

Summer EBT 2026 SUN Bucks

Pennsylvania

Information for Schools



Overview





Today's Session

Goal: To provide all Pennsylvania sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) with information they need to create and submit a 2026 SUN Bucks student file and to guide their families to resources they need.

Topics to be discussed:

- Background
- Issuance
- Key 2026 dates
- Eligibility and SUN Bucks application
- Student File: Creation
- Student File: Upload & Errors
- CEP and RCCI review
- Resources
- Family guidance
- Q & A time



Summer EBT 2026 SUN Bucks

In December 2022, Congress authorized a new, permanent program for States, territories and certain tribal nations to provide a total of \$120 per eligible child to low-income families to purchase food over the summer.

The program, called Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT), or SUN Bucks, is proven to reduce food insecurity and improve nutrition of children on summer break.

- 33% decrease in most severe childhood food insecurity*
- 8% decrease in childhood food insecurity overall*

Through the program, which commenced in the summer of 2024, official agencies provide \$40 per summer month per child to families with eligible school-age children to buy groceries, like how Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are used. SUN Bucks works with other USDA nutrition programs to connect every eligible child with nutritious food in the summer.

As a result of the collaboration between NSLP participating schools, DHS, PDE, and their support agencies, Pennsylvania distributed SUN Bucks to 1.12 million eligible students for the summer of 2025.

* "Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Demonstration: Summary Report 2011-2024 (Summary)", United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, May 2016.

SUN Bucks Pennsylvania Stakeholders

The Pennsylvania Departments of Human Services (**DHS**) and Education (**PDE**) are jointly responsible for overseeing the SUN Bucks program in Pennsylvania, under the guidance of the USDA. DHS works with several existing vendors to assist with benefits issuance.



Pennsylvania
Department of Education



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the NSLP/SBP submit SUN Bucks student enrollment files to assist DHS with the benefit issuance. SFAs also provide guidance to families who turn to them with questions about SUN Bucks.



The Center for Schools and Communities division of Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (**CSIU**) acts on PDE's and DHS's behalf as the main program support for schools.



Each Household receives \$120 SUN Bucks benefit per eligible child (Equivalent to \$40 per month for June-August)

Benefits are issued **at the household level**. Example: A household with 3 eligible children may receive **\$360 total** (sent to the address in DHS systems or as reported by schools, depending on eligibility pathway)

It is generally best for schools not to answer specific benefits issuance questions for families. However, **schools can advise families of these issuance facts:**

1. Families should save previously issued SUN Bucks cards.
2. DHS follows this issuance hierarchy:
 - ✓ Benefits are applied to the family's state EBT card (ACCESS) if available
 - ✓ Otherwise, benefits are applied to a previously issued SUN Bucks card if available
 - ✓ Otherwise, benefits are applied to a new SUN Bucks card
3. Benefits will be issued beginning in late May 2026.
4. Benefits are expunged four (4) months after issuance date.



2026 Key Dates

April 21 & 22, 2026

- Webinars for schools
- SUN Bucks School Helpdesk available to assist with all SUN Bucks questions

April - May 2026

- CSIU sends SUN Bucks information to all schools
- Schools should ensure student eligibilities, addresses, and parent/guardian information are current

May 26 - June 19, 2026

- Schools submit SUN Bucks student files to CSIU
- CSIU transmits SUN Bucks school data to DHS

May 2026

- Students of PA's compulsory age (6-18) who receive SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid with qualifying income begin to receive their benefits

Beginning of July 2026

- Remaining automatically eligible students (from school data) begin to receive their benefits

August 31, 2026

- Deadline for families to submit SUN Bucks applications to DHS for 2026 SUN Bucks

September 2026

- Non-CEP schools submit a 2nd file of 25-26 SY students whose meal eligibility changed from paid to free/reduced due to a household meal application from the time of the school's first student file through 8/31/2026.

4 Months After Issuance

- Benefits are expunged

Eligibility



Streamlined Certification - A student is **automatically eligible** for 2026 SUN Bucks in either of these scenarios:

1. Attended an NSLP/SBP-participating school in 2025-2026 **and** qualified for free or reduced-price meals based on:
 - Direct Certification (DC) – Receiving SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid with qualifying income, or
 - DC by extension within a household unit, or
 - Other categorical eligibility (homeless, foster, migrant, runaway, or Head Start), or
 - Application for Free or Reduced-Price School Meals
2. Did not attend an NSLP/SBP-participating school in 2025-2026 but is on the State’s DC list **and** is of Pennsylvania’s compulsory school age (6 – 18 years).

SUN Bucks Application: Families whose children are not streamline certified but attended an NSLP/SBP school may apply for SUN Bucks.

CEP school students are not automatically eligible for SUN Bucks, even though they receive free meals during the school year. They must be DC or other categorically eligible to automatically receive SUN Bucks.

Families with questions about whether their child is automatically eligible or if they need to apply should use the **Eligibility Navigator tool on the DHS website** (dhs.pa.gov/sunbucks). The self-guided series of questions tells the family if a child is automatically eligible, not eligible, or if they should apply for SUN Bucks.

