

# Nutrition Note



TENNESSEE JUSTICE CENTER

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We want to address the state of police brutality and continued systemic racism across our country. Racism did not end with slavery, Jim Crow laws, or the Civil Rights era – the systems built by and for white people in America still exist and prevail through our housing, education, healthcare systems, and more. Part of fighting for racial justice is fighting for food justice. Hunger and food insecurity hits communities of color harder – in the US, black households are twice as likely to face hunger than non-Hispanic white households and 1 in 4 black children do not have enough to eat. Our team is committed to fighting for better policy and access to healthy and nutritious food through the federal nutrition programs. We will fight alongside our partners and allies, amplify voices most affected by racism, and continue to learn how we can better show our belief that Black Lives Matter.

## COVID-19 Updates

### Help Us Address Hunger During COVID19

#### Add Your Organization's Voice

Join other organizations across Tennessee and across the United States on a [massive sign-on letter](#) for national, state, and community-based organizations urging Congress and the White House to immediately boost SNAP benefits and make investments in other critical nutrition programs with proven health and economic impacts. The deadline for organizations to sign on is **Friday, June 12**.

## Use Your Voice – [Contact your Senator to pass the HEROES Act](#)

You can act now to through TJC's Feed Tennessee Campaign to urge the Senate to strengthen SNAP:

### URGENT: #FeedTN Campaign

**TELL YOUR SENATORS:** Strengthen SNAP in the next COVID-19 legislative response package

1. Increase the max SNAP benefit by 15%
2. Increase the min SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30 per month
3. Suspend all SNAP administrative rules that would weaken or terminate benefits

#FEEDTN

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SNAP is one of the most effective anti-hunger and economic stimulus programs available. Join us in urging our U.S. Senators to support strengthening SNAP through the HEROS Act.

[Click here to email your senators now](#)

Or call at the following numbers:

- Lamar Alexander: (202) 224-4944
- Marsha Blackburn: (202) 224-3344

### The HEROES Act

On May 12, House Democrats introduced the fourth COVID-19 response package - the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act.

#### *Highlights on Nutrition Benefits:*

- \$10 billion in additional funding for SNAP through September 30, 2021
- Boosts SNAP maximum benefits by 15% through September 30, 2021
- Increases the minimum monthly SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30
- Suspends SNAP time limits for certain adults and mandatory SNAP Employment and Training
- extends Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) through fiscal year 2021, which allows families to receive benefits through the summer

- provides emergency funding to school meal programs to help cover operational costs during COVID-19
- provides emergency funding to Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsors, centers, homes, and afterschool programs to help cover operating cost deficits
- \$1.1 billion in additional funding for WIC, to remain available through September 30, 2022
- allows USDA to increase the value of WIC Cash Value Voucher (CVV) from \$9 for children and \$11 for women per month to \$35 per month for women and children through the end of fiscal year 2020

## Pandemic-EBT

**USDA approves Tennessee to implement P-EBT.** When you speak, people listen. Because of the letters that many of you sent to Governor Bill Lee, Tennessee will now grant Pandemic- Electronic Benefit Transfers (P-EBT) to families in Tennessee. Often in this work, the results of our advocacy efforts can be hard to see. In this moment, though, your concentrated, sustained efforts on behalf of Tennessee families means that they have additional support to feed their children during the pandemic.

### *P-EBT Details:*

1. Households with school-age 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 are eligible for P-EBT.
2. Families will receive \$5.70 (the daily total cost of school breakfast and lunch) per student per school day disrupted by the pandemic, (approximately 44 days), totaling **\$250.80 per child**.
3. For eligible families not on SNAP, families must apply during an established open enrollment period.
4. 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.
5. DHS is currently working with the Department of Education and EBT vendors to determine the application and payment period timelines.
6. Note: P-EBT dollars are not yet available. We will alert you when the food dollars become available.

We will send updates on any breaking news regarding P-EBT and when it benefits will be issued to families. [Sign-up here to be the first to know.](#)

## SNAP Benefits Changes

## Maximum SNAP Allotment extended through June

Due to COVID-19, the USDA allowed every state to provide all SNAP households the maximum monthly amount for their household size (\$194 for a household of 1). This has been extended through June for all existing and new SNAP applicants. It will be given automatically. As of now, Tennessee DHS has not applied for this to extend through July. [Read more.](#)

## Online SNAP Purchasing – Available Now!

SNAP participants can now buy groceries online through Amazon and Walmart and have them delivered. SNAP benefits do not cover delivery fees. SNAP participants can also purchase groceries online through Kroger, though they will need to pay and pick up the groceries at their local Kroger. [Read more.](#)

## DHS Offices Begin to Reopen

DHS offices will only be open by appointment. Call your local DHS Office to set up an appointment. DHS phone numbers by county can be found [here](#). SNAP applications can be submitted online, by mail, or by fax to your county DHS or Family Assistance Office. A list of county offices and contact information can be found [here](#). **DHS will not be contacting applicants for interviews before making determinations** – make sure to include all relevant information, such as medical bills if applicable, when applying to receive the correct amount.

