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P-EBT Benefits Now Available for 2020-21 School Year New Guide Outlines Where Families can Spend P-EBT Benefits on Local Food

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Lewis, NY– The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance has begun to distribute Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Benefits from the 2020-2021 School Year. For a second school year, New York State is providing benefits to families who would have received free breakfast and lunch at school but did not due to COVID-19 related closures or remote learning during the year.

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Essex County and [Adirondack Harvest](#) have compiled a helpful resource for families who wish to spend their pandemic benefits on local food and at small businesses in their communities. They have [created a guide](#) to highlight where families can use P-EBT dollars to buy food grown and produced locally.

All students at Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools that provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, like Plattsburgh City Schools, Bouquet Valley Central School, and Glens Falls Schools, as well as students at any school that already receives free or reduced-price school meals, will receive this second round of P-EBT benefits. [Find a full list of CEP schools here.](#)

Families Can Use P-EBT Benefits Locally

Families can use their P-EBT dollars anywhere that SNAP dollars are accepted. This includes many grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores, farmers' markets, and even farmstands.

Customers can use P-EBT benefits to buy any fruits and vegetables; meat, poultry, and fish; dairy products; breads and cereals; snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages; seeds and plants that will produce food. Most of these eligible ["staple foods"](#) as designated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can be found at local food retail locations and markets.

Added Benefits of Buying Local with P-EBT and SNAP

Families can choose to spend a portion of their benefits to support small businesses and farms in their communities. Many local food SNAP vendors and farmers' markets offer curbside pick-up, online ordering, and even local home delivery services. Families may even be able to take advantage of other programs to help their dollar stretch further. For example, [qualifying](#) families can utilize Adk Action's 30% off coupons through their "[Fair Food Pricing](#)" program at farmers' markets and retail locations, some of which offer home delivery.

On top of that, customers using SNAP and P-EBT dollars at [qualifying retailers and farmers' markets](#) can make use of the [Double Up Food Bucks](#) program, which gives shoppers an extra \$2 for every \$2 spent on local fruits and vegetables, up to \$20 per visit.

For example, customers can visit the Lake Placid Farmers' Market with their P-EBT card, and redeem \$20 of their P-EBT benefits for tokens to spend on fruits and veggies. They would receive \$40 worth of tokens to spend and get 30% off each purchase they made.

If your local farmers' market doesn't provide Double Up Food Bucks, it may provide matching Fresh Connect dollars instead, which gives a matching \$2 for every \$5 of SNAP, which can be used for any SNAP-eligible items.

April St. Onge, co-owner of [Pat and April's Pork](#) in Fort Covington, New York, just north of Malone says that being able to accept SNAP and the new P-EBT benefits is very important to their business. She says that accepting SNAP benefits "allows us to sell meat to more people who care about where their food comes from. Buying locally allows families to get meats that are high quality with a great taste close to home."

She believes that for their small farm business, it's important that they can provide customers utilizing SNAP benefits transparency and trust in how their meat products are made. April says, "I like that folks who buy from us can see exactly how the animals were raised and what they ate and can be confident that what they're eating is genuinely good."

Transparency in growing and production practices is one of the many [benefits of buying local food](#). Additionally, food that is grown locally is generally harvested closer to when it is ripe and spends less time in shipment and on the shelf. Riper fruits and vegetables taste better and have more nutrients. When a customer spends \$1 on food at a conventional grocery store only \$0.17 goes directly to the farmer. However, when a customer spends \$1 at a farmers' market or local food retail location, the farmer earns almost that whole dollar.

Meghan Dohman, Farm to Institution Educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County underscores why it's important for community members to consider using their P-EBT benefits to buy local food. "It's important to support our local farms to ensure that our region can continue to grow food for years to come, even in the face of unprecedented challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change."

“Farms play many critically important social, environmental, and economic roles in our communities and provide children with the opportunity to learn about where their food comes from. For some families, the expanded P-EBT benefits may offer a unique opportunity for them to support their local farmers and try something new.”

Meal Planning with Local Food

Find recipes and tips for making the most of your budget at [MyPlate.gov](https://www.MyPlate.gov) where users can search for meal ideas by ingredient.

About CCE Essex and Adirondack Harvest

The mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. Essex County Extension staff and trained volunteers deliver education programs, conduct applied research, and encourage community collaborations through initiatives like the Master Gardener Program and 4-H.

Adirondack Harvest works to increase opportunities for profitable, sustainable production and sale of high-quality food and agricultural products, and expand consumer choices for locally produced healthy food. Its work covers the greater Adirondack region and northeastern New York State. Learn more at [adirondackharvest.com](https://www.adirondackharvest.com).

Find photos and more press materials [here](#).