

***Lunch & Learn: SUN Bucks, North
Carolina's Newest Food Assistance
Program for Kids!***

Spring 2024



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**



AGENDA

1. **Welcome and Introductions** (5 min)
2. **Child Food Insecurity in North Carolina** (5 min)
3. **Overview of New SUN Bucks Program** (15 min)
4. **How You Can Help** (15 min)
5. **Q&A Session** (20 min)

Facilitators



Cynthia Ervin

Assistant Director, Division of Child and Family Well-Being, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services



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SUN Bucks Coordinator, Division of Child and Family Well-Being, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

FOOD INSECURITY IS A CRITICAL CHALLENGE IN NORTH CAROLINA



1 in 4

North Carolina children face food insecurity or chronic hunger¹



60%

of North Carolina children eligible for free or reduced-price meals at school¹



12.8%

of North Carolina residents live below the poverty line²

Causes of Food Insecurity During Summer

- Many students **lose access to school meals** during the summer months
- Lack of **access** to affordable supermarkets and grocery stores
- Dependency on **transportation** to summer meal sites

Impact to Children

- Reliance on schools to provide meals, **limiting summer access to nutritious food** and impacting children's health
- **Adverse childhood development outcomes**, including heightened stress and worse academic performance³



¹ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

² *Poverty Rate in NC (Statista)*

³ *Food Insecurity and Child Development: A State-of-the-Art Review (NIH)*

INTRODUCTION TO SUN BUCKS

NCDHHS, in partnership with NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), is expanding its food assistance efforts to become **one of the first states** to administer USDA's **new** summer nutrition program, "SUN Bucks."

How much in SUN Bucks benefits will be issued?

North Carolina will issue **\$120 in benefits** per eligible child, which can be used by families to purchase nutritious food.

Who will be eligible for SUN Bucks?

Students who participate in certain federal assistance programs will be eligible to **receive benefits automatically**, while other students **may apply** for SUN Bucks.



SUN BUCKS WILL ADDRESS EXISTING ACCESSIBILITY GAPS IN FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SUN Bucks will transform North Carolina's summer food assistance strategy into a **three-pronged approach** that emphasizes **accessibility**.

Currently, North Carolina operates two federally-assisted summer meal programs: the **Congregate (Group) Meal Service** and the new **Non-Congregate Meal Service (Meals To-Go)**. Accessibility challenges associated with these programs that **SUN Bucks will directly address** include:



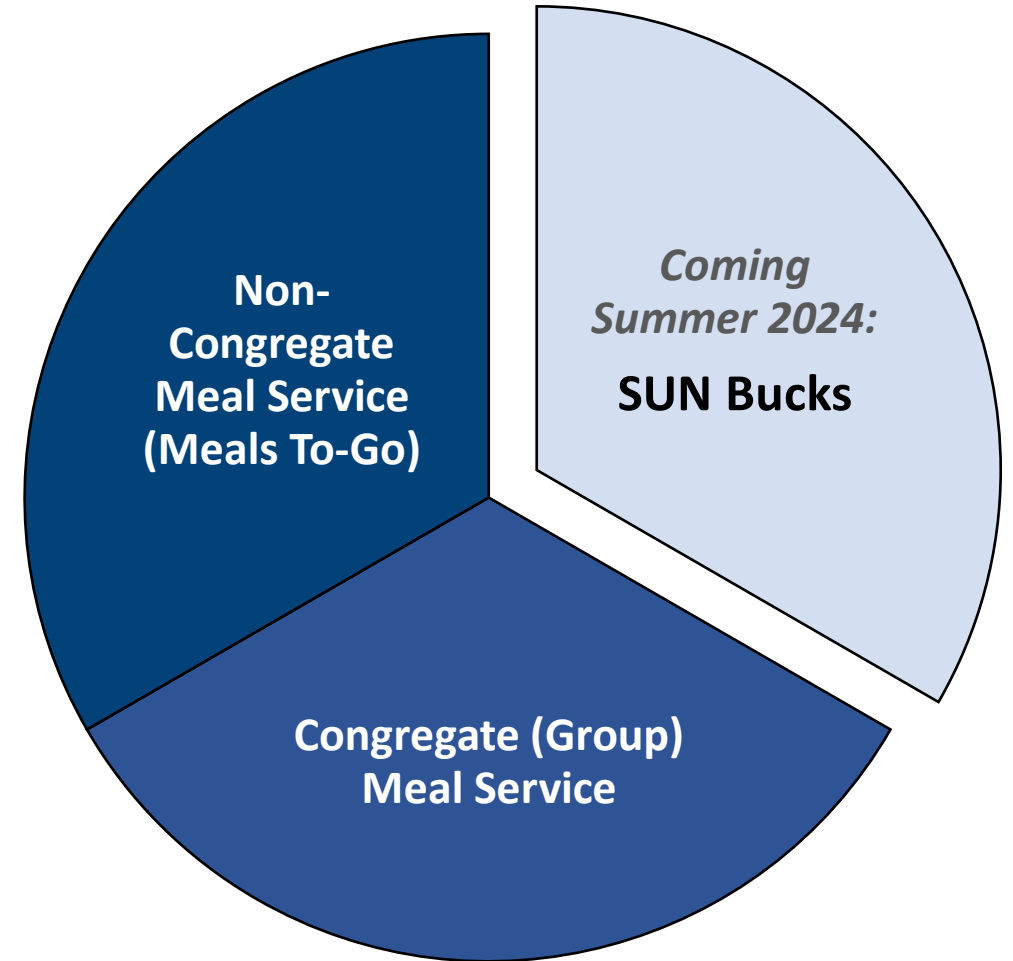
Children may live in areas that do not meet income requirements for summer nutrition meals.



