



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Human Services**



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Education**

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**Shapiro Administration Highlights SUN Bucks Summer Food Program to Help Feed Kids While School is Out, Encourages Eligible Families to Apply**

*An estimated 1.3 million children in Pennsylvania will qualify for SUN Bucks in Summer 2025.*

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, **Shapiro Administration officials** emphasized the importance of ensuring kids have enough to eat year round, and touted Pennsylvania's participation once again this year in the [SUN Bucks program](#), a federally funded summer benefit that helps eligible families purchase fresh food and groceries at retailers around Pennsylvania.

**Department of Human Services (DHS) Special Assistant to the Secretary Catherine Stetler and Department of Education (PDE) Acting Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe**, stood alongside partners from Feeding Pennsylvania and the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank together to promote the [SUN Bucks program](#), a federally funded summer serving lunch to kids at a SUN Meals Summer Food Service location. This is the SUN Bucks program's second year and the second time of participation for Pennsylvania.

SUN Bucks is a federal program that provides eligible children with a SNAP-like benefit to purchase food for the summer months when school is not in session. Most benefits will be issued beginning in late-July for Summer 2025. All 2025 SUN Bucks benefits will be issued by the end of September. Most eligible children will receive the benefit automatically and do not need to apply, including those who already receive free and reduced-price school meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) during

the school year. Households that need to apply must [apply by August 31](#) to receive a benefit for summer 2025. Families can use the [Sun Bucks Eligibility Navigator](#) to see if they need to complete an [online 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 SUN Bucks program provides eligible households with critical dollars to help bridge the gap during the summer break and ensure that children have enough to eat,” said **DHS Special Assistant Catherine Stetler**. “I encourage all Pennsylvania families who think their children may be eligible to use our Eligibility Navigator to see if they are automatically eligible or if they need to apply for SUN Bucks using our new online application.”

“Governor Shapiro made an intentional choice to opt into SUN Bucks for a second year because he understands that hunger doesn’t take a summer break. This program gives families added support when school is not in session for the summer, helping children stay nourished and ready to learn when they return in the fall,” said **Acting Secretary of Education Dr. Carrie Rowe**. “Just like Pennsylvania’s universal free breakfast program during the school year, SUN Bucks reflects our commitment to ensuring every student has enough food to learn, grow, and thrive.”

The Shapiro Administration has made it a top priority to ensure Pennsylvania students start the day with a full stomach, ready to learn. 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’s 2025-26 budget proposal includes funding for universal free school breakfast for a third consecutive year, helping to ensure Pennsylvania’s 1.7 million students continue to receive free breakfast at school, regardless of income. As a result of universal free breakfast, more students are able to start the day with a nutritious, filling breakfast: in 2024, more than 90 million breakfast meals were served in schools – that’s nearly 10 million more meals than were served the previous school year.

During the summer months, these same students and families may be strained by higher food bills when school is closed. SUN Bucks provides a one-time payment of \$40 per summer month (\$120 maximum) per eligible child. An estimated 1.3 million children in Pennsylvania will qualify for this program for Summer 2025.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

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 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 **and** the family does not meet other automatic eligibility criteria, will need to complete a SUN Bucks paper or [online application](#). Before completing an application, households can determine if their child is automatically eligible or 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, families are encouraged to complete an application. Applications can be submitted [online](#), by mail or completed at a local [County Assistance Office](#). The deadline to apply for Summer 2025 is August 31, and applications received after this date will be considered for SUN Bucks 2026 next summer.

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