

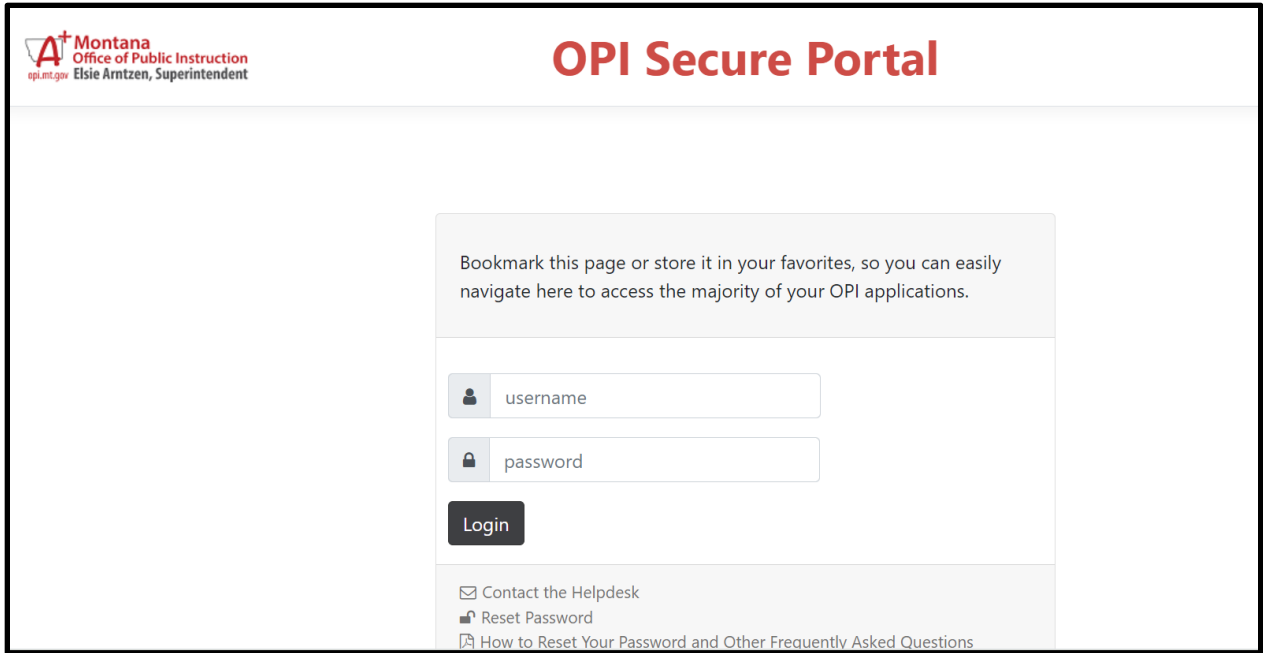
Direct Certification Application Reminders

The purpose of these reminders is to guide Sponsors on the actions that will maximize eligibility for students for SUN Bucks benefits. The system primarily used for processing direct certification and free and reduced applications is the Direct Certification Application (DCA) system. The steps listed below will help the State Agency ensure that your students are able to receive SUN Bucks benefits if eligible. Direct certification should be practiced routinely by all schools, including CEP schools, as per USDA regulations. This document covers the following in more detail:

