



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION  
Economic Services Administration  
Post Office Box 45440 Olympia WA 98504-5440

May 14, 2024

Dear interested parties and community partners,

We are excited to share that the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service approved Washington's plan to launch the Summer EBT program, also known as SUN Bucks, to eligible school children in June 2024.

The [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#), authorized this expansion to [USDA's summer nutrition programming](#), which provides \$120 in food benefits to eligible children for the summer period following the 2023-2024 academic school year. This is a permanent program, and its benefit amount will be adjusted annually for inflation.

Expanded summer-nutrition programming helps reduce hunger and food insecurity for children in low-income households who lose access to free and reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program during the summer when school is not in session. Although similar, SUN Bucks is a separate program from [Pandemic EBT \(P-EBT\)](#), which ended last year. Eligibility criteria for SUN Bucks is different from that of P-EBT, and benefits will not be loaded onto existing P-EBT cards.

Children may be automatically enrolled in SUN Bucks if, between July 1, 2023, and Aug. 31, 2024, they are:

- Aged 8-18 and a member of a household that receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the state-funded Food Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or State-Funded Assistance, *or*
- Enrolled at a school that offers the NSLP or SBP, qualify for free or reduced-price meals at school and are living in a household that meets [Income Eligibility Guidelines](#) to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Parents of children who are not automatically enrolled in SUN Bucks may submit a SUN Bucks application. To qualify for SUN Bucks via application, children must be:

- Enrolled at a school that offers the NSLP or SBP, and
- Living in a household that meets NSLP [Income Eligibility Guidelines](#) to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

DSHS is developing a SUN Bucks application portal in collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and our third-party vendor, Accenture. Accenture will validate eligibility data from both DSHS and local, K-12, NSLP-participating schools prior to issuance. Once eligible, each child will receive a dedicated SUN Bucks card along with an approval notice with detailed program information.

A communication-and-outreach plan is being developed to guide families, schools and partners through SUN Bucks eligibility and the application process, and to provide additional resources. Families with questions will be able to contact a dedicated SUN Bucks Customer Service Contact Center at 1-833-543-3230 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Families may also opt into text message alerts about SUN Bucks at [textsunbucks.dshs.wa.gov](https://textsunbucks.dshs.wa.gov), this site is scheduled to go live Wednesday, May 15. OSPI will provide guidance, communication and technical assistance to schools that can help families apply for free or reduced-price meals.

As with P-EBT, SUN Bucks eligibility and issuance will be entirely separate from internal DSHS systems. DSHS Staff will direct families to the SUN Bucks Customer Service Contact Center for assistance.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and support to spread the word about Summer EBT.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brice Montgomery', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brice Montgomery, Interim Director  
Community Services Division

DSHS: *Transforming Lives*