Eligibility Review – Are the following students eligible?

4-year-old Head Start student who attends an NSLP/SBP-participating school.	Yes. The school reports this child as “Free” eligibility because Head Start students are categorically eligible. DHS will only capture these students if the school reports them.
8-year-old student who attends a CEP school but is not DC or categorically eligible.	Maybe. The school reports this student as “Paid”. The family could apply for SUN Bucks since the child attends an NSLP/SBP-participating school. The household income would need to be 185% or less of federal poverty level to qualify.
10-year-old homeschooled child who never goes to class at their NSLP/SBP school	Maybe. The school would not report the child since they are 100% homeschooled. But if the child is on the State's DC list, they will receive SUN Bucks, since they are within compulsory school age. If the child is not DC and the family applies, they will be denied since the child did not attend an NSLP/SBP school.
Student who attends an NSLP/SBP school and is DC free by extension from another DC child in the same household unit	Yes. The school reports this student as “Free”. This student may not appear on the state’s DC list since they are DC by extension. If the school neglects to report this eligible student, the family won’t receive SUN Bucks Benefits unless the family submits a SUN Bucks application by 8/31/2026 and is approved.
22-year-old student who attends an NSLP/SBP-participating school and is DC free due to MA with qualifying income	Yes. The school reports the student as “Free”. There is no age restriction if a student attends an NSLP/SBP school, is eligible for free/reduced meals and is reported by their school. If the school does not report, they will not be captured by DHS since they are outside compulsory school age. The family could apply.
Childcare student aged 3 who eats free meals at a preschool that is not NSLP	No. The child does not attend an NSLP/SBP school, so they won’t be reported by a school. Also, DHS will not capture them from the state’s DC list because they are not of compulsory school age.
7-yr-old who attends an NSLP/SBP school, was “Paid” status in 25-26, and their household income decreases in June 2026	Maybe. The family would need to submit a SUN Bucks application. They will receive SUN Bucks if DHS determines they are 185% or less of federal poverty level.

SUN Bucks Application

Most families will **not** need to apply for 2026 SUN Bucks since the bulk of eligible students are captured automatically by 1) being eligible for free/reduced meals at NSLP/SBP schools or 2) if they didn't attend an NSLP/SBP school, by being on the state's DC list and of Pennsylvania's compulsory school age (6-18 years).

PDF versions of the SUN Bucks applications are available in English and Spanish on the DHS SUN Bucks webpage. Paper versions are also available upon request at the family's County Assistance Office (CAO).

DHS will review a family's application to confirm the student attended an NSLP school during the school year in question, (the 2025-2026 school year), and that the family's income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty level at the time of application. *(See Resources Section for link to poverty income levels)*. Families who apply but don't meet the qualifying criteria will receive denial letters from DHS. Schools should guide families to contact their local CAO if they have questions about a denial.

The SUN Bucks application will soon change to a version that won't need to be updated annually. In the meantime, the current 2025 application will still be in use during the 2026 program year.

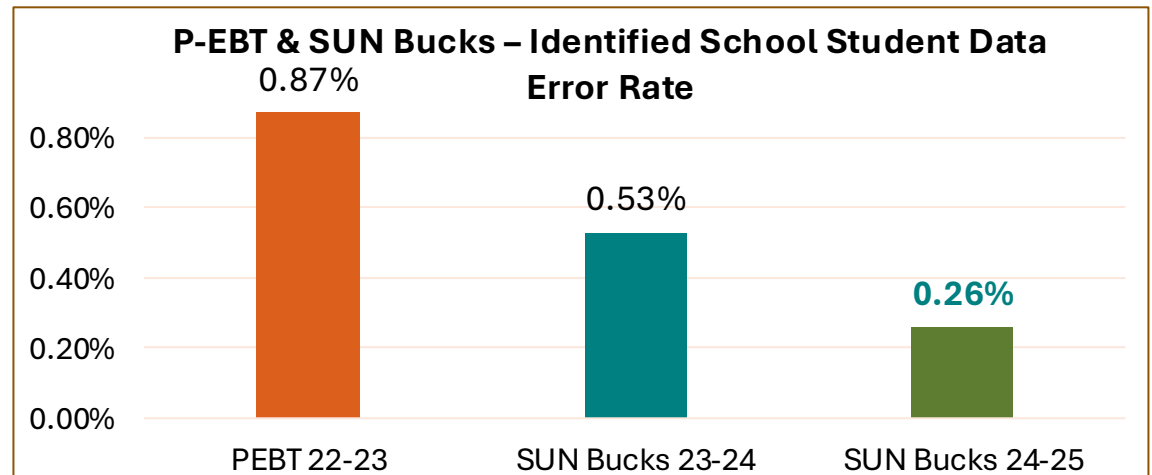
Applications received through August 31, 2026, will be considered for the 2026 benefit period. Applications submitted after August 31st will be held for review for the following year.