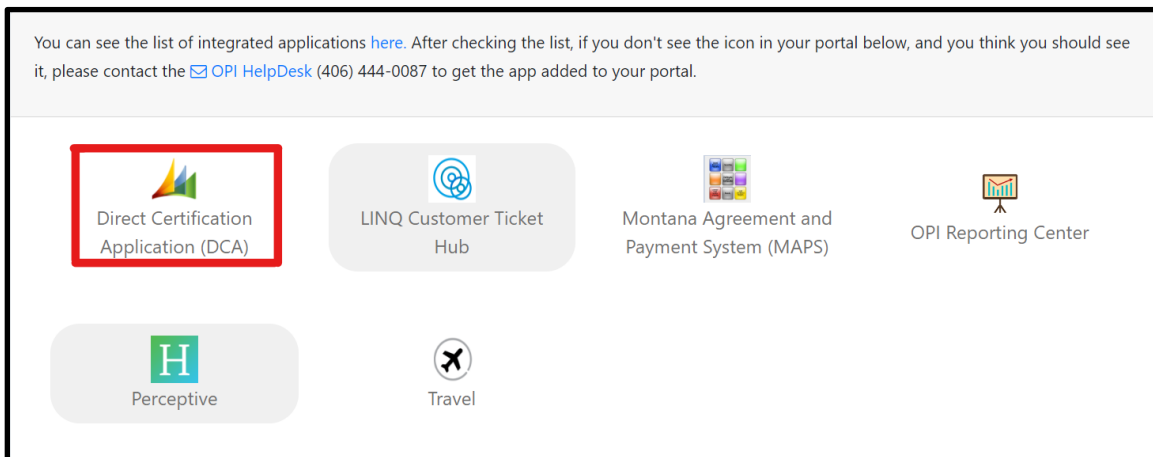
- ***Work Direct Certification Potential Matches***
- ***Work Direct Certification Extended Eligibility***
- ***Work Manual Direct Certification***
- ***Identify Active Students Not Directly Certified***
- ***Enroll your School in Online Free/Reduced Applications (FRAPP) and Contact Families***
 - ***If you use another on-line application for Free/Reduced evaluation, you will use the SUN Bucks Upload near the bottom of the DCA Home Page under Data Transfers.***
 - ***If you use paper applications, you can still opt in to use the OPI FRAPP and enter the data from the paper applications into the system to take advantage of the automation and reporting that occurs through FRAPP-DCA.***
 - ***IF you use FRAPP, all students determined eligible via FRAPP will be automatically picked up for SUN Bucks benefits, and you will not have to upload them using the SUN Bucks upload in DCA.***
- ***Process Submitted Applications no matter what method you receive them.***

System Access

- Please access the OPI Secure Portal available here: <https://apps.opi.mt.gov/osp/>. Favorite this link to easily access the DCA system.



- After logging in, your screen should look similar to that shown below. Click on the Direct Certification Application (DCA).

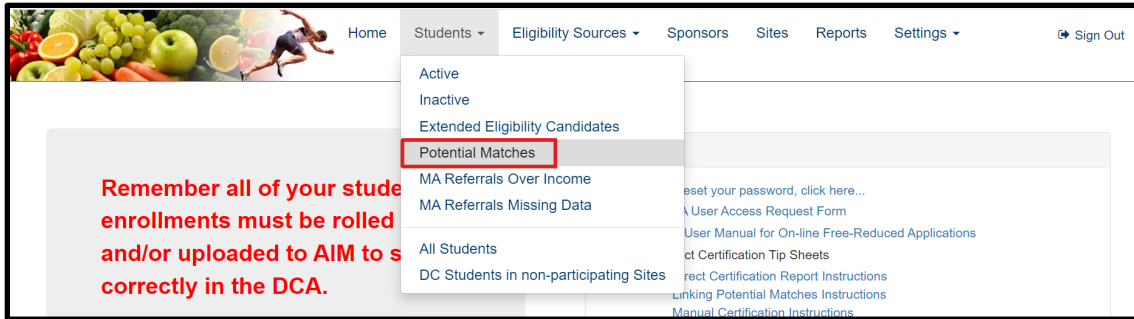


Direct Certification Application (DCA) Activities

It is best to perform these steps in the order listed.

Step 1: Work Potential Matches

- Click on “Students,” “Potential Matches.”

