



Summer EBT / SUN Bucks



Summer EBT is now a permanent USDA Summer Nutrition Program for Kids and rebranded as “SUN Bucks.” This is one of three SUN Programs for school-aged kids who qualify based on income. (There is also a SUN Meals and a SUN Meals-to-Go program.) The goal of the USDA Summer Nutrition Programs is to help kids have access to healthy meals when school is out for the summer.

Need in Washington State

According to the most recent data 43.1% of children in Washington State are eligible to receive free or reduced school lunches.

SUN Bucks Basics

- Each school aged child (typically between 8 and 18 years old) that is eligible and enrolled receives a \$120.
- The \$120 is pre-loaded on a new SUN Bucks electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card. Each child gets a separate card. The child’s SUN Bucks EBT card is mailed to their family.
- Once received, each SUN Bucks EBT card will need to be activated and have a PIN created by the cardholder, parent or guardian. There will be instructions sent with the card.
- The SUN Bucks roll out is expected to take place from mid-June through August.
- The SUN Bucks money can be spent at any time for up to 122 days after the benefits are loaded on the card. Note: if card arrives later in the summer, then the time SUN Bucks can be spent may extend into the fall.
- SUN Bucks can be spent at farmers markets, grocery stores, or other retailers.
- SUN Bucks can be used to buy any SNAP-eligible item, including fruits and vegetables, meat, poultry, and fish, dairy products, breads and cereals, snack foods and non-alcoholic drinks.

SUN Bucks at Farmers Markets

- In order to accept SUN Bucks, your farmers markets must be set up to accept SNAP.

- Shoppers come to your Information Booth and then you run the SUN Bucks card on your EBT terminal just like you do for the Quest/SNAP EBT card.
- Shoppers will get the same SNAP EBT tokens (or scrip) you give out for SNAP for their SUN Bucks. Different cards, same tokens.
- If your market is participating in SNAP Market Match this year, SUN Bucks is eligible to be matched by SNAP Market Match currency, up to \$25 per day.
- Since SUN Bucks must be used within 122 days of issuance, we can encourage people to use their SUN Bucks card this market season which, for most markets, will be within 122 days. Note: SNAP EBT benefits must be used within 274 days of being issued.
- If a customer comes to the market and their SUN Bucks cards have not yet been activated, then they can use the “ebtEDGE” app to activate the card in real time at the market.

SUN Bucks Bookkeeping

Record SUN Bucks transactions and match exactly the same way you record SNAP EBT and SNAP Market Match transactions. There will be no differentiation between the two.

SUN Bucks for Vendors

Since shoppers will use the same EBT token or scrip for SUN Bucks, your market vendors will probably not know if the original source of benefits was SNAP or SUN Bucks. And the same rules as SNAP apply: only SNAP-eligible foods can be purchased with the EBT tokens (scrip) and no change is given.

How do children get Summer EBT / SUN Bucks?

School-aged children may be automatically enrolled (see below) in SUN Bucks or they may need to apply through an online portal.

Automatic Enrollment

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

- School-aged and a member of a household that receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the state-funded Food Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or State-Funded Assistance;
- or*
- Enrolled at a school that offers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (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.

Must Apply

Parents of children who are not automatically enrolled in SUN Bucks may *submit an online SUN Bucks application* by going to the DSHS website for SUN Bucks: <https://sunbucks.dshs.wa.gov/en/>

Before you begin...

here are a few things to know and what to have ready for when you apply.

***Indicates required field**



You don't need to apply for your child(ren) if they're:

- Enrolled at a school that offers the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program AND is individually approved for free or reduced-price meals at school OR
- Age 8-18 and a member of a household that receives benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Food Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or State-Funded Assistance



Eligibility is based on:

- Your total household income and size and
- Your child(ren)'s enrollment in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program



To apply you will need:

- To provide the name of your child(ren)'s school they attended prior to the start of summer and
- To reference earnings statements or pay stubs to report income for any jobs, Social Security, or retirement benefits for anyone in the household (you will need both the amount and frequency) and
- If you participate in either state or federal SNAP or TANF, you will need to provide your child(ren)'s client IDs

Once validated, each child will receive their own SUN Bucks card along with an approval notice with detailed program information and information on how to activate the card.

Customer Support

SUN Bucks Customer Service Contact Center can be reached at (833) 543-3230 between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Families may also opt into text message alerts about SUN Bucks at textsunbucks.dshs.wa.gov or by using the QR code.



More Information

- WA State Information: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sunbucks>
- Federal Information: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summer/sunbucks>
- USDA Promotional Toolkit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summer/promotion>
- WSFMA Currency Cheat Sheet (English and Spanish) are available on the WSFMA Food Access webpage: <https://wafarmersmarkets.org/food-access-2/>

The WSFMA can be reached at (206) 706-5198 or info@wafarmersmarkets.org if you have any further questions.