Schools that are NSLP/SBP sponsors have two primary roles with SUN Bucks: Family Guidance and Student Data File Submission

Schools often ask ‘**why?**’. The State agencies are very grateful for assistance schools provide despite not being mandated to do so. Nearly 100% of NSLP/SBP schools submitted SUN Bucks student files in 2025.

Student Data: Accurate school student data is critical to DHS during the SUN Bucks benefits process to:

1. Confirm that a child attended an NSLP/SBP school
2. Identify additional students who qualify for free/reduced meals and therefore qualify for SUN Bucks (household meal applications, DC extensions, other categorically eligible students)



Family Guidance: Families often turn to schools as trusted sources of information, but schools are limited in ability to assist with SUN Bucks. Most family questions must be answered by DHS. We’ll talk more about this.

Student File

Creation

PENNSYLVANIA



Things schools should do now:

- ✓ Make sure 25-26 DC matching is current at time of student file – including Potential and Sibling matches.
- ✓ Check student household addresses, parent/guardian names, and other data are current in systems used for SUN Bucks file.
- ✓ Identify all other categorically eligible students (foster, homeless, runaway, migrant, Head Start) as “Free.”
- ✓ Obtain data about all students from other LEAs who attended their schools and had access to NSLP or SBP meals in any eligibility category.

If you offer meals to a student through your SNP, you **must** report the student.

- **Examples:** an IU classroom inside a public school, a private school that another school offers/claims NSLP meals for, students placed in the school from other schools for the whole school year.
 - May require contacting the other educational entity to obtain data.
- ✓ Notify system vendor(s) of 2026 student file requirements if an export/report from the system is desired.
 - ✓ **Full PA-SES** users who plan to use the **Dynamic Query** (see slide 16) to create their SUN Bucks file should have the following items current in PA-SES (or have a process to add this information to their file):
 - Parent/guardian names
 - Other categorically eligible students in as “Free”
 - Household meal applications
 - Students from other LEAs for whom meals were offered through the SNP

School Student File

School Food Authorities (SFAs) that participate in the NSLP/SBP must **submit a SUN Bucks student file during collection period** for the 2025-2026 SY.

The student file must list every student who attended schools under the SFA's 2025-2026 School Nutrition Program agreement and who were eligible for NSLP or SBP school meals in any eligibility category (free, reduced, or paid) **even if the student was from a different LEA.**

The 2026 SUN Bucks Data Collection Template must be followed to create the file. The template can be downloaded at <https://www.pasebt.com> (note: the template is Excel, but the final file must be in **“CSV UTF-8 (comma delimited)” format**).

The **Student file submission window is from May 26 – June 19, 2026.** The *Upload File* icon at <https://www.pasebt.com> is used to submit the file.

As this is a monetary state benefit, it is crucial that the data submitted by schools is accurate, to ensure the success of the SUN Bucks benefits process.

2nd Collection: non-CEP SFAs will be asked to submit a second file at the end of the Summer listing only 25-26 SY students who changed to free/reduced eligibility due to a household meal application received by the school from the point they created their first student file through 8/31/2026. Details will be sent to schools after June.

Full SES Users – PrimeroEdge SUN Bucks Query

“Full” PA-SES users can use a **Dynamic Query** in the system to create their **SUN Bucks Student File**.

Caveat – all data in the report must still be reviewed to ensure the student data is accurate and that all students for whom meals were offered/claimed in the 2025-2026 school year are included.

Common issues schools must correct in the query report data:

- Missing parent/guardian information
- Other categorically eligible students not identified as “Free”
- Students that are placed out to other schools for the whole year but remain “Active” in the school’s PA-SES
- Students from other LEAs who the SFA offers and claims meals for are missing in their PA-SES
- Missing Student IDs

The query must be run prior to 6/30/2026 to show data for the 25-26 SY

School Student File Pointers

File Checklist

Use the 2026 SUN Bucks Student File Checklist when creating your school file to ensure accuracy and completeness. (Under Training/Program Materials at www.pasebt.com)

All students that meals are offered/claimed for

Include all students at all sites who attended schools under the SFA's 2025-2026 School Nutrition Program agreement and who were eligible for NSLP or SBP school meals in any eligibility category. This includes any pre-K, Head Start, or students from other schools.

No homeschooled, virtual, outplaced if 100%

Only include homeschooled, virtual, or outplaced students if they also were enrolled for in-person classes and participated in the school meal program in 25-26 SY.

One row per student

Students should only be listed once in the file. If a student withdrew and returned or shifted amongst buildings, list them in the last building they attended and with their oldest beginning and newest ending enrollment dates in the 25-26 SY.

CEP: Not all students are listed as "Free"

Only DC or other categorically eligible students are listed as "Free" or "Reduced" – all others are "Paid."

No student age restriction

If the student was enrolled for in-person classes and participated in the school meal program in the 25-26 SY.