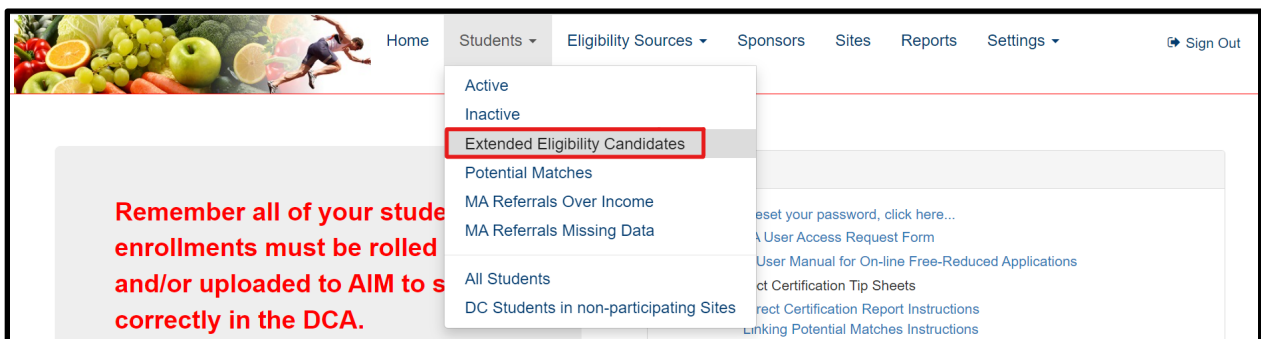


- You will see students from your district that may match to a SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Foster Care, or FDPIR referral.
 - *Note:* If the program/case and student are active, this match will directly certify them for free or reduced lunch.
- If the AIM student listed matches the referral, link with the green + button.
- If the AIM student listed does NOT match the referral, mark the link as invalid, and it will not show up again in your potential matches.
- If you want more information on linking potential matches, see [here](#).

Link	Invalid	Confidence	Active	Source	First	Last	MI	Gender	DOB	Sponsor	School	Grade	ID	City
		86	✓	AIM Student	██████	██████	██	██	██████	██████	██████	██	██████	██████
			✓	SNAP/TANF/MA	██████	██████	██	██	██████				██████	██████

Step 2: Work Extended Eligibility

- Click on “Students,” “Extended Eligibility Candidates.”



- You will see students who may qualify for Direct Certification because of the status of their household or siblings.
 - *Note:* Extended Eligibility – If any student in a household is directly certified through SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, or FDPIR, school meal eligibility benefits should be extended to all students in that household. Manually certify extended eligible in DCA. Extended Eligibility only applies to SNAP, TANF, Medicaid & FDPIR programs.
- Verify the student’s eligibility by confirming the student resides in an eligible household.

- Link the match with the green + button.

	Name	Current DC	State Id	Gender	DOB	Sponsor	School	Grade	Enrollment Start	DC Eligibility	Case	Address
+	[REDACTED]	Medicaid Reduced	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	SNAP - EE	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
+	[REDACTED]	Medicaid Free - EE	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

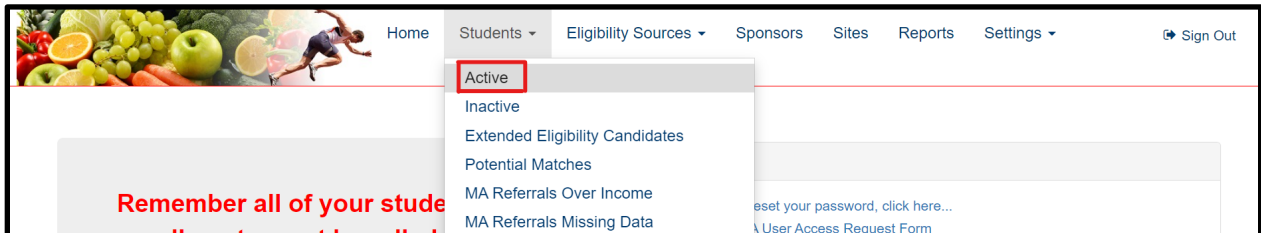
Step 3: Manual Direct Certification

Students can be manually directly certified in some circumstances if they are not found on the potential eligibility list or the extended eligibility list. Students can be manually certified when documentation of program eligibility is confirmed through agency records. Eligibility Sources include: SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, Foster, Homeless/Runaway, and Migrant.

