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**Did you know?**

For the first time in 45 years, the USDA has increased the SNAP benefit by 21% to more accurately reflect the current cost realities of purchasing healthy food.

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### Mothers Fight to Feed Children During the Pandemic

Tabitha Dean is a mother of two from just outside Memphis, Tennessee. She is a hardworking mother who puts the needs of her children above her own and goes above and beyond to ensure they receive the care they need. This past year, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Americans from all ranges of life; Tabitha was no

different...[read more about Tabitha's fight to feed her children during the pandemic here...](#)

## You Can Help Feed Tennessee Children

Help families like Tabitha's connect to food resources. **Donate today!**

Be a part of our work connecting thousands of Tennesseans to food across the state by joining us for our virtual Hunger Awareness fundraising campaign in September.



## P-EBT for Children 5 and Under is Here!

About \$80 million in P-EBT benefits has begun loading onto SNAP EBT cards for 138,000 eligible Tennessee children. Families who participate in SNAP with children ages 5 and under are also eligible for P-EBT for the months of October 2020 to May 2021. If you work with families on SNAP with a child age 5 or under, please remind them to check their EBT cards for additional money to help buy groceries for their children. Summer P-EBT for children under 5 has not been loaded onto EBT cards yet, but stay tuned for more information on when to expect those benefits. For more information, [see our child care P-EBT factsheet.](#)

## Summer P-EBT Sent to Eligible TN Families

Approximately 765,000 children across Tennessee received \$338 million Summer P-EBT benefits last week. \$375/child was loaded directly onto Round 3 cards for eligible children. Students who were just approved for free/reduced price school meals in June or July can expect benefits to be loaded onto cards in the fall.

For more information, [see our Summer P-EBT flyer.](#)



## Issues with Round 3 P-EBT Uploads to Cards

P-EBT benefits for the months of March–June have been severely delayed for many families. If you did not receive benefits during those months, please call DHS at 833-496-0661, or visit the [DHS Parent Portal](#) to ensure that your child’s information is correct. Families may also appeal within the parent portal if you believe that your child has been missed.

## Need Information on P-EBT?

Visit our [P-EBT page](#)! Learn more about P-EBT, who qualifies, and who to contact if you did not receive your benefits.



## Maximum Allotment Extended into August!

All families will continue to receive the full SNAP benefit for their household size during August (see chart). Families will also continue to receive an additional **15%** added to their SNAP benefit through September. SNAP participants will continue to receive the maximum allotment one month after the state of emergency expires. Follow us on social media for up-to-date information.

Household Size	Max Benefit Amount	15% Increase*
1 Person	\$204	\$30
2 People	\$374	\$56
3 People	\$535	\$80
4 People	\$680	\$102

\*approximate benefit



## USDA Reevaluates SNAP Benefit

In response to an executive order signed by President Biden, the USDA is reevaluating the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) that determines SNAP allotments. According to a USDA study completed in June, 88% of SNAP participants are not able to maintain a nutritionally adequate diet with current amount of money they receive from SNAP. An increase in SNAP dollars would mean that SNAP participants across the country could purchase more food for their families.



## Pandemic Flexibilities Boost WIC Participation

In response to COVID-19, the USDA has offered flexibilities for states to adopt to make WIC safer for applicants and participant to access during a pandemic. Remote check-ins and phone applications have allowed participants who don't have access to

transportation to utilize WIC to help feed their children under 6. In response, WIC participation has increased by 2.1% nationally and by 0.1% in the state of Tennessee. Not only does this increase help families feed their youngest children, but it also infuses billions of dollars into local economies. While this increase is positive, it's likely that the number of people eligible for WIC increased at a higher rate because of job loss and economic instability brought on by the pandemic. To learn more about how remote flexibilities affected WIC participation, [see FRAC's report "One Year of WIC During COVID-19"](#).



## Applying for WIC During COVID

WIC offices remain closed for in-person visits, and appointments are being conducted by phone. Contact your [local office](#) to schedule an appointment. Ask questions or apply at 1-800-DIAL-WIC.



# CHILD NUTRITION

## Back to School Reminder for Parents

As summer draws to a close, so will P-EBT benefits. However, students can still receive support buying lunch and breakfast by applying for free/reduced price meals at school. If you work with parents of school age children, please remind them to fill out an application with their child's school as soon as possible.

## CEP Numbers Decline in TN

The number of Tennessee schools participating in CEP dropped by nine this past year as families and schools struggled to keep up with applications in a virtual environment. The community eligibility provision (CEP) allows schools with a high number of students eligible for free/reduced price school meals to offer free meals to all students at the school, regardless of individual income. It reduces administrative burdens on schools who would otherwise have to process upwards of hundreds of applications a year. It also guarantees that all children receive at least one healthy meal per day. This past year, free school meals have become even more vital as families experience economic instability brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more about the importance of CEP designation and how Tennessee compares to other states, [see FRAC's report "Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger Free Schools."](#)

# ADVOCACY UPDATES

## Bills to Support

**Closing the Meal Gap Act of 2021 ([S.2192 / H.R.4077](#))**– Increases SNAP benefits, expands SNAP to include U.S. territories, and eliminates eligibility restrictions like time-limits. Urge your members of Congress to support this bill today.

**Improving Access to Nutrition Act ([H.R. 175](#))**– Eliminates 3-month time limit for SNAP and provides flexibilities for people seeking work while participating in SNAP. Urge your members of Congress to support this bill today.

**Enhanced Access to SNAP Act [S. 2515](#) / [H.R. 1919](#)** – Provides flexibilities for low-income college students to access SNAP. Urge your members of Congress to support this bill today.

## UPCOMING WEBINARS

**WIC 101** (Thursday, August 12 at 11:00am CT) – As hunger rates continue to climb due to the pandemic, WIC can ensure that more moms and young children have enough healthy food to eat. Join us for a discussion about WIC, who is eligible, how to apply, and how the program has adapted during the pandemic. [Register today!](#)

**SNAP Access Call** (Thursday, July 15 at 10:00am CT) – Monthly call to discuss SNAP advocacy, casework best practices, and nutrition program updates. E-mail [aluttrell@tnjustice.org](mailto:aluttrell@tnjustice.org) for more information and for the link to register.

**Food Assistance for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals** (Thursday, September 23, at 11:00am CT) Join us for a discussion on eligibility for formerly incarcerated individuals, how they can apply, and what we can do to advocate for program expansions that support people transitioning out of the prison system. [Register today!](#)

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more information

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