



## Frequently Asked Questions for Parent/Guardians

Links and resources are listed on the last page of this document.

### General Program Questions

#### What is Indiana SUN Bucks?

Summer EBT, which is branded as Indiana SUN Bucks, is a new and permanent program to provide money to households with school-aged children to purchase food during the summer. Households will receive \$120 for each qualifying child, to be spent during the summer months. Children must be eligible for free or reduced price meals in qualifying schools and eligibility must be established annually.

#### How is SUN Bucks funded?

SUN Bucks is funded by the State of Indiana and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

#### Who qualifies for SUN Bucks?

School-aged children are eligible for Indiana SUN Bucks if:

- The household already participates in SNAP, TANF, or income-based Medicare, or
- The student has been identified as a ward of the state (foster child), homeless, or migrant, or
- The student attends a school that offers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and the household income meets the requirements for free or reduced-price school meals.

#### What is the definition of school-aged?

Children aged seven to 18 years-old are required to attend school in Indiana, and are therefore considered “school-aged.” Students must be seven-years-old by Friday, August 16, or 18-years-old on or before Wednesday, May 22, to be eligible for 2024 SUN Bucks benefits. Children who are younger or older than this range, and are enrolled at a kindergarten through grade 12 school operating NSLP may also be eligible as long as they are approved for free or reduced meals.

#### My child is homeschooled, can we receive SUN Bucks?

Homeschool families that receive SNAP, TANF, or some income-based Medicaid, or have foster, migrant, or homeless children, are eligible to receive this benefit. Interested families should complete [this application](#) and will be asked to submit a valid Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) case number or designate their categorical status (foster, migrant, homeless). The application will then be reviewed to determine eligibility. Homeschool households cannot qualify for SUN Bucks using household income.

**Who needs to complete the online SUN Bucks application?**

The following households need to complete the online [SUN Bucks application](#):

- Households with children attending a school operating the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), where all meals are free to students, and who have not been notified of automatic SUN Bucks eligibility.
- Households with children attending a school operating NSLP who were not approved for free or reduced meals during the school year.
- Households with children that do not attend a school operating NSLP and who receive SNAP, TANF, certain levels of income-based Medicaid, or are foster, migrant, or homeless.

**How much money will I get?**

SUN Bucks is distributed as a \$120 lump sum per eligible child. This amount is intended to assist with groceries for the entire summer.

**Do I need to save my card(s) from year to year?**

No. After the funds have been spent, households can discard their SUN Bucks card(s). New cards will be issued each year for all eligible children.

**Eligibility****How do I become directly certified?**

Direct certification is a state system that identifies households with children who are receiving SNAP, TANF, some income-based Medicaid, or are wards of the state (fostered). Schools that operate the NSLP use this system to automatically qualify children for free or reduced meals. Additionally, with the help of school or state liaisons, children meeting homeless or migrant definitions can also be direct certified for free meals at schools operating NSLP.

If your household has children who do not attend an NSLP school, including homeschooled or virtual children, you can only qualify for SUN Bucks through direct certification. Please submit a [SUN Bucks online application](#) with a valid FSSA case number or the foster, homeless, or migrant designation checked.

**I have custody of a child that I consider my foster child. Do they qualify for SUN Bucks?**

Only foster children who are wards of the State of Indiana are eligible for SUN Bucks. Informal or formal guardianship agreements do not qualify as foster under USDA's definition. USDA defines a foster child as, "a child who is formally placed by a court or a State child welfare agency. Whether placed by the State child welfare agency or a court, in order for a child to be considered categorically eligible for free meals, the State must retain legal custody of the child. This definition does not apply to informal arrangements or permanent guardianship placements that may exist outside of State or court-based systems. [7 CFR 245.2]"

**If my child attends a program where meals are provided through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) am I still eligible for SUN Bucks?**

Yes, SUN Bucks is an extra benefit to help stretch your grocery budget when school is out for summer. You can use it even if your child gets free summer meals through other programs. You can call 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (or text 914-342-7744 with the keyword “summer meals”) to find the free meal service location closest to you.

**Are there immigration status restrictions to receiving SUN Bucks?**

SUN Bucks is available regardless of citizenship or immigration status and will not affect your current immigration status.

**Benefits Questions****When is the last day to apply?**

Applications for Summer 2024 must be received by Friday, August 16.

**What is the website to apply for SUN Bucks?**

The online SUN Bucks application is [available here](#).

**Is the application available in other languages?**

Users can use Google Translate for websites. Please follow [these instructions](#).

**Can I apply using a paper application?**

Yes, IDOE will release additional information about the paper application soon. Paper applications must be postmarked by Friday, August 17, to be eligible for 2024 benefits.

**I never received my benefits card. How can I get it?**

Please submit a help request to [this form](#) and a SUN Bucks Specialist will respond shortly.

**The card was sent to the wrong address. How can I update my address?**

Please submit a help request to [this form](#) and a SUN Bucks Specialist will respond shortly.

**Where can I use SUN Bucks?**

Use SUN Bucks anywhere EBT benefits are accepted. Benefits may only be used to purchase food. Stores cannot give change or cash back from a food benefit transaction. Only the exact amount of food purchases may be deducted from the food benefit account. If returns are made from a SNAP account, the amount of the return will go onto the EBT card as a credit. Cash cannot be given for returns according to federal law. There is no minimum dollar amount per transaction or a maximum limit on the number of transactions.

**When will SUN Bucks expire?**

Unused benefits expire 122 days after issuance. Please use the benefit within that time frame. Once expired, the benefit cannot be reloaded.

**What is the payment schedule?**

SUN Bucks benefits are sent in one lump sum for the entire summer. Households that are automatically enrolled will receive their card in early June. Those who apply later will receive their card fully loaded with \$120 for the eligible child about four to six weeks after approval.

**When will I receive my card?**

Households that are notified of automatic eligibility, and those who applied by Wednesday, May 1, will receive their card in early June. Those that apply between Wednesday, May 1, and Friday, August 16, will be processed and receive their card fully loaded with \$120 per eligible child as quickly as possible after approval.

**Will I receive one card for all children or separate cards for each eligible child?**

Households will receive one card per eligible child. Each card will be pre-loaded with the full \$120 benefit.

**Support****I was notified of my household's automatic eligibility, but I do not want SUN Bucks, how do I opt-out of this program?**

Please submit your information in the [online help form](#).

**I opted out of SUN Bucks benefits, but I have decided I really need them. Can I opt back in?**

Please submit your information in the [online help form](#).

**Where do I go if I need help?**

Indiana SUN Bucks has an [online help form](#) as well as a customer service phone line at 317-234-4528.

**When should I contact my school versus using the help form?**

If your student attends a school that operates NSLP, you can contact them with questions about your student's automatic eligibility. If you have other questions, please use the [online help form](#).

**If I was notified I was approved, but didn't get a card, who do I contact?**

Please submit a ticket to the [online help form](#). A customer service representative will contact you shortly.

**Marketing and Communications Guidance****I am representing a community organization. How can I help?**

Help spread the word about SUN Bucks. View the Community Outreach Toolkit [here](#).

## Resources and Links

SUN Bucks Webpage: <https://in.gov/doe/nutrition/indiana-sun-bucks-summer-ebt>

SUN Bucks Application Link: <https://indianasunbucks.com/>

SUN Bucks Help Form: <https://ido.e.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portal/11>

USDA Information for Families: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt/household>