- See instructions as needed [here](#).

Step 4: Identify Active Students Not Directly Certified

- Click “Students,” “Active.”



- You will see a list of active students at your school. Those without a “DC Source” listed are not directly certified and can only be determined eligible for SUN Bucks using a household application, preferably using the on-line free and reduced application (FRAPP).
 - Encourage families who have not submitted a Free and Reduced application to do so if they wish to be evaluated for SUN Bucks benefits as determined by free and reduced income eligibility guidelines.

Name	State Id	Local Id	Gender	DOB	Sponsor	School	Grade	Enrollment Start	DC Source	DC Date
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Medicaid Reduced	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

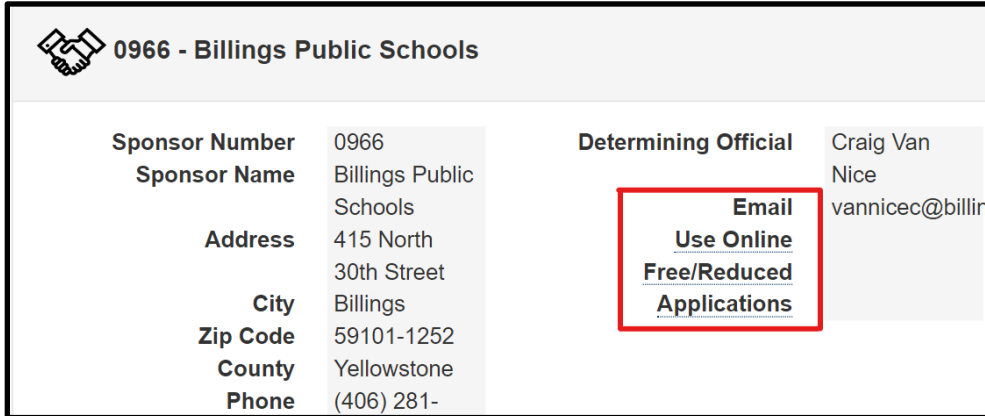
Sponsor Online Free and Reduced Application (FRAPP) Instructions

Step 5: Enroll your School in Online Free/Reduced Applications, if feasible, and Contact Parents

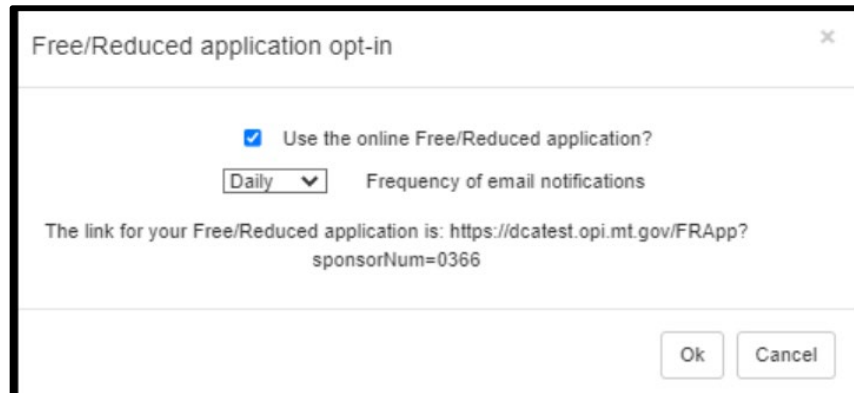
- Click on “Sponsors.”



- Click on the “Use Online Free/Reduced Applications” hyperlink.



- You may now use a direct link for your district, as shown below that will lead directly to your district’s application welcome page.



