

2025 SUN Bucks Overview

SUN Bucks, sometimes called Summer EBT or S-EBT, is an income-based food assistance program that helps qualifying families buy groceries for their children during the summer using a debit-like EBT card. Most children will automatically qualify and will not need to apply because of their participation in other qualifying programs, but some children will need to apply. Each student who is approved will receive a **one-time payment** for the summer period. Eligibility will be determined every two weeks from May through September and cards mailed as additional children qualify. Benefit amounts will be disclosed at the beginning of each calendar year on the SUN Bucks website [ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks). Benefits per eligible child for the 2025 summer will be \$120. Benefits are meant to be used during the summer and will expire 122 days after they are issued. Families also are encouraged to have their children ages 18 and younger participate in the other federal summer nutrition programs available at no cost to them; information at [SummerMeals4NCKids.org](https://www.SummerMeals4NCKids.org).

Who Will Get SUN Bucks Benefits?

NSLP School Eligibility

Students enrolled in NSLP schools are **automatically eligible** if they participate in **one** of the following programs:

- ☐ NSLP free or reduced-price (FRP) school meals
- ☐ FNS (formerly food stamps)
- ☐ Work First (TANF, cash assistance)
- ☐ Medicaid (with household income <185% of FPL)
- ☐ McKinney Vento (unhoused, runaway)
- ☐ Foster care

Non-NSLP School Eligibility

Students **NOT** enrolled in NSLP schools are **automatically eligible** if they are **between the ages of 7-16** and participate in **one** of the following:

- ☐ FNS (formerly food stamps)
- ☐ Work First (TANF, cash assistance)
- ☐ Medicaid (with household income <185% of FPL)
- ☐ McKinney Vento (unhoused, runaway)
- ☐ Foster care
- ☐ CTFDP (Cherokee Tribal Food Distribution Program)

CEP Eligibility

Students enrolled in CEP schools where meals are free for all students are **automatically eligible** if they participate in **one** of the following:

- ☐ FNS (formerly food stamps)
- ☐ Work First (TANF, cash assistance)
- ☐ Medicaid (with household income <185% of FPL)
- ☐ McKinney Vento (unhoused, runaway)
- ☐ Foster care

All other students that attend an NSLP or CEP school may apply for SUN Bucks by completing an income-based application. Use the School Search Tool on the SUN Bucks webpage at www.ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks to see if a school is NSLP or CEP.

Families can check to see if they automatically qualify for SUN Bucks by using the interactive Chat Bot to take an eligibility quiz. To access the quiz, visit the SUN Bucks webpage and click on the blue circle at the bottom right corner of the screen.

When and Where will SUN Bucks Benefits be Issued?

Once eligibility is determined, benefits will be distributed on SUN Bucks cards on the next scheduled issuance date.

- For students participating in NSLP free or reduced-price (FRP) school meals, cards will be sent to the mailing address on file with the child's school.
- Households with an **active** FNS or WorkFirst case will be sent a SUN Bucks card to the address on file in their case.
- If a child is currently in foster care, their card will be sent to the DSS office handling their case.

Activating a New Card

To activate a card, the activation code will be the birth date of one of the school-aged children in the household. Families should try the birth date for each student in the household, starting with the youngest first. Enter the birth date using two numbers for the month, two numbers for the day, and four numbers for the year. For example, if the birth date is June 1, 2008, you would put in 06012008.

Additional Questions & Points of Contact

- Updates to the program and answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be posted on the SUN Bucks webpage, [ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks).
- If parents need help applying or have other questions, they can call 1-866-719-0141 and select Option 2 for a SUN Bucks agent.

Additional Food Assistance Resources

- 1. FRP school meals** – Provides children and teenagers breakfast, lunch, and snacks while they are at school at no cost. Parents should contact their child's school for more information and to apply.
- 2. FNS; Food Stamps; Women, Infants, and Children** – Food benefits that are issued to a debit card for families to purchase groceries. More information can be found at the FNS Homepage at www.ncdhhs.gov/fns.
- 3. NC Summer meals** – Find free meals during the summer months at [summermeals4nckids.org](https://www.summermeals4nckids.org)
- 4. NC 2-1-1** – Find organizations in your community providing health and human services by visiting www.nc211.org.

Acronyms Key

CEP: Community Eligibility Provision
DSS: Division of Social Services
FPL: Federal Poverty Level

EBT: Electronic Benefit Transfer
FNS: Food and Nutrition Services
FRP: Free or Reduced Price

NSLP: National School Lunch Program
TANF: Temporary Assistance for

Needy Families
SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



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