

SUN Bucks – Questions & Answers

1. What state agencies are responsible for administering the SUN Bucks program?

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) share responsibilities for implementing SUN Bucks. The OPI creates and manages the application process, validates eligibility, and handles client communications. The DPHHS issues the EBT cards, manages card usage, investigates client fraud complaints, and oversees budget and program reporting to FNS.

2. Which children are eligible to participate?

There are 3 groups of children in Montana who may be eligible to participate.

- Students at non-Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools who have been approved as eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.
- Students attending a CEP school and are directly certified or have been approved using a SUN Bucks application.
- Children who are not attending a school that operates the National School Lunch Program and are 7-15 years old and participate in eligible programs like SNAP.

3. Do all children in CEP schools automatically qualify for SUN Bucks?

No, all children must be determined eligible individually through direct certification or income application.

4. Which children qualify automatically?

Children who are directly certified as receiving SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, or Medicaid benefits; or are directly certified as having foster, migrant, or homeless/runaway status.

5. What is direct certification?

Direct certification is a process conducted by states and schools to certify eligible children for free meals without the need for household applications.

6. How can children qualify who are not directly certified?

Children who are not already directly certified may apply using a free or reduced-price meal/SUN Bucks application. Families must meet the federal income eligibility guidelines to qualify based on household size and income.

7. My child receives free meals at school based on a submitted application. Do I need to apply to receive SUN Bucks benefits?

No, the application for school meals eligibility will be used to distribute SUN Bucks benefits if this information is provided to the state agency for benefit issuance.

8. When will I receive benefits and how much will I receive?

Each eligible child will receive one payment of \$120 for the summer on a DPHHS-issued Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.

9. What other resources are available for meals over the summer?

The SUN Meals and SUN Meals To Go may be offering free meals over the summer for kids at a site near you. To find the nearest site to your location, please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids> or text 'Summer Meals' to 914-342-7744.

10. How can SUN Bucks benefits be used?

SUN Bucks benefits can be spent at any [SUN Bucks-approved retail store](#) to purchase any SNAP-eligible foods. Purchases must be made in person at the store register. The card cannot be used for online purchases.

11. Who can I contact with questions?

Questions can be emailed to SUNBucks@mt.gov; or call 406.444.0044.

12. How can I opt out if I don't want to receive SUN Bucks benefits?

Families can opt out by emailing SUNBucks@mt.gov; or calling 406.444.0044.

13. Is SUN Bucks the same as Pandemic-EBT?

No, SUN Bucks and P-EBT are different programs. P-EBT was offered during the Covid-19 pandemic. SUN Bucks is a permanent federal program.

14. Will applications for SUN Bucks be subject to verification?

Schools will follow their standard verification process, including verification for cause.

15. What is the timeframe for processing applications?

Applications for SUN Bucks must be processed within 15 days.

16. What is the timeframe for collecting applications?

Applications can be submitted and approved at any time during the year.

17. How will schools process applications from FRAPP and upload Free and Reduced-Price lists during the DCA end-of-year shutdown?

The end of year shutdown is near the end of June and into the first or second week of July. During that time, you will not be able to upload lists or process FRAPP applications. When DCA comes back up, you can upload your Free and Reduced-Price list for the next SUN Bucks benefit issuance. To process applications that were submitted June 30th or earlier, you need to change the year on the dashboard to bring up the prior program year and process those FRAPPS. Then you need to change the program year to the current July 1 program year and process those FRAPPS. All eligible children will be picked up in the next SUN Bucks benefit issuance.

18. What should families do if they received a duplicate benefit, or received benefits in error?

Families must not use any benefits received in error.

19. I have a question, which includes Personally Identifiable Information (sensitive) information about my child. How should I relay this information?

Questions may be received either by email or by phone. Any PII (personally identifiable information) should not be sent via unsecured methods; email is considered unsecured. Please call the hotline (406.444.0044), or relay *only* the unique identifiers that are not sensitive (State ID or FRAPP ID). Questions general in nature that do not contain PII are encouraged.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

program.intake@usda.gov.