Home Students ▾ Eligibility Sources ▾ Sponsors Sites Reports

0966 - Billings Public Schools

Sponsor Number	0966	Determining Official	Craig Van Nice
Sponsor Name	Billings Public Schools	Email	vannicec@billingssschools.org
Address	415 North 30th Street	Use Online	✓
City	Billings	Free/Reduced	The link you can use to direct parents to
Zip Code	59102	Applications	your Free/Reduced application is:
County	Yellowstone		https://dcatest.opi.mt.gov/FRApp?
Phone	(406) 281-5116		sponsorNum=0966
Fax	(406) 281-6179		
Email	vannicec@billingssschools.org		

- Your district will now also appear as an option in the Dropbox when accessing the application via the OPI website link, [here](#).



Welcome!

This is the State of Montana OPI's electronic application for **free and reduced-price meals** for the USDA's National School Lunch & School Breakfast Programs. This application will also be used to issue benefits for the **SUN Bucks** that will provide \$120 per eligible child in the form of preloaded cards that your family can use to purchase groceries. Children must be directly certified or income eligible to qualify. The program is intended to help fulfill hunger gaps when children are not in school. Please contact the hot-line at (406) 444-0044 or email SUNBucks@mt.gov if you wish to opt out of the SUN Bucks program benefits.

This interactive application will guide you through the application process.

You cannot save and return to this application after you have started it. You will receive an application number for reference once you have submitted the application. The time it will take you to finish this application depends on your household circumstances and the information you have on hand when you begin. You will need to provide information regarding DOBs, grades, schools, and income information for children and adults in your household, as well as case numbers for SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR assistance programs. When you are ready to apply, select the school district in which you are applying to begin.



You are submitting this application after August 25th and on or before June 30th. If you are deemed eligible based on your income, you will receive school meal benefits for the remainder of the current school year as long as school is in session (through June 30th) and SUN Bucks benefits for the summer following the current school year. **You need to fill out another application on July 1st or after to be evaluated to see if your children are eligible to receive free/reduced meals for next school year and SUN Bucks benefits the next summer.**

Note: Students attending a CEP school will continue to receive school meals at no cost during the regular school year even if deemed reduced-price eligible or denied SUN Bucks benefits via this application.

Please see the OPI SUN Bucks webpage for more details.

If the school district your child attends is not in the below list, your school will provide information to you on how you should submit a free and reduced application.

Step 6: Process Submitted Applications

- Submitted applications will be visible in the middle of your “Home” screen. Click on the date hyperlink beneath “Date.”

Id	Date	Application Status ⓘ	Sponsor	Transferred Out	Transferred In	Household Members	Number of Students	Annual Household Income	Household Status	SNAP Case	TANF Case	FDPIR Case	Contact
20663	7/12/2023		0978 Broadview Public Schools			3	2	\$23,340.00	FREE				
22053	8/7/2023		0595 Clinton Elementary			5	1	\$24,976.00	FREE				

- Underneath “Household Status” the application’s eligibility status will be stated based on Household’s Income and the USDA Free and Reduced Thresholds. These include:
 - Free
 - Reduced
 - Does not qualify

Original from the Application						
App Id	Date	Children in Household	Adults in Household	Estimated Monthly Household Income	Assistance Programs	
1116	7/17/2020	2	2	\$2,710.00 ⓘ		
Revisions						
Revision Date	Children in Household	Adults in Household	Calculated Yearly Household Income	USDA Annual Free Threshold	USDA Annual Reduced Threshold	Household Status
There are no revisions	2	2	\$32,520.00	\$34,060.00	\$48,470.00	FREE

- There may still be children who qualify even if the Household (HH) does not. Check each child’s eligibility status before determining the final status of the application as a whole. Further instructions are provided later in the instructions.
- If an application modification is necessary, click the options to add or edit in the upper righthand corner of each section. An audit note of your change will be recorded on the page.