If you have questions about these new changes or if you experience barriers to applying to SNAP please contact Sarah Henson at [shenson@tnjustice.org](mailto:shenson@tnjustice.org)

## WIC Benefits Changes

Most WIC appointments are still by phone only. Call your nearest WIC clinic to ask about new processes and accommodations.

Find your nearest WIC clinic at [www.signupwic.com](http://www.signupwic.com) or by calling 1-800-DIAL-WIC.

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

**Due to grocery store inventory shortages, WIC participants now have some flexibilities in the food they purchase with WIC.** If the designated WIC food is sold out at the grocery, WIC participants can purchase alternative food. For more information about what food is currently eligible in WIC benefits packages, [please see here.](#)

## School Meals

Schools are closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year, yet many schools across the state are still providing meals to children. Operating schools are providing pick-up meals and delivery. Visit this [site locator](#) to find out where

school meals are available: [School Meal Finder](#).

## Summer Meals

USDA extended 3 waivers to help kids continue to access food through summer through August 31. As communities continue to be impacted by school closures and economic downturn, these waivers allow sponsors and sites to continue meal service during the summer as they begin to coordinate long term responses to the pandemic into the fall.

*The following waivers will be extended:*

1. [Non-Congregate Feeding](#): To support social distancing, meals may be served outside group settings. For example, meals may be distributed at a pick-up site or delivered directly to homes.
2. [Meal Service Times](#): Meals may be served outside of the standard designated meal times. This way, multiple days-worth of meals may be provided at once.
3. [Parents may Pick Up Meals for Children](#): Students no longer have to be present for meal pick-up. A parent or guardian may now pick up children's meals.

USDA extended a fourth waiver, from May 31 to June 30, on [Meal Pattern Flexibility](#). This waives the requirements on meal patterns on a case-by-case basis.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause hardship in the United States, increased flexibility, funding, and support for federal food assistance programs is paramount. These nationwide waivers will help support the families and children that normally utilized free and reduced-price school meal programs access nutritious meals. TJC supports these waivers, continues to monitor progress on COVID-19-related modifications to programs, and encourages additional waivers that promote flexibility for families to access meals in these trying times.

## TJC COVID-19 Webpage for Partner Organizations

The nutrition team has compiled all our COVID-19 resources for partner organizations on our website. Find policy updates, advocacy opportunities, and additional resources:

[SNAP & COVID-19](#)

[WIC & COVID-19](#)

[Child Nutrition Programs & COVID-19](#)

If you or someone you know is experiencing food insecurity and needs assistance, please [click here](#).

# SNAP

## College Hunger

Colleges and Universities are closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year disrupting life for many students. Our college partners are hard at work during this time to ensure TN students basic needs are met. Our next College Hunger Call will be July 1.

Email Sarah at [shenson@tnjustice.org](mailto:shenson@tnjustice.org) to join the next College Hunger call.

# The WIC Program

## Newly Eligible for WIC?

The COVID-19 pandemic has created economic challenges for families across the state. As a result, there may be women, infants and children who are newly eligible for this nutrition food support. Here are some resources that share more information about WIC and how to apply.

[WIC Basics](#)

[Find out if you are eligible](#)

Reminder – 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.](#)

# Child Nutrition

## School Meals



## Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) - New Report on Participation

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provides low-income schools and school districts with non-pricing meal options. These CEP schools serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting applications. Our national partners at the Food Research Action Center (FRAC), released a nationwide report on CEP for the 2019-2020 school year.

### Highlights for Tennessee:

- Data is collected via required annual alternative income forms
- State education funding formulas DO consider NSLP eligibility
- 65.5% of eligible school districts adopted CEP
- 85.6% of eligible schools adopted CEP
- 96.8% was the CEP take-up rate by schools' identified student percentage
- Student enrollment has dropped by 6,735 between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years
- 4 new schools adopted CEP between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years

Full Report: <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/CEP-Report-2020-1.pdf>

## Social Media

### #FeedTN Campaign

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### TJC Tennessee Tuesday Tweetstorm

Join us Tuesday, May 19 from 1-2 pm CT for our next TJC Tennessee Tuesday

Tweetstorm to highlight the new Pandemic EBT program and the importance of getting it to TN families as soon as possible. Email [shenson@tnjustice.org](mailto:shenson@tnjustice.org) for more information.

Join us on Social Media. Use our [social media toolkit!](#) Just copy and paste these graphics and sample messages that we created.

**Please Retweet!**

- [ADD YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME to Support SNAP](#)
- [We've had hundreds of calls about Pandemic EBT](#)

## What We're Reading

### TJC Nutrition in the News!

P-EBT funds for families with children who receive free and reduced-price meals is not getting to families fast enough [Read more here](#). Tennessee Lookout, June 8, 2020

### COVID-19 & P-EBT

[Hunger Program's Slow Start Leaves Millions Waiting](#), New York Times, May 26, 2020

[Not Moving Fast Enough: Millions of Children Still Without Food Aid](#), CNN, May 31, 2020

### COVID-19: Inequality and Hunger

['Cascading failures of the state': COVID-19 impacts on health, food security amplifying George Floyd Protests](#), ABC News, June 5, 2020

['People are looking at me': For many who lost jobs in the coronavirus epidemic, hunger comes with shame](#), The Washington Post, June 4, 2020

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