



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEV DUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

YVONNE COPELAND • Director, Division of Child and Family Well-Being

Date: April 2, 2025

**Dear County Directors of Social Services:**

**Attention:** County Directors of Social Services

**Subject:** 2025 North Carolina SUN Bucks (S-EBT) – Benefits Issuances

**Priority:** Information for Awareness

SUN Bucks is a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) program that provides grocery-buying benefits in a one-time payment of \$120 per eligible child on a debit-like card that can be used to buy nutritious food during the summer months when schools are out. In North Carolina, the SUN Bucks program is administered by the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) in partnership with the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). As the 2025 SUN Bucks program implementation continues, we want to share additional information about eligibility, benefit issuance, and resources available for promotion.

**Eligibility**

Many students will automatically qualify for the SUN Bucks benefit, while others will need to apply.

The following children are **automatically eligible** and **do not need to apply**:

If the child is enrolled in a National School Lunch Program ([NSLP](#)) school for the 2024-2025 school year and meets one of the scenarios below:

- Child completed a SUN Bucks application between July 1, 2024 - August 31, 2024, and was approved. You do not need to complete another application for summer 2025, so long as the child is still enrolled in a NSLP/Community Eligibility Provision ([CEP](#)) participating school.
- The child has an approved application for Free or Reduced-Price (FRP) school meals through the child's school.
  - ☐ Important: This does not apply for children in schools where all students get free meals (CEP schools), however, they could be automatically eligible if they participate in any of the programs listed in the section below (any age).

**OR**

If the child's date of birth is between July 2, 2007, to August 31, 2018, and they participate in at least one of the programs below:

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

LOCATION: 5601 Six Forks Road, Building #2, Raleigh, NC 27609  
MAILING ADDRESS: 2416 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2416  
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-707-5659 • FAX: 919-919-870-4882

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- Food and Nutrition Services (FNS, SNAP, food stamps), **or**
- Work First (cash assistance), **or**
- Medicaid and has a household income of less than 185% of the federal poverty level, **or**
- Cherokee Tribal Food Distribution Program (CTFDP), **or**
- Child is in Foster Care, **or**
- Child is enrolled in the McKinney-Vento program (unhoused, migrant, runaway)

Students not participating in any of these programs and who meet income eligibility requirements can apply on the [SUN Bucks website](#). Applications of households that applied after July 1, 2024,

will be used to determine eligibility in the 2025 SUN Bucks program. Paper applications can be requested, though online applications are encouraged and are typically processed faster.

Families who are eligible to apply will receive an email or text with an invitation to apply and instructions on how to submit an application. **Applications for Summer 2025 must be submitted by August 31, 2025.**

Families can view the SUN Bucks eligibility flyer in English or in Spanish on the [SUN Bucks Resources](#) page to see if they are automatically eligible or if they should apply. Additional information about the program, including frequently asked questions (FAQs), can be found on NCDHHS' [SUN Bucks website](#).

## Issuances

SUN Bucks cards will start to be **issued and mailed early to mid-May 2025** and continue for several weeks. Benefits will be made **available on these cards starting late May**. Therefore, some households may receive their SUN Bucks card before benefits are available to spend. This year, all families receiving SUN Bucks benefits will receive a new SUN Bucks card with information on how to activate these benefits.

Only a one-time payment of \$120 per eligible child will be issued for the 2025 summer. As additional children are found eligible, benefits will be issued to families every two weeks until the end of September. Please encourage clients to be patient if they do not see their benefits right away.

## DSS Role

Counties will play an important role in helping eligible students get their benefits this summer, including:

- Distribute SUN Bucks cards mailed to the DSS office.
- Students who do not have a valid mailing address on file will have their SUN Bucks cards mailed to the DSS office for pick up.
- Social workers will take SUN Bucks cards to students in foster care and ensure they follow the child to each placement.
- Follow your county's established processes using the FNS undeliverable card report. Note, NCDHHS will pursue undeliverable cards for SUN Bucks only cases. **NOTE: Any remaining 2024 SUN Bucks cards should NOT be distributed, as benefits have expired; you may want to inform clients that the 2024 SUN Bucks cards can be destroyed, and new cards will be issued in 2025.**
- County DSS offices will **NOT** be assisting clients with the process to create an activation code or "PIN" (personal identification number) for their 2025 SUN Bucks benefits cards. For related questions, please instruct clients to call the North Carolina EBT Call Center at 1-866-719-0141, select their language, and SELECT OPTION 2 to speak with a SUN Bucks representative.

## Resources

Please keep checking the NC SUN Bucks [Resources page](#) since items are still being updated for 2025 and translated.

- **Inform staff** about SUN Bucks benefits by directing them to [this resource page](#).

**This page includes the following resources:**

- Flyers
  - Webinars
  - Eligibility Flow
  - Job Aid
  - Memo for Child Welfare Staff
  - Reminders for McKinney-Vento Students
  - Customer Service Script
  - Public Notice of 2025
  - Coordinated Services Plan Waiver Request
- **Inform families** of SUN Bucks benefits by sharing the following information:
    - [SUN Bucks Website](#)
    - [SUN Bucks Social Media Flyers](#)
    - [SUN Bucks School Search Tool](#)
    - [Does my child qualify for SUN Bucks](#)

## General Information

SUN Bucks is the newest addition to North Carolina's Summer Nutrition Programs and aims to provide an easy and convenient way for students to access nutritious food over the summer. In addition to receiving SUN Bucks, families also are encouraged to have their children, ages 18 and younger, participate in other federal Summer Nutrition Programs available at no cost to them. Through SUN Meals, kids and teens can eat meals and snacks and engage in fun, fitness and educational activities during the summer at schools, parks, camps, and other neighborhood locations. In rural areas where it may be difficult to access and participate in SUN Meals, SUN Meals To-Go may be available for pick up or delivery. Families can find more information at [SummerMeals4NCKids.org](#).

Sincerely,



Jerquitta Hicks-Smallwood  
Assistant Director  
Division of Child and Family Well-Being

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