All Children in the household + ↻											
Eligibility Status ⓘ	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Birth Date	Gender	School	Grade	Homeless	Runaway	Migrant	Foster Care
FREE-Income	LilJohnny	X	Tester	1/1/2013	M	Babb School	07				

- At the bottom of this page, select the “Application Status” from the Dropdown.

Application Status ⓘ

APPROVED

DENIED

CANCELLED

All Students Directly Certified - neither Approved or Denied

- If you select **APPROVED**, the application will ask for a reason for your status selection.

Application Status ×

APPROVED

FREE INCOME for all students

REDUCED INCOME for all students

Partial HH Approval – Some students FREE or REDUCED Income qualified and some students directly certified in DCA (any category, including extended eligibility)

SELF REPORTED FOSTER CARE for all students but not in DCA as foster care - DO unable to obtain official documentation to manually certify in DCA

ADMINISTRATIVE APPLICATION for all students – HH not willing to fill out an application but school submits it on behalf of the children

SELF-REPORTED SNAP, TANF, FDPIR for all students – unable to find in DCA

Other

Save Cancel

- Select **All Students Directly Certified – neither Approved or Denied** if all students on the application are directly certified.

Application Status ✕

All Students Directly Certified - neither Approved or Denied

All students DC SNAP
 All students DC SNAP Letter Method
 All students DC All other sources besides SNAP
 Other

- If you select **CANCELLED**, you must select the reason why the application is being withdrawn.

Application Status ✕

CANCELLED

HH declined benefit
 More than one application for same students – split HH or accidental double submittal.
 Submitted without income – unable to verify categorical eligibility – requested new application
 New application overrides previous application eligibility determination
 Other

- If you select **DENIED** because the household does not qualify, select the reason.

Application Status ✕

DENIED

PAID INCOME for all students
 Partial HH Denial – Some students PAID Income and some students directly certified in DCA (any category, including extended eligibility)
 Other

- Send correspondence to the household regarding their application’s determination.

- After selecting Application Status, an email icon appears next to the email address provided.
- If you click on this icon, an email regarding their status will be displayed for you with the option to edit. When complete, click email or print to send the household their notice of determination.

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Mailing Address	Apt #	City	State	Zip	Phone	Email	Last 4 SSN
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	4064656831	afakeEmail@mt.gov	[REDACTED]

Email Household Contact

Application Status: APPROVED

To: klarsen2@mt.gov

From: Sandrar@bps.k12.mt.us

Subject: Browning Public Schools Application for f

Email Body

Thank you for filling out the Free and Reduced On-Line Application for school meals and SUN Bucks benefits. Your application #38784 has been APPROVED.

Please contact the number at the bottom of this email if you would like to know more information about why your application received this status.

The eligibility statuses for each of the students in your household are:

- LilJohnny Tester: FREE-Income

Students attending a CEP school will continue to receive school meals at no cost during the regular school year, even if determined via this application for REDUCED-priced meals per the income eligibility guidelines for the SUN Bucks program

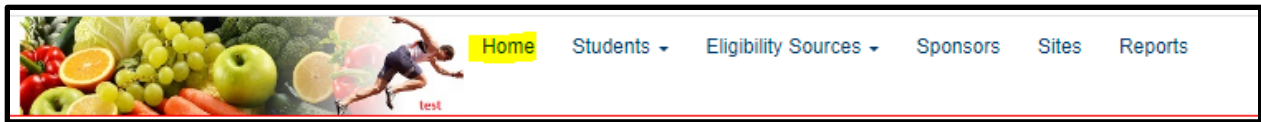
Email Print Cancel

- Once processed, students and their eligibility status will be listed under the **Free/Reduced/Paid Students** tab on the “Sponsor” page. Those with free and reduced eligibility status will receive SUN Bucks benefits.

