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August 8, 2024

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Shapiro Administration Highlight New SUN Bucks Summer Food Program Feeding Kids While School is Out, Encourages Eligible Families to Apply

This year, Pennsylvania opted in to the new nationwide Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer program, also known as SUN Bucks or Summer EBT, to help families who qualify with high food costs during the summer months.



Harrisburg, PA – Today **Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh, Department of Education Secretary Dr. Khalid N. Mumin, USDA Food and Nutrition Service Policy Advisor, Alberto Gonzalez, Jr.** and partners from the City of Harrisburg, Feeding Pennsylvania, and Central Pennsylvania Food Bank visited a Harrisburg Summer Food Service location to highlight the [SUN Bucks program](#), a new summer benefit for children that can be used to purchase fresh food and groceries at retailers around Pennsylvania. The Shapiro Administration is focused on making sure kids have enough healthy, nutritious food to thrive and grow – whether in school or over the summer.

This federal program provides households with children who already receive free and reduced-price school meals through the National School Lunch Program during the school year with a SNAP-like benefit to purchase food for the summer months when school is not in session. Because this is the first year of the program, benefits will start to be issued beginning in mid-August for Summer 2024. All 2024 SUN Bucks benefits will be issued by the end of October. Most eligible children will receive the benefit automatically and do not need to apply, but households who need to apply must [apply by August 31](#). Families can use the [Sun Bucks Eligibility Navigator](#) to see if they need to complete an application.

“The Shapiro Administration is committed to helping parents have the resources they need to keep their children fed so they can grow and thrive. The new SUN Bucks program will provide eligible households with critical dollars to help bridge the gap during the summer break and ensure that children have enough to eat,” said **Secretary Arkoosh**. “I am grateful to the Biden-Harris Administration and the U.S. Congress for their work to allow states to extend this support to families for summer months, and I urge all Pennsylvania families whose kids get free or reduced-price meals during the school year to use our Eligibility Navigator to see if they are automatically eligible or if they need to get their SUN Bucks application in by August 31.”

Free or reduced-priced meals during the school year provide critical nutrition to students that is an essential foundation for learning and positive child development— that’s why Governor Shapiro fought to secure universal free breakfast for Pennsylvania students in his first two budgets. During the summer months, these same students and families may be strained by higher food bills when school is closed. This year, Pennsylvania opted in to the new nationwide [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer](#) program, also known as SUN Bucks or Summer EBT. SUN Bucks will provide a one-time payment for households of \$40 per summer month (\$120 maximum) per eligible child. An estimated 1.2 million children in Pennsylvania will qualify for this new program, a benefit that is paid for by federal funds.

Most children who will receive SUN Bucks are automatically eligible and do not need to apply. If families already have an EBT card, SUN Bucks benefits will be automatically added to this card, if possible. Families who do not have an EBT card will receive a Summer EBT card in the mail. There are several ways for a child to be automatically eligible for [SUN Bucks](#) without needing to apply, including if they or their family already qualify for SNAP or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or if they already qualify for Medicaid with qualifying income for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), or if they applied for and were eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals.

Families whose children are not automatically eligible, including those who attend a school where all students receive free or reduced-price school meals under the Community Eligibility Provision **but** the family does not meet the automatic eligibility criteria will need to complete a paper SUN Bucks application. Households can determine if their child is eligible and whether they need to apply by using the Shapiro Administration’s SUN Bucks [Eligibility Navigator](#). If households are not automatically eligible and believe their child is eligible, a paper application is available to complete. Paper applications can be printed from the [SUN Bucks](#) website or are available at local [County Assistance Offices](#). They can be submitted by mail or through drop off at a local [County Assistance Office](#). The deadline to apply for Summer 2024 is August 31, and applications received after this date will be considered for SUN Bucks 2025 next summer.

“USDA’s SUN Bucks program, also known as the Summer EBT program, is an unprecedented opportunity to dramatically reduce child hunger. USDA is thrilled to offer this new federal program to support students in the summer months. We commend the dedicated staff at the Pennsylvania Departments of Human Services and Education, and their partners, for the impressive work they have done to opt into and administer this important program. Providing families with this extra support in purchasing nutritious foods helps to advance our goals of

improving child health and well-being,” said **Alberto Gonzalez, Jr., USDA Food and Nutrition Service Policy Advisor.**

Find more information about [SUN Bucks benefits](#) and start your application.

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