

**Listen and answer the questions.**

1. What is the more urgent question for US schools right now during COVID-19? Why?
2. Can all the students get the free meals they are qualified for? Why?
3. What foods can students get from their schools for free?
4. What do schools do to ensure that students can get free foods when the schools are closed during the pandemic?
5. What is Pandemic EBT?
6. What does it mean by the phrase "the wildcard in this whole equation"? What is the wildcard?

Listen and fill in the blanks.

### 'Children Are Going Hungry': Why Schools Are Struggling To Feed Students

NOEL KING, HOST:

Are kids forced by COVID to do school from home actually learning? This is a big question right now. But a more urgent question may be \_\_\_\_\_. About \_\_\_\_\_ American kids depend on their schools \_\_\_\_\_. And a new analysis says many \_\_\_\_\_. NPR's education correspondent Cory Turner has been following this one. Hey, Cory.

CORY TURNER, BYLINE: Hey, Noel.

KING: How many kids are we talking about who may not be getting food?

TURNER: You know, well, I spoke with Lauren Bauer at the Brookings Institution. And she's been studying the results of this new household survey from the Census Bureau. And she found that among \_\_\_\_\_ who qualify for either free or low-cost school meals, only \_\_\_\_\_ have recently been getting them. And, you know, I heard something similar when I got on the phone with school leaders \_\_\_\_\_. So for example, in Tucson, Ariz., the schools' Food Services Director Lindsay Aguilar, she told me they're now reaching just a small fraction of their kids.

LINDSAY AGUILAR: Every day that goes by is the day that we're serving 10% of \_\_\_\_\_. And that's the disheartening part is because in our district, 70% of our families qualify for \_\_\_\_\_. So I know there's a need.

TURNER: Aguilar's now trying to meet that need, Noel, by actually \_\_\_\_\_ and then trying to meet students \_\_\_\_\_.

KING: Oh, wow. So that is a lot of logistics. How common is that?

TURNER: Yeah.

KING: Are other schools trying things like this?

TURNER: Well, so the standard here when the pandemic began, at least, and schools closed is that families would generally have to show up at a daily designated \_\_\_\_\_, like a school, to grab \_\_\_\_\_ and, usually, \_\_\_\_\_. But as \_\_\_\_\_ have returned to work, it's become much harder for them or their kids to get to these sites. And that's why school districts are, right now, really trying to improvise.

In Fulton County, Ga., I spoke with Alyssia Wright. She heads \_\_\_\_\_ there. She told me since lots of people just can't \_\_\_\_\_ every day, she's been trying to \_\_\_\_\_ a whole week's worth of meals into just one \_\_\_\_\_. And now she's doing what Tucson's

doing. She's trying to figure out how to fit all of this food onto their school buses. And she told me she is constantly worrying about hungry students.

ALYSSIA WRIGHT: Every day. I worry about them every day. I think about it every night. We \_\_\_\_\_ ways every week to find a new way to get meals to our kids.

TURNER: But this is really important, Noel. As they're trying to find these new ways, many meal programs - in fact, the majority - \_\_\_\_\_. And some are even at risk of having to lay off staff soon.

KING: And in the meantime, 30 million kids rely on this. Can the federal government do anything?

TURNER: Well, I want to focus on one really interesting \_\_\_\_\_ in this whole equation. In the spring, Congress created something called Pandemic EBT. It basically took the value of \_\_\_\_\_ and it put it - usually in a lump sum of \_\_\_\_\_ - onto \_\_\_\_\_ that families could use directly at \_\_\_\_\_. Now, Lauren Bauer, the researcher at Brookings, she studied this program. And she says it kept between 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 million children \_\_\_\_\_. But by Labor Day, it's \_\_\_\_\_ now in 33 states. And only \_\_\_\_\_ can renew it. And \_\_\_\_\_.

KING: NPR education correspondent Cory Turner. Thanks for your reporting on this, Cory.

TURNER: Thank you, Noel.