

Purpose

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) SUN Bucks program provides grocery-buying benefits to qualifying families with school-aged children during the summer months when schools are on summer break. SUN Bucks is sometimes referred to as Summer EBT or S-EBT. Benefits are issued on debit-like cards (EBT cards) that families can use to purchase nutritious food during the summer period. The SUN Bucks benefit amount is \$120 per eligible child, issued in a single payment during the summer period. Benefits are for use during the summer months and will expire 122 days after they are issued. Additional information about SUN Bucks can be found at [SUN Bucks | NCDHHS](#).

Legal Authorization

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (PL 117-328) (the Act) authorized a permanent, nationwide Summer EBT program beginning in 2024. The Act gives the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture authority to issue guidance and approve State Agency plans.

Guidance

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will continue their collaboration to administer the program. Many children are automatically eligible for SUN Bucks, while others may need to apply. An [online application](#) is available for families who need to apply. Notices of Eligibility will be sent to most families in late Spring through early Summer via email, text message, and robocall. However, families of children in foster care will not receive these notices directly. Instead, the child's foster care social worker will need to print and deliver the Eligibility Notice along with the SUN Bucks card to the child's foster care placement provider. Eligibility is reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the spring and summer, and cards are mailed as additional children qualify. Once eligibility is confirmed, benefits are loaded onto the SUN Bucks cards and issued on the next scheduled distribution date. Most children who automatically qualify will begin receiving benefits in the spring and throughout the summer.

Important information about SUN Bucks cards for foster children:

- **New** SUN Bucks cards will be mailed for all students identified as foster children.
- Cards are issued **in the child's name** and are not combined with other children, even if they are in the same household.
- SUN Bucks cards will be mailed to the county DSS office that has custody of the child in foster care.
- **ACTION REQUIRED:** The child's foster care social worker will provide the card and print a copy of the Eligibility Notice to provide with the card. The foster care social worker must assist with transfer of the card to the child's placement provider, whether a family foster home, congregate care setting, or if the child returns to the biological family. It is imperative that the foster care social worker ensures the card follows the child if there is change in caregivers.

Resources



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

PERMANENCY PLANNING POLICY, PROTOCOL, AND GUIDANCE

Child Welfare Memo

SUN Bucks - also known as Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT)

- Attached to this guidance is the SUN Bucks [DESK REFERENCE](#) which can be referenced when assisting families with SUN Bucks questions.
- More information on the SUN Bucks program including FAQs and an interactive eligibility quiz can be found on the Homepage at ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks. Application information can be found at ncdhhs.gov/sunbucksapplication. Informational flyers and additional resources can be found at [SUN Bucks Resources | NCDHHS](#).

In addition to receiving SUN Bucks, families are encouraged to have their children participate in other federal summer nutrition programs available at no cost to them. More information about summer food programs can be found at SummerMeals4NCKids.org.



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