Real-time reasonability checks

Real-time reasonability checks are performed on data in student files when uploading: 1) sites match 25-26 SY NSLP/SBP sites in CN PEARS, 2) student count within 25% of Oct report, 3) "Free" and "Reduced" count within 25% of Oct report, 4) No duplicate students.

CSV UTF-8

File must be saved in "CSV UTF-8 (Comma delimited)" (- .csv) format to submit.

School Student File Layout

There have been **New Updates to the student data file:**

- New filetype to be used: Save and Submit your student file as “CSV UTF-8 (Comma Delimited)” (- .csv) format
- Updates to Field (Column) descriptions
- **Diacritics allowed** in name fields

As such, schools must use the latest data collection template for 2026

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K			
*SFA Name or LEA Name	*AUN 9 digits & 3 hyphens XXX-XX-XXX-X	*School Building Name No abbreviations - full name of building	*School / Branch 4 digits (include leading zeroes if applicable)	*Student ID 10 digits or less - no special chars	*Student First Name Max 26 characters Hyphens, apostrophes, diacritics ok - no spaces	Student Middle Name Max 26 characters Hyphens, apostrophes, diacritics ok - no spaces	*Student Last Name Max 26 characters Hyphens, apostrophes, diacritics ok - no spaces	*Student Date of Birth MM/DD/YYYY	*Mailing Address Line 1 No Commas	Mailing Address Line 2 No Commas			
L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y
Apt # (if not captured separately from Address Line 2)	*City Full City Name	*State Two letter abbreviation	*Zip Code	*Eligibility Free/Reduced/Paid - Case Sensitive	*Address County Name	Case Number (if available) 9 digits (if starts with zero it must be listed)	*Primary Parent or Guardian First Name Hyphens, apostrophes, diacritics ok - no spaces	*Primary Parent or Guardian Last Name Hyphens, apostrophes, diacritics ok - no spaces	Primary Parent or Guardian Phone Number XXX-XXX-XXXX	Primary Parent or Guardian email (if available) include @; only list 1 email, no spaces	*Enrollment Begin Date MM/DD/YYYY	Enrollment End Date MM/DD/YYYY	Validation Output (For DHS use only)



There are two tabs at the bottom of the template. **Data Dictionary** contains detailed instructions for each column.

School Student File Layout

All columns must be present. Highlighted columns must have data populated in them.

Column	Column Name	Description/Tip
A	SFA Name (LEA Name)	The education entity's full name, ex. ABC School District. No abbreviations or special characters. Letters, numbers, or spaces only.
B	AUN	The education entity's Administrative Unit Number (aka agreement number). 9 numbers and 3 hyphens ###-##-###-#
C	School Building Name	The full name of the student's school building. No abbreviations or special characters. Letters, numbers, or spaces only.
D	School / Branch	The four-digit code assigned to the school (aka building or site ID). Can be found in CN PEARS. Every school/site that is covered by an LEA's nutrition agreement should be on the SUN Bucks file. If a site ID is more than four digits, use the last four digits. Make sure to include any leading zeroes.
E	Student ID	The ID number assigned to the student, as it appears in the school's SIS. Important for removing duplicates. Must be 10 or less numerical digits.
F	Student First Name	The student's first name. Maximum 26 letters. No spaces or special characters other than hyphens, apostrophes, or diacritics. (Hyphens and apostrophes cannot be in the first or last position).
G	Student Middle Name	The student's middle name. Same rules as above.
H	Student Last Name	The student's last name. Same rules as above.

School Student File Layout

Column	Column Name	Description/Tip
I	Student Date of Birth	Must be in mm/dd/yyyy format. Tip: Dates must be re-formatted to mm/dd/yyyy when a CSV UTF-8 file is re-opened in Excel to make changes.
J	Mailing Address Line 1	<p>The primary address on file for the student in the school's SIS.</p> <p>Schools can decide what address to report for homeless, runaway, migrant, or foster students based on the student's circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The address where the student is living if it is anticipated the address will be appropriate when benefits are issued or • The school's address so that staff may distribute any SUN Bucks cards that are issued for the student, or • A general delivery address at the main post office nearest the student that holds general delivery mail for pickup. The U.S. Postal Service location search tool (https://tools.usps.com/find-location.htm) can be used to determine if a given post office offers general delivery service. The general delivery address format is Student name, GENERAL DELIVERY, City, State, Zip.

School Student File Layout

Column	Column Name	Description/Tip
K	Mailing Address Line 2	If needed, the second line of the student's primary address on file in the school's SIS.
L	Apt #	If possible, move apartment number into Mailing Address Line 2.
M	City	The full city name for the student's primary address. No abbreviations or special characters except hyphen and apostrophe (which cannot be in the first or last position).
N	State	The state for the student's primary address. 2 uppercase letters.
O	Zip Code	The zip code for the student's primary address. This will be used to activate new SUN Bucks cards. Correct information is critical. Can be 5 numbers or 9 numbers with a hyphen #####-####
P	Eligibility	<p>Case sensitive: Free, Reduced, or Paid. List the student's eligibility for NSLP meals during the 2025-2026 school year.</p> <p>Student's eligibility should be confirmed immediately prior to file submission in the event the student changed to a higher benefit level.</p> <p>CEP schools should not list all students as "Free." Only DC and other categorically eligible students at CEP schools should be listed as "Free" or "Reduced," and the remainder of students listed as "Paid."</p>
Q	Address County Name	The full county name where the student resides. Letters and spaces only.

School Student File Layout

Column	Column Name	Description/Tip
R	Case Number	The student's DHS case number, if known. Assists DHS with identifying a student in their system. The case number can be found for most DC students in PA-SES, and from household applications. The number is 9 digits and should include leading zeros if present.
S	Primary Parent or Guardian First Name	The first name of the student's primary parent or guardian on file in the school's SIS. If a name is unknown, enter the student's first name. No spaces or special characters other than hyphens, apostrophes, or diacritics. (Hyphens and apostrophes cannot be in the first or last position). Only one parent/guardian name listed per student record.
T	Primary Parent or Guardian Last Name	The last name of the student's primary parent or guardian on file in the school's SIS. Same rules as above. If a name is unknown, enter the student's last name.
U	Primary Parent or Guardian Phone Number	The primary parent or guardian's phone number. 10 numbers with 2 hyphens ###-###-####
V	Primary Parent of Guardian Email	The primary parent or guardian's email, if known. Only one email should be listed. Must be in valid email format with @ symbol and valid suffix, ex: abc@gmail.com.
W	Enrollment Begin Date	Student's beginning enrollment date for the 2025-2026 school year. Must be between 7/1/2025 and 6/30/2026. MM/DD/YYYY format. If a student has multiple beginning dates during the year, list the oldest.
X	Enrollment End Date	The student's ending enrollment date for the 2025-2026 school year. May be left blank if the student is still enrolled. MM/DD/YYYY format. If a student has multiple ending dates during the year, list the newest.
Y	Validation Output	FOR DHS USE ONLY

Student File

Uploading & Errors



File Upload Process

When a file passes validation, the user will see a success message on the screen and receive an **email confirmation**.

If the upload fails, the user will be provided a list of the specific errors on the screen which can be printed if desired. **All errors must be corrected until the upload passes.**



<https://www.pasebt.com> Upload File icon



S-EBT File Upload Form

The S-EBT file upload deadline is now passed. The upload site is currently closed. Please contact the S-EBT School Helpdesk if you have any questions: 800-683-5100 or sebt@csc.csiu.org.

Please note that it may take 10-20 seconds or longer per 1,000 students uploaded. Please be prepared to wait.

Form fields:

- Password
- Submitter First Name
- Submitter Last Name
- Submitter Email Address
- Submitter Phone Number
- School AUN #
Please enter in the format: ###-##-####
- School Name
- Comments/notes
Please enter any additional information related to the spreadsheet
- Spreadsheet (CSV file) No file chosen

1 Fill out the upload form. A SUN Bucks **Password** and **AUN** are used to verify the user.

2

1. Click Choose File
2. Select your CSV file
3. Click Upload

Common File Errors & Obstacles with Solutions

1. Spaces in names.

- In Excel, highlight the column you need to remove spaces from
- Choose **Find & Select** under *Home*
- Choose *Replace*, then under the Replace tab:
 1. *Find what* – use the space bar to enter one space
 2. *Replace with* – key in a hyphen
 3. *Replace All*

Amanda(space)Jo → Amanda-Jo

Caution: Do not replace spaces at the beginning or end of names with hyphens. This will cause another error. In these cases, use Find & Select as described above but put nothing in 'Replace with.' This will replace the space with nothing.

2. Special characters like commas or periods in names.

- In Excel, highlight the column you need to remove from
- Choose **Find & Select** under *Home*
- Choose *Replace*, then under the Replace tab:
 1. *Find what* – key in a comma, or period, or whatever special character you need to remove
 2. *Replace with* – nothing (leave blank)
 3. *Replace All*

Jonathan(space) → Jonathan

3. Names still fail after removing spaces and/or special characters.

First, verify that the name does not contain extra spaces at the beginning or end. Also check that the name is not exceeding a 26-character max. It is also possible that the name includes invisible characters that are remnants from other programs. Try to right click in the cell, **Clear Contents** then re-enter. If this does not work, call the SUN Bucks School Helpdesk.

4. AUN numbers fail during upload but appear correct with hyphens.

This can occur when the AUN column has been formatted to show hyphens, but the hyphens are not actually **in** the numbers themselves. Solution: key the AUN in the first cell correctly with hyphens ###-##-###-# and copy it down the whole column.

5. Dates are failing but appear in correct mm/dd/yyyy format.

Dates may look correct because the column was formatted to appear as mm/dd/yyyy but the numbers may be text values.

Solution:

1. Highlight the date column to be fixed
2. Choose **Text to Columns** under the Data tab
3. Delimited – Next – Tab – Next – Date: MDY – Finish
4. Right click anywhere inside the highlighted column
5. Format Cells – Custom – Type: “mm/dd/yyyy”

Common File Errors & Obstacles with Solutions

6. Zip codes with leading zeros are failing.

The leading zero in zip codes will be dropped when you enter or paste them into the Excel. To retain the zero, you can enter the number with an apostrophe in front which allows the zero to remain. Ex: '00801.

7. Beginning enrollment dates are failing.

This is usually because the enrollment dates listed are from before the 2025-2026 school year. Beginning enrollment dates cannot be before 7/1/2025.

8. The total number of students and/or total number of free or reduced students in the file are more than 25% different than the building data your LEA reported to PDE.

The validation program checks these counts from the schools file in real-time against similar figures reported by the LEA to PDE near the beginning of the school year. A 25% buffer is added to account for students who withdraw/enroll throughout the year. This check is intended to identify large gaps in school data, such as omission of data for whole sites covered under the LEA's nutrition program. One example is a site that the LEA offers and claims NSLP/SBP meals for but that is not part of the LEA (e.g., a private school that a district offers an NSLP meal program to, as one example).

9. How to save an Excel file in CSV UTF-8 format.

File—Save As. Choose where to save the file. Give the file a name. Save as type: **“CSV UTF-8 (Comma delimited).”** Save.

CEP Schools and RCCIs



Not all students who attend CEP schools will automatically receive SUN Bucks. Even though CEP students receive free meals during the regular school year, they must be DC or categorically eligible to automatically receive 2026 SUN Bucks. Otherwise, the household must apply for SUN Bucks through DHS.

CEP schools must **not** list all students as “Free” meal eligibility on their SUN Bucks student file. Only students who are DC or categorically eligible for free or reduced-price school meals should be listed as “Free” or “Reduced.” All other students must be listed as “Paid.”

CEP schools must have their 2025-2026 DC matching current prior to submitting their SUN Bucks student file.

CEP schools **do not use household meal applications** to determine meal eligibility based on income and they cannot use an “economic survey” in place of household applications for SUN Bucks purposes. Families of CEP students who do not qualify for free/reduced meals based on DC or being categorically eligible must apply for SUN Bucks through DHS.

Schools that have a mixture of CEP and non-CEP sites will report the data the same way but will not have any students who qualify via an income application as free or reduced in the CEP school data.

Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs)

RCCIs must submit SUN Bucks student files if they participate in the NSLP/SBP.

RCCIs should list their residential students with the “Free” meal eligibility they have.

Students who attend RCCIs will receive SUN Bucks benefits following the same processes as with any students.

- If the student’s household has a state EBT card (ACCESS), the benefits will be loaded on that if possible, or
- If that is not possible, the benefits will be loaded on a previously issued SUN Bucks card, or
- If that is not possible, the benefits will be loaded on a new SUN Bucks card and be mailed to the address the RCCI reports for the student.

RCCIs can decide what address to use for a student based on the student’s or institution’s circumstances.

- They may use the RCCI address and distribute any SUN Bucks cards which are sent to them for the students.
- They may use the student’s home address if it is anticipated the student will be home during the benefit issuance and expungement period. *Issuance (Late May – Early July 2026) plus 4 months after issuance for expungement.*

Resources



Resources Overview

For Schools

- SUN Bucks **School** Helpdesk – sebt@csc.csiu.org or 800-683-5100. Mon-Fri, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- SUN Bucks **School** Webpage – <https://www.pasebt.com>
- U.S. Postal Service location tool - <https://tools.usps.com/find-location.htm>



**SUN Bucks
School Webpage**

For Families

- DHS SUN Bucks Webpage for Families: dhs.pa.gov/sunbucks
- Statewide Customer Service Center: 877-395-8930, or 215-560-7226 in Philadelphia
- SUN Bucks family flyers (at bottom of the DHS SUN Bucks webpage)
- CAO locator: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/services/assistance/pages/cao-contact.aspx>
- Summer EBT Income Eligibility Guidelines: <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>
- Pre-recorded FAQ line for families – 877-762-1575




**DHS SUN Bucks
Webpage for Families**


Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) – Summer EBT webpage - <https://frac.org/summer-ebt>


Resources – SUN Bucks Webpage for Schools




<https://www.pasebt.com>


[Upload File](#)


[Download Data Collection
Excel Template](#)


[School Portal Login](#)


[Training and Program
Materials for Schools](#)

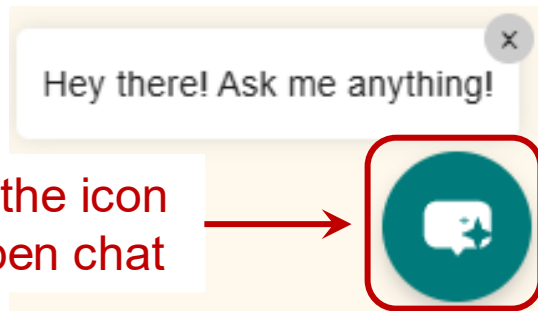
- ✓ 2026 School FAQs
- ✓ 2026 Student File Checklist
- ✓ 2026 Webinar for Schools – slides and recording
- ✓ Excel 101 Training Video - **NEW**
- ✓ Family Scenario Guide for Schools
- ✓ Family Eligibility Navigator Flowchart for Schools

New for 2026 Webpage – SUN Bucks Assistant

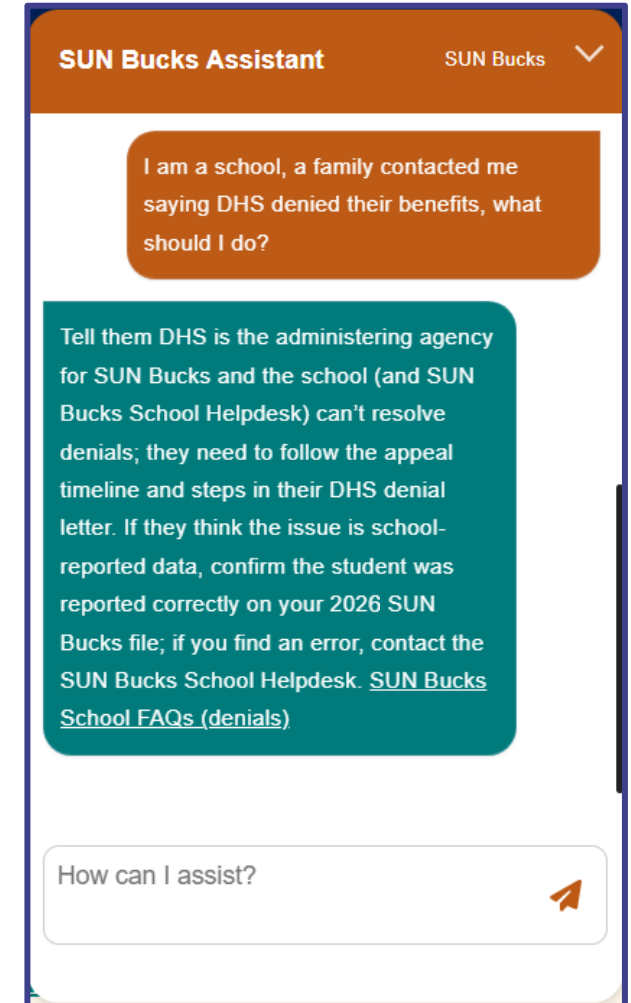


A new, **Interactive support tool** available on the SUN Bucks School Webpage (pasebt.com)

- ✓ Designed to help schools quickly find answers and resources
- ✓ Recommended **first stop** for schools with SUN Bucks questions
- ✓ Helpdesk email and phone support remain available when needed



Click the icon to open chat



Resources – School Portal



The Secure SUN Bucks School Communications Portal:
<https://www.pasebt.com>, **School Portal icon**

SUN BUCKS Pennsylvania Summer EBT – SUN Bucks School Communications Portal

Welcome to the Summer EBT – SUN Bucks School Helpdesk portal.

To access the Portal you will need to know LEA Name, AUN and Password.

[Click here to go to login page](#)

SUN BUCKS Pennsylvania Summer EBT – SUN Bucks School Communications Portal

Local Education Agency (LEA) Name

AUN

Password

Login

*Forgot password or have questions?
Contact the Summer EBT - SUN Bucks School Helpdesk at
sebt@csc.csiu.org or 800-683-5100*

The secure SUN Bucks communications portal should be used for schools and the helpdesk to communicate when private student data is involved.

The portal is accessed from the SUN Bucks school website (“School Portal” icon) and requires the same credentials schools use to upload files.

Once logged in, a school will see all new and old incoming and outgoing messages with the helpdesk.

Schools are welcome to use the helpdesk email and toll-free number. But this offers a secure method when sharing messages involving student data.

Start Here:

dhs.pa.gov/sunbucks



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

SUN Bucks: Pennsylvania's Summer EBT program

SUN Bucks payments are complete for all children who are eligible in 2025. Applications received after August 31st, 2025, will be held and considered for Summer 2026 benefits.

Got questions? Call the SUN Bucks pre-recorded FAQ line at 1-877-762-1575

Find out if your child qualifies for SUN Bucks, Pennsylvania's Summer EBT program.

Please read the FAQs on the [DHS website](#) for more information.

Get Started!

When first entering the site, a box will appear with a link to the **Eligibility Navigator**

Families can find detailed information sections including:

- ✓ Student Eligibility
- ✓ Applying for SUN Bucks
- ✓ Letting others know about SUN Bucks
- ✓ **SUN Bucks FAQ**

SUN Bucks Applications

PDF Applications

- [SUN Bucks English Application \(PDF\)](#)
- [SUN Bucks English Instructions](#)
- [SUN Bucks Spanish Application \(PDF\)](#)
- [SUN Bucks Spanish Instructions](#)

SUN Bucks FAQ

SUN Bucks Basics

- What is SUN Bucks? ▾
- Who is eligible for SUN Bucks? ▾
- How can I prevent my SUN Bucks benefits from being stolen? ▾

Eligibility and Application

- Do all eligible children need to apply for the SUN Bucks benefit? ▾
- What are some examples of children who would be automatically eligible for SUN Bucks? ▾
- How do households apply for the SUN Bucks benefit? ▾

Family Guidance



Families often turn to schools for information, but **most detailed SUN Bucks questions must be answered by DHS.**

However, there are several things PDE and DHS recommend that schools do to assist families with SUN Bucks:

1. Consider posting SUN Bucks information for families on the school's website (or send via text or email) and make sure families who inquire have this information:
 - ✓ DHS SUN Bucks website – dhs.pa.gov/sunbucks
 - ✓ DHS Statewide Customer Service Center – 877-395-8930, or 215-560-7226 in Philadelphia
 - ✓ SUN Bucks family flyers (found at the bottom of the DHS SUN Bucks website, dhs.pa.gov/sunbucks)
 - ✓ CAO locator: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/services/assistance/pages/cao-contact.aspx>
 - ✓ Summer EBT Income Eligibility Guidelines: <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>
 - ✓ Pre-recorded FAQ line for families – 877-762-1575
2. Confirm that the student who the parent is inquiring about was reported correctly on the school's 2026 SUN Bucks file.
 - ✓ If there is an error, contact the SUN Bucks School Helpdesk.
 - ✓ If no error, guide the parent to the DHS SUN Bucks resources.

3. Make sure families know of the **Eligibility Navigator** on the DHS webpage (dhs.pa.gov/sunbucks) to help them determine if their child is eligible for SUN Bucks and whether they need to apply.

The navigator walks the parent/guardian through a series of questions. Based on answers, the navigator guides the parent about their child's eligibility for the benefits.

Find out if your child qualifies for SUN Bucks, Pennsylvania's Summer EBT program.

Please read the FAQs on the [DHS website](#) for more information.

[Get Started!](#)

4. Provide parents with answers to their most common questions:
 - a) SUN Bucks cards should be retained for future benefits.
 - b) Students are automatically eligible for SUN Bucks and do not need to apply if they are eligible for free or reduced-price meals at their NSLP/SBP school.
 - c) Families whose children are not automatically eligible may apply for SUN Bucks on the DHS SUN Bucks webpage: dhs.pa.gov/sunbucks
 - d) Not all CEP students automatically receive SUN Bucks. Only students who are DC matched or live in the same household economic unit as a DC matched student or are other categorically eligible (foster, homeless, runaway, migrant, Head Start) are automatically eligible for SUN Bucks at CEP schools.
 - e) DHS will begin issuing 2026 benefits in late May.
 - f) DHS will issue benefits on the family's state EBT card first if one is available, otherwise a previously issued SUN Bucks card if available, otherwise a new SUN Bucks card.
 - g) The family must contact DHS for all specific questions about their SUN Bucks benefits.

Remember to utilize the [Family Scenario Guide](#) on the SUN Bucks School Webpage

Conclusion



Acronyms & Abbreviations

25-26 SY	2025-2026 school year
AUN	Administrative Unit Number, also known as Agreement Number
CAO	County Assistance Office
CEP	Community Eligibility Provision – refers to a school or group of schools that meet(s) eligibility requirements to offer free breakfast and lunch to each enrolled student.
CN PEARS	Child Nutrition Pennsylvania Electronic Application Reimbursement System
CSC	Center for Schools and Communities (a division of CSIU)
CSIU	Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (IU 16)
CSV UTF-8	Comma Separated Value, Spreadsheet file type (format of the SUN Bucks file)
DC	Direct Certification or Directly Certified, if referring to student status.
DHS	Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, which is the issuing agency for SUN Bucks.
LEA	Local Education Agency – licensed educational facility
MA	Medicaid (must have qualifying income)
NSLP	National School Lunch Program

Acronyms & Abbreviations

PA-SES	Pennsylvania Student Eligibility System (aka PrimeroEdge)
Pandemic EBT or P-EBT	Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer, a program that provided funding for eligible students during the Public Health Emergency, which ended in May 2023.
PDE	Pennsylvania Department of Education, which is the supporting agency
RCCI	Residential Child Care Institution
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SFA	School Food Authority – a school or group of schools that participate(s) in the USDA SNPs
SIS	Student Information System
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SNP	School Nutrition Programs
Summer EBT or S-EBT	Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer
SUN Bucks	Common name for Summer EBT or S-EBT
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Please use the link in the chat to access the form to submit questions. We will show the list of incoming questions on the screen.

We will attempt to answer as many questions as possible in time remaining. If all your questions have been answered, you are free to go and thank you!

If we are unable to get to your question today, the SUN Bucks School Helpdesk staff will reach out to you promptly after the webinar.

Thank you!