

Nutrition Note



TENNESSEE JUSTICE CENTER

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COVID-19 continues to cause hunger and health problems while devastating the economy in Tennessee. The pandemic has disrupted summer learning opportunities and back to school time for children; and it has limited or taken away childcare option for parents. This has created incredible barriers to Tennesseans ability to work and feed their families. The nutrition safety net programs can help families during the pandemic, but we need to make sure they are implemented in a way that does not provide barriers to Tennesseans who are eligible and need the support. Read on to learn about how we are working to address those barriers, promote the extension of waivers, new program rules and how to connect families with food assistance through SNAP, WIC, P-EBT and the child nutrition programs.

Child Nutrition

Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Program

P-EBT provides money to families or guardians with children who receive free or reduced-price school meals, or who attend a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school that offers free school meals to all students.

Updates

- **Over 200,000 children are still missing out on P-EBT benefits!**
- There's still time to apply! The application deadline is Friday, **August 14 at 4:30.**

- Eligible families who do not participate in SNAP (food stamps), [must apply here](#).
- Families who participate in SNAP, received their first P-EBT installment in June.
- Both SNAP and non-SNAP families will receive two installments of P-EBT funds.
- P-EBT provides \$5.70 (the daily total cost of school breakfast and lunch) per student per school day disrupted by the pandemic, (approximately 44 days), or up to **\$250.80 total per child**.
- The funds cover school meals lost in March, April, and May.
- If you want P-EBT to continue call your Senators and other elected officials to let them know this is important to your family or important for your neighbors.
 - **Note:** Families may continue to receive free meals from schools, pick-up points, and SFSP meal sites. Participation does not disqualify eligibility for P-EBT or reduce the number of dollars you will receive.
 - **Note:** Children in pre-school are eligible for P-EBT if they participate in free or reduced-price meals.

TJC will send updates on any breaking news regarding P-EBT as we learn about them. [Sign-up here to be the first to know](#).

Advocate with us and our partners at The Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) to ensure that all children receive P-EBT

This pandemic has exposed deep structural inequities in our society as **low-income Tennesseans, workers, and Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people and people of color continue to suffer the most** from the public health and economic crises.

Due to a complicated application process that discriminates against families with limited English proficiency and internet access, **over 200,000 children have not had access to these potentially life-saving funds**. Other states have implemented the smart, easy strategy of automatically distributing P-EBT funds directly to children who qualify, no application necessary. **Our state can do this too.** [Will you take one minute to email your legislators, Governor Lee, and DHS to urge them to support Tennessee families and hungry children?](#)

Questions about Pandemic EBT?

Call the TDHS P-EBT hotline at 1-833-496-0661

Contact us if you have problems connecting with someone or are unable to access the application at nutrition@tnjustice.org

Tell us about your experience with P-EBT [here](#).

Summer Meal Program

Too many Tennessee children are missing out on the nutrition they need during the summer. 14,000 fewer children received meals through summer lunch program since July 2019 compared to July 2018 according to a new report released by the Food Research &

Action Center (FRAC) - [Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report](#)

Children across the country are missing out on the nutrition they need during the summer months when the school year — and access to school breakfast and lunch — ends, according to the new report. It finds that 2.8 million children received summer lunch on an average weekday in July 2019, reaching only one child for every 7 low-income children who participated in school lunch during the 2018-2019 school year.

Back to School

Many schools across Tennessee have already started back for fall semester. About 25% of schools are starting remotely. With the Pandemic EBT application open through August 14, there's time to include this flyer to families to ensure every eligible family can receive assistance buying groceries for kids. Many schools are delivering or providing pick-up meals for these students.

- [School Meal Site Finder:](#)
- [TN Dept. of Education School Reopening Toolkit](#) (Nutrition Section) - Learn more about how school nutrition is operating in response to the pandemic
 - Flyer to apply for Pandemic EBT in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
 - Remind families to apply for free and reduced-price meals!