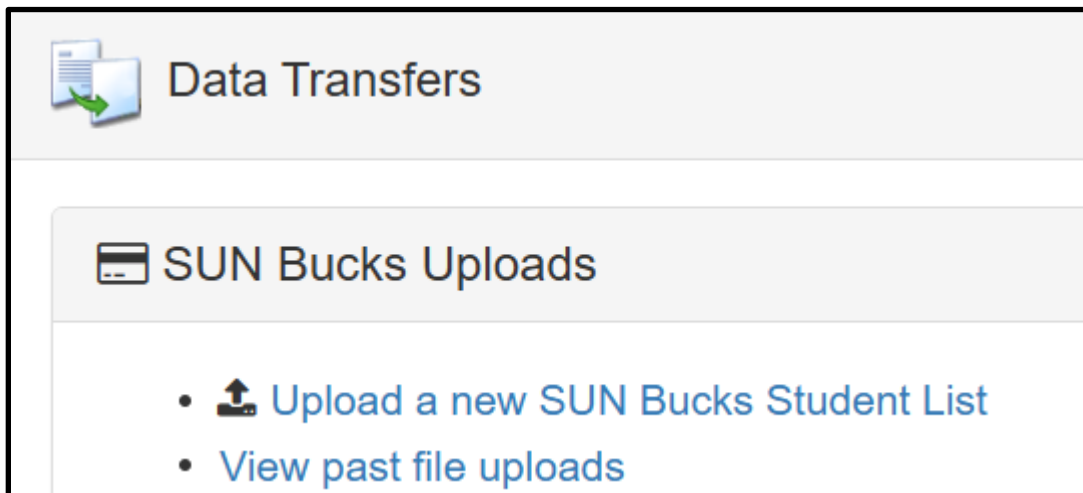
Upload SUN Bucks file

- ✓ If you do not use FRAPP, you need to upload your application-based free/reduced students using the SUN Bucks upload process on the DCA home page. We also ask that you send best addresses for your homeless/runaway, migrant and FDPIR students.

1. Click on 'Home'.



2. Click on the 'Upload a new SUN Bucks Student List' hyperlink on the bottom right of the page.



3. Follow the steps/instructions on the page that appears.
 - Select a sponsor if you have more than one sponsor. If you only have one, it will default to it.
 - Download the SUN Bucks Student import template.
 - Populate the template with free and reduced student data for all of your schools in one sheet. There is no need to use a separate sheet for each school. Please include homeless, runaway, FDPIR, and migrant students as you are likely to have the best address for those students. All fields are required.
 - You **MUST** enter a State Id for all students. In the rare case where a district has a mix of non-OPI-accredited schools, along with OPI-accredited schools, you must enter NA for the State ID for any students that do not have a State ID.

*DO NOT INCLUDE THOSE DIRECTLY CERTIFIED BY SNAP, TANF, MEDICAID, OR FOSTER CARE AS THEY WILL BE PICKED UP FOR SUN BUCKS BENEFIT DISBURSEMENT AUTOMATICALLY.

- Remember where you saved it. 😊
- Upload the saved populated student data by choosing the file location and click 'upload'.

Upload SUN Bucks Students

- Select the sponsor.
 -
- Download a student import template.
 - Download a copy of the [SUN Bucks Student import template](#).
- Populate the template.
 - Populate the template with your Student data.
- Upload the populated template.
 - No file chosen

AutoSave: Off | SEBT student import templat... | Saved to this PC

File Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Help Acrobat

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles Cells

A2

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Last Name	Middle Initial	First Name	StateID	Birth Date	Free/Reduced Status	Contact Name	Address 1	Address 2	City	State	Zip	
2													
3													
4													
5													

- If your file does not load properly, you will receive an error message and row-by-row details of issues found in the file.

An error occurred

Some records in your file had errors and need to be corrected and re-uploaded. Please go back to the Home page to upload your corrected file.

Search:

Student Identifier	Last Name	Middle Initial	First Name	Date of Birth	F/R Status	Contact	Address	Row Status
8888888	Another		Kid	9/1/2013	Reduced	Contact Name	123 Some Street Helena, MT 98272	
123456	SomeTest	X	Kid	9/1/2013	Free	Contact Name	123 Some Street	City is a required value.