Locating rural sponsors who can provide meals may be challenging due to transportation barriers.



89% of Group Meal Service sites require transportation to access, but only 30% of sites provide transportation.¹



SUN BUCKS 2024 PROGRAM GOAL AND IMPACT

NCDHHS and NCDPI aim to combat hunger among North Carolina's most food insecure children and teens.

1 million*

NC children will receive benefits to increase access to healthy food choices during the summer months.

\$120 million*

in food assistance benefits during the 2024 summer months, feeding children while boosting NC's economy.

**All figures are approximate and rounded*



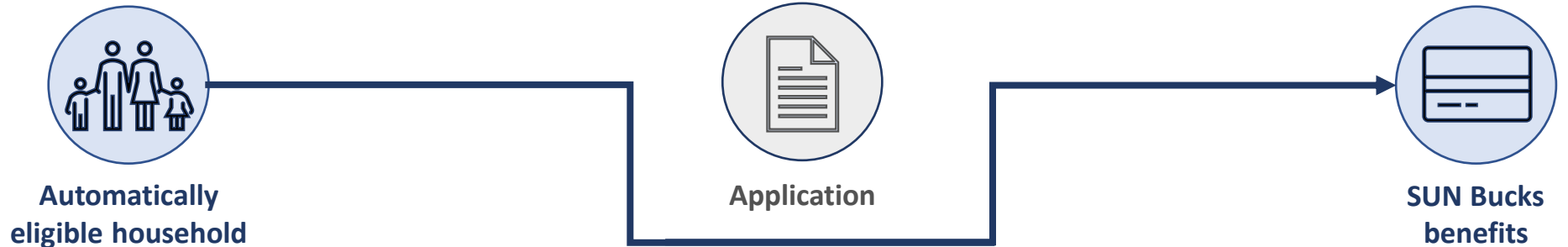
SUN BUCKS AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY

700k

North Carolina
students expected to
be automatically
eligible in 2024

Students may be **automatically eligible** for SUN Bucks if they participate in at least one of the following programs and do **NOT** need to apply:

1. National School Lunch Program (NSLP) free or reduced-price (FRP) school meals
2. Food and Nutrition Services (FNS, food stamps)
3. Work First (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, cash assistance)
4. Medicaid with household income below 185% of the federal poverty level
5. Foster care



How will families know if one or more of their children are automatically eligible?

Households with one or more children who are automatically eligible should receive an official Eligibility Notice via robocall, text, and email. More details are available on the [SUN Bucks webpage](https://ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks) (ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks).

WHO SHOULD COMPLETE A SUN BUCKS APPLICATION?

First, which type of school does the student attend?	Then, which scenario applies to the student?	Automatically qualify?	Apply?
NSLP	SCENARIO A: Participates in at least one of the following programs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NSLP free or reduced-price (FRP) school meals 2. Food and Nutrition Services (FNS, food stamps) 3. Work First (TANF, cash assistance) 4. Medicaid with household income below 185% of federal poverty level 5. Foster care 	YES	NO
	SCENARIO B: Does not participate in any of the programs listed in Scenario A.	NO	YES
<u>Non</u> -NSLP	Scenario C: Age 7 to 16 and also participates in at least one of the programs listed in Scenario A.	YES	NO
	Scenario D: Does not participate in any of the programs listed in Scenario A.	NO	NO
CEP	Scenario E: Participates in at least one of the programs listed in Scenario A.	YES	NO
	Scenario F: Does not participate in any of the programs listed in Scenario A.	NO	YES

SUN BUCKS 2024 KEY DATES



MAY 1st

*2024 SUN Bucks
application opens*



AUGUST 31st

*Last day to apply for 2024
SUN Bucks benefits*

How can families access the SUN Bucks application?

Families who can apply will receive an invitation to apply by E-mail with instructions. Families can also visit the [SUN Bucks webpage](https://ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks) (ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks) to learn more and apply once the application opens in May. The online application is the easiest and fastest way to apply; paper applications will also be available in school offices.

When will approved children receive their SUN Bucks benefits?

SUN Bucks benefits will start to go out mid to late June and will continue through the summer as more children are determined eligible.

More details are available on the [SUN Bucks webpage](https://ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks) (ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks). Monitor NCDHHS social media accounts for SUN Bucks announcements. These accounts are on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) (previously Twitter).

ROLE OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

We need YOU to help spread the word about the new SUN Bucks program in North Carolina. Community stakeholders can help support this information sharing in several ways:

Learn more about the new SUN Bucks program by visiting the NCDHHS website and social media channels.

Direct students and families interested in learning more to available resources, including the NCDHHS website.

Encourage students and families who may be eligible, but don't automatically qualify, to apply for SUN Bucks before August 31, 2024.

Distribute official SUN Bucks information through your established channels (e.g., ListServ, social media, bulletin boards).



POLL QUESTION #1

When is the deadline to apply for SUN Bucks this summer?

- A. June 30, 2024
- B. August 31, 2024
- C. July 1, 2024
- D. September 1, 2024

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- B. August 31, 2024**
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POLL QUESTION #2

Which of the following is NOT true about the SUN Bucks benefit?

- A. The benefit is a one-time payment for the summer period
- B. The benefit amount is \$120
- C. All eligible students will receive the same benefit amount
- D. The benefit must be used within 1 week of issuance

POLL QUESTION #2

Which of the following is NOT true about the SUN Bucks benefit?

- A. The benefit is a one-time payment for the summer period
- B. The benefit amount is \$120
- C. All eligible students will receive the same benefit amount
- D. The benefit must be used within 1 week of issuance**

POLL QUESTION #3

TRUE or FALSE: All students attending a CEP school are automatically eligible.

A. True

B. False

POLL QUESTION #3

TRUE or FALSE: All students attending a CEP school are automatically eligible.

A. True

B. False

POLL QUESTION #4

How will eligible students receive their SUN Bucks benefit? (Select ALL the apply)

- A. On a FNS card for students with an existing FNS case
- B. On a new SUN Bucks card and mailed to eligible students
- C. On students' old Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) cards
- D. As cash and mailed to eligible students

POLL QUESTION #4

How will eligible students receive their SUN Bucks benefit? (Select ALL the apply)

- A. On a FNS card for students with an existing FNS case**
- B. On a new SUN Bucks card and mailed to eligible students**
- C. On students' old Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) cards
- D. As cash and mailed to eligible students

POLL QUESTION #5

How can students access the SUN Bucks application?

- A. Receive a text, email, or robocall from NCDHHS (if eligible)
- B. Request a paper application from their school
- C. Visit ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks to see if they should apply
- D. All of the above

POLL QUESTION #5

How can students access the SUN Bucks application?

- A. Receive a text, email, or robocall from NCDHHS (if eligible)
- B. Request a paper application from their school
- C. Visit ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks to see if they should apply
- D. All of the above**

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), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, 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, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (833) 620-1071, 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:

1.mail:

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
1320 Braddock Place, Room 334
Alexandria, VA 22314; or

2.fax:

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

3.email:

FNSCIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

HOW COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS CAN HELP

Stay up to date on SUN Bucks information and NCDHHS food assistance programs. Please help spread the word and direct constituents to the SUN Bucks website, which will be regularly updated.

Where can I go for more information about SUN Bucks?

- **NCDHHS Website:** www.ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks
- **NCDHHS Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, and X):** @NCDHHS
- **Carolina Hunger Initiative Website:** www.carolinahungerinitiative.org

Please reach out to DCFWSUNBucks@dhhs.nc.gov with any questions!



Resources

- 1.) SUN Bucks Informational Flyer (English, Spanish)
- 2.) SUN Bucks Overview Flyer (English, Spanish)
- 3.) [SUN Bucks Resources Toolkit](#) on ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks

