBT operations in early May 2020 and, as of the end of July, the CDSS completed issuance of P-EBT cards to children determined eligible through a

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data match between CDSS and CDE. All P-EBT appeals will be processed within the month of September. As P-EBT operations come to an end, the P-EBT Helpline and online inquiry form have closed and CDSS is transitioning limited P-EBT cardholder support responsibilities to the CWDs.

As of August 31, 2020, these responsibilities include supporting existing P-EBT cardholders with requests for PIN set-up support and replacement P-EBT cards. The CWDs will not assume any P-EBT eligibility responsibilities and will not be able to issue P-EBT benefits to children not already issued P-EBT benefits by CDSS and CDE.

Requests for Pin Set-Up Support

Some P-EBT cardholders, after attempting to use the automated system to set-up their PIN, may require additional assistance. This may require P-EBT cardholder information to be updated in the system for cardholders to successfully PIN their card. P-EBT cardholders may contact their local social service office for PIN set-up support.

Requests for a Replacement P-EBT Card

P-EBT cardholders may request a replacement P-EBT card. A request for a replacement card may be accepted in two scenarios: (1) a P-EBT cardholder reports a previously activated P-EBT card as lost or stolen or (2) the P-EBT card, though anticipated to be received via mail, was not received.

In either scenario, the CWD will look up the cardholder's P-EBT card information. After verifying the cardholder's information, the CWD can deactivate the original card and issue a replacement P-EBT card to the cardholder's current mailing address. The replacement P-EBT card will reflect the balance remaining on the original card at the time of deactivation.

Other Requests

If a child is not found in the system, the CWD cannot assist with the request, as the deadlines for application and appeal have already passed. The CWD cannot determine P-EBT eligibility or issue P-EBT benefits.

Clients may inquire about the status of their pending P-EBT appeal. The CDSS is currently processing all appeals and anticipates that all appeals will be processed by September 17. Clients who submitted an appeal and are P-EBT eligible will receive a confirmation email when their P-EBT card is mailed. Clients who submitted an appeal and are not P-EBT eligible will also receive a confirmation email with information about the outcome of the appeal.

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CWDs have been issued system instructions under separate cover.