Waiver extensions for August

- Every SNAP household will receive the maximum household allotment in August.
- Interview flexibility extended through August 31 – new SNAP applicants will not be required to complete an interview to be approved or denied.

SNAP

Congressional COVID-19 Legislative Update

In May, the House of Representatives introduced the HEROES Act, which included:

- 15% SNAP boost
- Raise SNAP minimum from \$16-\$30
- Suspend harmful rules that would weaken SNAP or knock participants off the program
- Extends Pandemic EBT to cover summer months
- Extends WIC and Child nutrition waivers

9 weeks later in July, the Senate introduced HEALS Act:

- Does not boost SNAP
- Does not extend P-EBT
- Does not extend WIC/Child Nutrition ([read more](#))

Reach out to your Senators [here](#) and ask that they include boosts to federal nutrition programs in the next COVID-19 legislation.

What Tennessee can do to improve SNAP access

- Tennessee can apply for a waiver to allow Tennessee families to apply for SNAP over the phone. Currently no one can apply over the phone in Tennessee, which is especially needed due to office closures during COVID-19.
- TJC is hosting a [tweetstorm](#) about telephonic on August 18 from 2-3 pm CT.

SNAP amounts will increase 5% October 1

- Every year, SNAP amounts increase slightly for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). This year it will increase 5% rather than 2%. The minimum amount will not increase from \$16. Read more [here](#).

Join our monthly SNAP Access Call! Email Sarah at shenson@tnjustice.org for details.

Join our quarterly College Hunger Collaborative! Email shenson@tnjustice.org for details.

The WIC Program

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC offices are taking applications over the phone and have limited or no in person visits because of the pandemic. Call your local WIC office (800) DIAL-WIC if you would like to apply.

- [Find your WIC office here.](#)
- [WIC Basics](#)
- [Find out if you are eligible](#)

USDA has extended all approved WIC waivers through September 30th! These waivers allow for a continuation of remote and flexible services, including:

- Remote WIC certification for new applicants

Remote appointments

- Remote benefit issuance
- Expanded options for WIC-eligible foods

If you or someone you know is experiencing barriers to scheduling or attending a WIC appointment, please contact Signe Anderson at sanderson@tnjustice.org.

Additional WIC-Approved Food Items during the Pandemic

*Updated on July 22, the Tennessee WIC Program added additional food items for you to purchase with your TNWIC Card through the pandemic **until further notice**. Learn more about what you may purchase here:*

- [In English](#)
- [In Spanish](#)

Join the National WIC Association's Biennial Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Conference. [Register here](#) before September 2.

- The conference will be held virtually from September 9-11, 2020. This conference is the most popular gathering of the **WIC nutrition and breastfeeding professionals** in the US. More than 40 exhibitors will be on hand to provide the **latest on WIC-related products, technology, and services**.

Social Media

- **Use these tags:** #FeedTN, #TNPEBT, #JustSendThemTheCards
- [Retweet this](#) about our work with Pandemic EBT and its importance in Tennessee.
- **September is Hunger Awareness Month** - Each week in September we will host a Twitterchat on Tuesday from 2-3pm CT.
 - Week 1: Pandemic EBT
 - Week 2: Telephonic Signatures (applying for programs over the phone!)
 - Week 3: School meals
 - Week 4: Senior Hunger

What We're Reading

- **DON'T MISS OUT** [Poverty Hunger Health and the Federal Nutrition Programs: A Profile of the Southern Region](#), Food Research and Action Center
- [Tennessee may forfeit \\$60M in federal food aid for low-income families during coronavirus pandemic](#), The Tennessean
- [Are You Eligible for Food Stamps Now? Maybe, but It's Complex](#), New York Times
- ["Senate Proposal 'Wholly Inadequate' to Address Needs of Babies and Children,"](#) National WIC Association

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Tennessee Justice Center
211 7th Ave N
Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37219
United States

info@tnjustice.org | 1-877-608-1009 | <https://www.tnjustice.org>

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