



**Office of Representative Lauren McNally
59th Ohio House District**

February 29, 2024

Dear Community Leaders,

We wanted to inform you that there are critical issues surrounding the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program and its potential implications for the upcoming Summer EBT Program.

The P-EBT program, overseen by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) by the authority of the USDA, was designed to provide crucial assistance to families with children who were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the pandemic. These funds were intended to ensure that children facing food-insecurity maintained access among school closures and remote learning conditions.

However, we were made aware of concerning trends pointing to underutilization of these benefits in an article published by Cleveland.com found [here](#) indicating that 14% of eligible beneficiaries or 131,000 students had not accessed funds. It is important to note that not all free or reduced-price meal students qualify for SNAP benefits, potentially leading to oversight in the availability of funds and not utilizing the P-EBT cards that were issued in the *child's* name.

Further complicating matters, families were given a limited window for card utilization, with only 274 days from issuance to expenditure. This period varied depending on issuance date with some cards expiring as soon as March 1, 2024, through the end of the month.

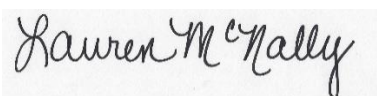
The March 1st deadline is of particular significance, by which families *must* spend at least \$1 to extend usage by an additional 274 days. **We encourage you to notify all eligible families of this deadline.**

Families who do not have access to issued cards must request a new card through the P-EBT customer service line at 1-866-244-0071, Press Option 1. It is important to note that guidance has not yet been released regarding the course of action to be taken in cases where a new P-EBT card has been requested but the allocated 274-day period since issuance has already lapsed.

The urgency of this situation is compounded by the imminent launch of the Summer EBT program in 2024, mirroring the P-EBT model. Given the challenges in P-EBT utilization, it is crucial to address these barriers promptly to ensure effective implementation and utilization of benefits in the forthcoming program.

Thank you for your swift action on this matter. Together, we can work towards a solution that ensures the well-being and opportunity to thrive for all Ohio students. Please let our office know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren McNally". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light gray rectangular background.

Representative Lauren McNally
Ohio House District 59

135th General Assembly Committee Assignments

Commerce and Labor, Ranking Member
Agriculture
Economic and Workforce Development
Families and Aging
Finance Subcommittee on Health & Human Services
Finance (Ex Officio)

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