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

- You must correct the file and re-upload until it is successful. You know it is successful when there are no pink error message splashed on your page or next to your individual students.

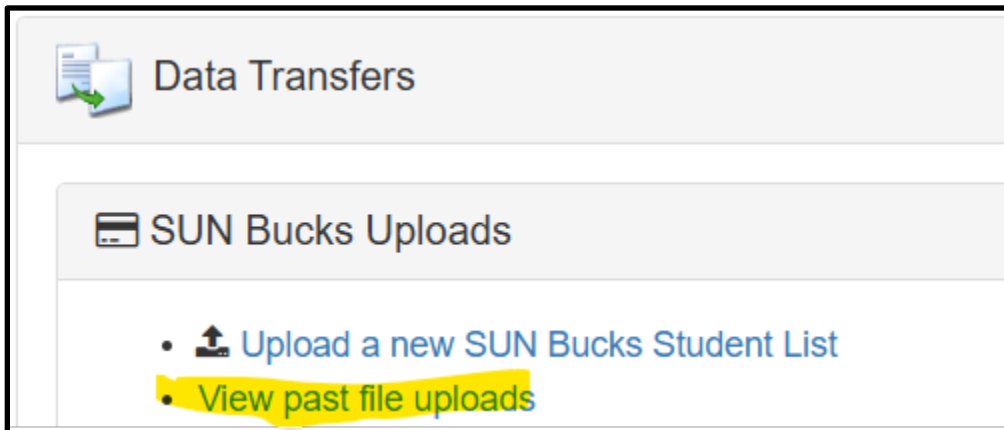
SUN Bucks file

Sponsor	Uploaded By	Uploaded On	Record Count	Status	Uploaded File
0970 - Laurel Public Schools	██████████	8/23/2024	116	Complete	SEBT student import template.xlsx

Search:

Student Identifier	Last Name	Middle Initial	First Name	Date of Birth	Gender	F/R Status	Contact	Address	Row Status
██████████	██████████	L	██████████	██████████		Free	██████████	Laurel, MT 59044	
██████████	██████████		██████████	██████████		Reduced	██████████	Laurel, MT 59044	

4. Repeat this process for each sponsor for which you are the determining official.
5. Review your uploads if you wish by selecting 'View past file uploads'.



- Click on the date/time stamp of the file you wish to review.

 A screenshot of a table titled "SUN Bucks Uploads" with a dropdown menu set to "Summer 2024". The table has columns for "Uploaded On", "Uploaded By", "Year", "Sponsor", "File", "Record Count", and "Status". There are two rows of data. The first row's date "8/23/2024" is highlighted in yellow.

Uploaded On	Uploaded By	Year	Sponsor	File	Record Count	Status
8/23/2024	Bremus	2024	9180 - Our Lady Of Lourdes Schl	SEBT student import template June 5, 2024.xlsx	8	Complete
8/23/2024	WMeans	2024	0970 - Laurel Public Schools	SEBT student import template.xlsx	116	Complete

You will see the file contents displayed on the page either with or without errors, based on the specific upload results.

You will need to upload several times throughout the summer to assure that all eligible students receive SUN Bucks benefits. If you use FRAPP for your free and reduced applications, you do not need to use this upload, as FRAPP applications, once processed, will be picked up for SUN Bucks benefit disbursement automatically.

Additional Resources:

- **Webinars**
 - [Introduction](#)
 - [DCA Applications Dashboard](#)
 - [Applications Detail Page Features](#)
 - [Application Transfer to Another Sponsor](#)

- [Application Reports](#)
- [F/R Application Processing Manual](#)
- [OPI SUN Bucks Web Page](#)

If you have further questions, please email SUNBucks@mt.gov or contact the hot line at (406) 444-0044.