

OSPI Child Nutrition Services Reference Sheet

Summer-EBT (S-EBT/SUN Bucks)

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328) authorized a permanent, nationwide Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) program—also known as SUN Bucks—to support children who lose access to free and reduced-price school meals during the summer months. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), in partnership with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), is administering the Summer EBT (S-EBT) program in Washington state.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is eligible for Summer-EBT benefits?

- a. Students enrolled at any time during the school year at a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) **and**
 - i. Students determined to be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals through direct certification or a Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit (CNEEB) Application.
- b. School aged (defined as 8 years to 18 years) and residing in a household receiving SNAP, TANF, or other federally means tested assistance programs approved by USDA.
- c. Students that do not qualify by the above two methods have the option to submit an online Sun Bucks application through DSHS. Requirements for approval through a Sun Bucks application include:
 - i. Confirmed to be enrolled at any time during the school year at a school that participates in the NSLP or SBP **and**
 - ii. Meet the USDA School Meals Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Resource: [OSPI Enrollment Reporting](#)

2. Are all households enrolled in a CEP or Provision 2 school eligible for Summer EBT?

No. Households must either be directly certified for free or reduced-price meals or submit a qualifying Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit (CNEEB) Application to be determined eligible for Summer-EBT benefits.

3. Are graduating seniors eligible for Summer-EBT benefits?

All students enrolled at any point during the school year at a NSLP/SBP school and eligible for free or reduced-price meals are eligible for Summer-EBT benefits.

4. Are preschool-aged students eligible for Summer EBT?

- a. Children of any age who are enrolled in NSLP/SBP-participating schools are eligible for Summer EBT if they are also eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. This includes



- children of high school grade or under, including preschool-age children, as well as students who are mentally or physically disabled, as defined by the State, and who are participating in a school program established for the mentally or physically disabled.
- b. Children not enrolled in NSLP/SBP-participating schools that are receiving assistance program benefits must be school age which is defined as 8 years to 18 years in Washington state.

Resource: [OSPI Enrollment Reporting](#)

5. Are online or homeschooled students that are on campus with access to NSLP/SBP meals eligible for Summer EBT?

Students must be enrolled in a NSLP/SBP-participating school and be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals to be eligible for Summer-EBT benefits and included on a Local Education Agency's (LEA) uploaded eligibility list.

Students not enrolled in NSLP/SBP-participating schools that are receiving assistance program benefits and are school-aged (ages 8-18 years) are eligible for Summer-EBT benefits. These benefits will be automatically issued by DSHS.

Resource: [OSPI Enrollment Reporting](#)

6. If a student withdraws prior to the end of the school year, are they still eligible for Summer EBT?

Yes. Students that were identified as eligible for Summer EBT and enrolled at any time during the school year are eligible for Summer-EBT benefits.

7. Who is considered directly certified for free or reduced-price meals?

LEAs must directly certify children who are members of households receiving assistance program benefits. Categorically eligible children are categorized into two groups:

- a. Assistance Programs Households (Basic Food, TANF, FDPIR, and Medicaid) **and**
- b. Other Source Categorical Eligible (Foster Care, Homeless, Migrant, ECEAP, Head Start or Even Start)

Resources: [Direct Certification Reference Sheet](#)
[Direct Certification-Medicaid Reference Sheet](#)

8. If households submit a qualifying CNEEB Application to their school district, do they also need to submit an online Sun Bucks application to receive benefits?

- a. Children who are enrolled in NSLP/SBP schools who are directly certified or submit a qualifying CNEEB are eligible for Summer-EBT benefits, and do not need to submit a separate Sun Bucks application.

9. Will new Summer-EBT cards be issued to households?

Yes. Once qualified, children will receive an approval notice and SUN Bucks EBT card within 7 to 10 business days via U.S. Mail.

10. Are there guidelines for how the Summer-EBT benefits may be used?

Participants who receive benefits will be able to purchase SNAP-eligible food, as defined in the Food and Nutrition Act, at any retail store approved for participation with SNAP.

11. Who can households contact for questions?

- a. SUN Bucks Call Center: 1-833-543-3230
 - i. Monday-Friday between 8am-5pm (except observed holidays)
- b. SUN Bucks webpage: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/SUNBucks>
 - i. Includes link to SUN Bucks application

12. What is the timeframe and deadline for households to apply for Summer EBT?

Households must have the opportunity to establish eligibility for Summer EBT at any point between the start of the school year and August 31.

- a. LEAs must upload student eligibility lists each year. Dates for initial upload and supplemental uploads will be published annually by OSPI typically between February and May.
- b. Households may directly apply for Summer-EBT benefits with DSHS, using the online Sun Bucks application, through August 31.

13. When will households receive their Summer-EBT cards?

DSHS plans to issue SUN Bucks beginning mid-June through the end of August. Within this period, children may receive benefits at different times depending on how they qualify. Once qualified, children will receive an approval notice and SUN Bucks EBT card within 7 to 10 business days via U.S. Mail.

14. Is Summer EBT the same as SUN Bucks?

Yes, Summer EBT has been branded as SUN Bucks by the USDA. Both terms can be used interchangeably.

Resources & References

- [DSHS SUN Bucks webpage](#)
- [Summer EBT \(USDA\)](#)
- [Summer EBT Q&A \(USDA\)](#)
- [Summer EBT Implementation Toolkit \(USDA\)](#)
- [SUN Programs Communications Toolkit](#)
- [7 CFR 292.13\(i\)](#)
- [P.L. 117-328](#)

Acronym Reference

- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- CNEEB – Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit Application
- DSHS – Department of Social and Health Services
- EBT – Electronic Benefit Transfer
- ECEAP – Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program
- FDPIR – Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture