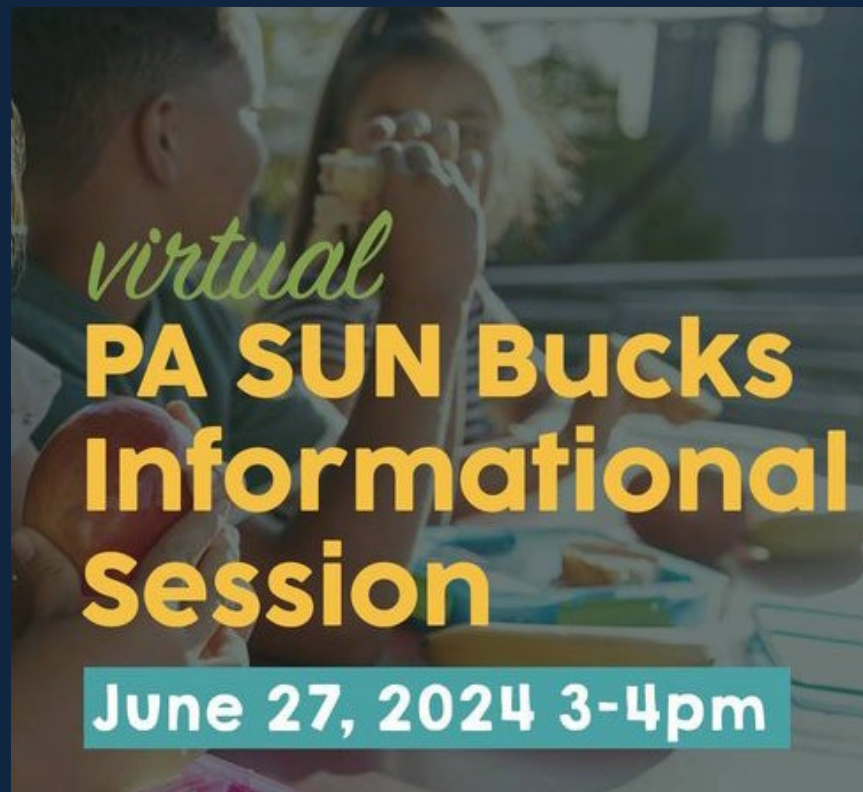


virtual
**PA SUN BUCKS
Informational
Session**

June 27, 2024 3-4pm

Hosted by the
PA FOOD POLICY COUNCIL
in partnership with





Meeting Purpose:

To provide an overview of how the program works and what applicants and recipients can expect.

Agenda

- Welcome & Introduction
- PA Sun Bucks Program Overview
- Questions & Answers

Instructions

- **Remain muted** – given the size of the group, we ask that you remain muted through the webinar
- **Use the Chat** – we will present information and invite questions to be shared in the chat. Questions will be answered during Q&A
- **Use 'Raise Hand'** – during the Q&A the raise hand function if you would like to speak and we will go in order of the queue
- **Avoid jargon, acronyms and industry language** – use inclusive language that is accessible to people with a varied knowledge base
NOTE:
DHS = PA Department of Human Services
PDE = PA Department of Education
- **Be Conscious of Time** – we aim to start and finish on time. If there are remaining questions, please contact

WHAT IS A FOOD POLICY COUNCIL?



Figure 1. Organizational Structure of the PA Food Policy Council as established in EO 2022

Council was established to:

Evaluate

- Evaluate issues facing Pennsylvania's food system including, but not limited to, developing, and implementing strategies to improve food security and nutrition, and reduce food waste.

Coordinate

- Facilitate coordination of interagency efforts designated to reduce hunger and improve nutrition for Pennsylvania residents over their entire lifespan.

Facilitate

- Facilitate the organization of private and public sector efforts to improve the Commonwealth's response to challenges in the food system and support food sovereignty.

GET INVOLVED

PA FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Visit our website

Public is welcome to attend quarterly meetings

Share your contact information via email

Contact

Dawn Plummer

Director

dawplummer@pa.gov

https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Food_Security/Pages/PA

- Food - Policy - Council.aspx

SUN Bucks

(Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program)

June 27, 2024

Office of Income Maintenance, Bureau of Policy

What is SUN Bucks?

SUN Bucks, also known as the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer program (Summer EBT), was authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 as a new permanent summer nutrition program.

Unlike other Child Nutrition programs that are operated through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, SUN Bucks will be operated through DHS, with support from PDE.

SUN Bucks was included in Governor Shapiro's 2024-2025 Budget.

Benefit Information

- SUN Bucks provides a benefit of \$40 for each summer month (June, July, and August). In Pennsylvania, SUN Bucks will be issued as a single \$120 maximum benefit per eligible child.
- There is no pro-ration of SUN Bucks benefits. A child is either eligible and receives the full \$120 or is ineligible and does not receive SUN Bucks.
- The benefit is functionally equivalent to SNAP

Eligibility

A child can qualify for SUN Bucks through three methods:

- Automatic eligibility based on being eligible for Direct Certification
 - Must be age 6 through 18; or enrolled in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
 - SNAP and TANF qualify for Direct Certification.
 - Medicaid with qualifying income for the NSLP also qualifies for Direct Certification.
 - PH 95 and CHIP do NOT qualify for Direct Certification.
- Automatic eligibility based on information provided by school
 - Must be an NSLP-participating school.
 - Must have been determined eligible for Free or Reduced-Priced meals through an NSLP application; or,
 - Be a foster child, a runaway, a migrant, homeless, or participating in Head Start.
- Determined eligible through a SUN Bucks application.

Eligibility ctd.

- A child must apply for SUN Bucks if:
 - They attended a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP); AND,
 - They did not receive TANF or SNAP or they did not receive Medicaid with qualifying income for the NSLP; AND,
 - They did not apply for or were not determined eligible for Free or Reduced-Priced meals through their school; AND,
 - They are not a foster child, homeless, a migrant, or a runaway.
- If a child was not enrolled in a school that participates in the NSLP, they cannot qualify for SUN Bucks through an application.

Eligibility ctd.

- Students receiving free/reduced price meals at Community Eligibility Provision Schools will not be automatically eligible for SUN Bucks unless they meet one of the previous eligibility criteria:
 - Received SNAP or TANF; or,
 - Received Medicaid with qualifying income for the NSLP; or,
 - Is homeless, a foster child, a runaway, or a migrant.

Benefit Receipt

- If a child is eligible for SUN Bucks and is actively receiving SNAP or TANF, the benefit will be issued to the regular EBT card, into the SNAP account.
- If a child is eligible for SUN Bucks through MA eligibility, the benefit will be loaded onto a SUN Bucks card and sent to the address associated with the MA case.
- If a child is eligible for SUN Bucks based on information submitted by the child's school, the benefit will be loaded onto a SUN Bucks card and sent to the address provided by the school.
- If a child is eligible for SUN Bucks through an application, the benefit will be loaded onto a SUN Bucks card and sent to the address on the SUN Bucks application.
- DHS anticipates that benefits will begin being issued in mid-August with all benefits being issued by October

Application Eligibility

- Applications must be submitted to local CAO
- The income limit for SUN Bucks is 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit.
- Client self-attestation of income and household composition will be accepted.
- School enrollment must be verified.
- Application must be signed.

Application Processing

- An application cannot be pended, it can only be approved or rejected
- An application will be rejected for the following reasons:
 - The child is already eligible for SUN Bucks.
 - The child is not enrolled in an NSLP-participating school.
 - The household is over the income limit.
 - The application is not signed.
- Applications should be processed within 15 days

Verification for Cause

- A required component of SUN Bucks is called Verification for Cause.
 - Verification for Cause only applies to children who are eligible through a paper application.
 - If the caseworker has known information that contradicts what is reported on the application, the application is still processed and approved, but a Verification for Cause is selected. This will hold the benefit from being issued until the Verification for Cause can be completed.
 - The caseworker will send a pending letter requesting verification of the conflicting information and then will either release the benefit, if provided information confirms the application information, or reject the benefit if the verification confirms the child is not eligible or the household fails to provide the verification.

Program Timeframe

- **7/1/24** – Paper apps available to public
- **8/10 to 8/18** – Benefits issued to automatically eligible population
- **8/19** – Paper application processing begins
- **8/31** – Last day to accept paper applications for 2024 Program Year
- **9/1** – First day to accept paper applications for 2025 Program Year
- **9/30** – Target deadline for all 2024 Program Year Application Processing completion
- **11/29** – Last day for 2024 Program Year SUN Bucks appeals to be submitted
- **12/12 to 12/19** – Approximate timeframe for unspent 2024 Program Year SUN Bucks automated expungement

Key Anticipated Challenges

In the first year of availability, the program will operate as a minimum viable product with limitations on operating processes. We hope to improve processes in future years.

- Extraneous Applications
- No legislatively required statewide enrollment/NSLP database
- CEP School Eligibility
- Application Deadline
- Fixed Appeal Deadline
- Self-Attestation on Apps
- Fixed Benefit Expungement Deadline
- No Online Application/Limited Language Availability

FAQs

What if a student household's circumstances changed during the year?

- If found eligible at any point in the year, the student will remain eligible for that program year. If you need to report a change of address you can report this through COMPASS or the myCOMPASS PA Mobile App or calling the Customer Service Center

Will all children in a household get the benefit on the same card?

- If possible, only one SUN Bucks account will be created but if your children qualify for the SUN Bucks benefit in different ways they may be separate.

FAQs ctd.

What should a household do if they believed they would receive an automated benefit, but do not receive one?

- Benefits will be distributed beginning around mid-August and all issuances will be complete by October 2024. Contact the Statewide Customer Service Center at 1-877-395-8930 or 215-560-7226 in Philadelphia to inquire about your automatic eligibility.

What should a household do if they received benefits for one child but not another?

- Siblings might receive benefits at different times. Some children younger than 6 or older than 18 may not be eligible, even if a child in the same household is eligible.

FAQs ctd.

What should a household do if they were denied but believe they were eligible?

- The household should appeal their eligibility determination.

What should a household do if they lose the SUN Bucks Card?

- To request a replacement contact the CAO or the Statewide Customer Service Center at 1-877-395-8930 or 215-560-7226 in Philadelphia.

Where can Households receive assistance with the SUN Bucks Program?

- If assistance is needed households should contact DHS through the CAO or the Statewide Customer Service Center at 1-877-395-8930 or 215-560-7226 in Philadelphia.
- Schools are NOT able to assist households with SUN Bucks programing questions. Households should not be directed to contact their school or PDE.

Resources

- SUN Bucks Webpage and FAQs
- SUN Bucks Eligibility Navigator

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS