



Information on Summer EBT for Schools/School Districts/Regional Information Centers

Visit otda.ny.gov/SummerEBT for updated program information

April 23, 2026

Summer EBT is a federal program implemented by New York State to help low-income households with school-aged children purchase food over the summer when school is out of session and children can no longer rely on access to free/reduced-price school meals.

The 2026 Summer EBT benefit amount of \$120 per eligible child will be issued on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that the family can use just like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase eligible food items at SNAP participating grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other retailers. This program is an addition to free meals that children ages 18 and younger can get at summer meal sites in their communities.

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) is working closely with New York State Education Department (NYSED) on the implementation of Summer EBT.

How Schools Can Help:

- **Educate families on the availability of Summer EBT:** Distribute/post informational flyer on Summer EBT to all families in your school beginning in May 2026. This flyer is available in multiple languages at [Summer EBT Information for Schools and Providers](#).
- **Direct parents to the right source of information:** The most comprehensive information on Summer EBT can be found at otda.ny.gov/SummerEBT. The Summer EBT Customer Service Helpline is 1-833-452-0096. Families should seek answers to specific questions using the website before calling the helpline. The Summer EBT [Customer Service Contact Information](#) can serve as a guide to navigate families to the contact that best meets their needs.
- **Provide New York State Student Information System (NYSSIS) IDs to families who request this ID number for the purpose of applying for Summer EBT benefits.**
- **Ensure student enrollment and demographic records are maintained and accurately reported,** including but not limited to each student's status for free/reduced-price (F/RP) lunch, foster care, homeless, or migrant, and mailing address reported to NYSED in the Student Information Repository System (SIRS). This data is used to determine student eligibility and issue Summer EBT benefits. It is also used to communicate with families and mail Summer EBT benefit cards. Private, non-public schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) but do not report

student-level information for all their enrolled students in SIRS will upload student information to NYSED through a separate process that will be provided by NYSED Information and Reporting Services (IRS). Visit [Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer \(SEBT\) 2025 – New York State Education Department](#) for more information.

How Students Qualify for Summer EBT:

Children are eligible for 2026 Summer EBT benefits in one of two ways:

Automatically Enrolled:

- Aged 6-16 and received SNAP, Temporary (cash) Assistance (TA), or Medicaid* benefits, or
- Any age and were reported as directly certified for free/reduced-price meals by their school – this includes children who are certified homeless, migrant, foster care, Head Start, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or are approved for free meals through an NSLP application in a non-provision school.

If the child meets any of these criteria between July 1, 2025, and September 8, 2026, they are automatically enrolled and will receive the 2026 benefit automatically. These families do not need to fill out a Summer EBT application. Most children who are eligible for Summer EBT will be automatically enrolled.

Must Complete an Application:

- Attends an NSLP participating school, and
- Child is not directly certified, but the household meets the income guidelines for free/reduced-price meals (at or below 185% FPL)

If the child meets BOTH criteria, they may be eligible for Summer EBT through an application. The family must complete a simple online application to be considered for Summer EBT 2026 benefits. See “Application Process” below.

*Limited to certain Medicaid-eligible children who have income that is at or below 185% of poverty before the application of blocks, disregards, or exceptions.

Each student must be individually determined eligible for free/reduced-price meals to receive Summer EBT benefits. A school’s participation in the **Community Eligibility Provision** of the NSLP to provide free school meals to all enrolled students **cannot** be used to establish eligibility for Summer EBT benefits.

Application Process:

- Families must complete and submit an application by September 8, 2026, to be considered for 2026 benefits.
- For children who must apply to receive benefits, the online application is the fastest and easiest way to apply. The online application is available year-round in English and Spanish. Paper applications are available for download in twelve languages. The application and instructions are available at [How to Apply for Summer EBT](#).

- The application is very similar to the NSLP application and asks for information including the name of each child applying for Summer EBT benefits; date of birth; school name; names and income information for all adults in the household; current address, phone number, and email address.
- Families have the option to include the child's NYSSIS ID and/or local student ID on the application. Applications will be processed more quickly and accurately if one or both numbers are included. The NYSSIS ID or local ID will expedite the process to determine if the applying children attend an NSLP-participating school.

How Families Will Be Notified About Their Summer EBT Benefits:

Beginning in June 2026 and throughout the summer, OTDA will mail letters to the parents/guardians of each eligible child. This letter will be mailed to the most recent address provided in the school records or the address the family provided on the Summer EBT application. This letter will inform families about Summer EBT and the specific payment method for their child's Summer EBT benefit.

OTDA also sends text messages when benefits are issued and when benefits are set to expire. OTDA uses a valid mobile phone number when provided in the student's record.

Benefits/Payment method:

Most children will receive benefits beginning in mid-June 2026. Benefit issuance dates will be announced on the NYS Summer EBT website: otda.ny.gov/SummerEBT. Please encourage families to check the website for updates before calling the Summer EBT Helpline.

Families will receive benefits in one of two ways:

1. If the household used any of their 2025 Summer EBT benefit, or if a household requested a replacement card for 2025 Summer EBT, their 2026 benefit will be loaded on their existing Summer EBT card,
2. If a child is new to the program or did not use any of their 2025 Summer EBT benefit, they will be mailed a new EBT card.

If a child's benefit is to be issued to an existing EBT card, and the family no longer has this card and needs a replacement, their eligibility letter will include specific instructions on how to request a replacement card. Information on requesting a replacement EBT card is also available at [Summer EBT Card Replacement](#).

Children will **not** receive Summer EBT benefits on a family's SNAP EBT card. Each child will have their own Summer EBT card in their name. Families must retain this card for future Summer EBT benefits.

Families can visit otda.ny.gov/SummerEBT to learn how to check their Summer EBT card balance online and freeze their card between purchases to protect their benefits from electronic theft.

Special Timeline for Non-Public School Students:

Non-public (Private, religious, and independent) schools that participate in NSLP report data directly to NYSED for Summer EBT. This data will not be transmitted to OTDA and processed until the end of the summer. Private school students who are not on Medicaid or SNAP (and therefore only eligible for F/RP meals through direct certification from their school) will be notified and issued Summer EBT benefits at the end of the summer.

Benefit Expiration:

Summer EBT benefits expire and are removed from the EBT card **122 days** from the date they were deposited onto the card. Expired benefits **cannot** be restored. It is important that families use these benefits soon after they receive them.