To all Parents or Guardians of Students at Shenandoah Valley School District:

Summer EBT/SUN Bucks Benefit
Family Letter

What is Summer EBT/SUN Bucks:

A new program called Summer EBT, or **"SUN Bucks,"** has been authorized by a bipartisan U.S. Congress to provide food dollars to low-income families with school-aged children over the summer months. The program is proven to reduce food insecurity and improve children's nutrition during summer break. Governor Shapiro's administration announced that the Commonwealth would participate in this program beginning in the summer of 2024. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees the program, and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) coordinates the benefit issuance in Pennsylvania.

Who is Eligible:

A student is automatically eligible for 2024 Summer EBT/SUN Bucks if they are enrolled at a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP), **AND** they qualify for free or reduced-price school meals for any of these reasons:

1. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or
2. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or
3. Medical Assistance with income that qualifies them for the NSLP/SBP, or
4. Household meal application with income that qualifies, or
5. Are homeless, runaway, migrant, foster, or in Head Start

If your child is automatically eligible for Summer EBT/SUN Bucks, you do not need to do anything else to receive the benefit.

If you believe your income qualifies (185% or less of the federal poverty level), you can still apply for free or reduced meals through the school (unless your child attends a Community Eligibility Provision* (CEP) school) or apply for the Summer EBT/SUN Bucks through DHS. See "Summer EBT/SUN Bucks Application" below for details.

Students who are homeschooled or are taught virtually for 100% of the school year are ineligible for Summer EBT/SUN Bucks. The only exception is if the child also attends a school building regularly that offers them NSLP/SBP school meals.

***IMPORTANT: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** is a special program that allows NSLP/SBP schools in low-income areas to feed all students for free during the school year, regardless of each student's economic level. However, Summer EBT/SUN Bucks is based on each student's situation. **Students at CEP schools are not automatically eligible for Summer EBT/SUN Bucks** unless they receive SNAP, TANF, or Medical Assistance with income that qualifies them for free/reduced meals or are homeless, runaway, migrant, foster, or in Head Start.

Summer EBT/SUN Bucks Application:

Families should only submit a Summer EBT/SUN Bucks application if their child attended an NSLP/SBP-participating school in the 2023-2024 school year and was not found automatically eligible for Summer EBT/SUN Bucks.

Summer EBT/SUN Bucks applications will be available on July 1, 2024, on the DHS SUN Bucks webpage as a fillable PDF form in English and Spanish. DHS will review the family's application to confirm that the child attended an NSLP/SBP school, and that the family income qualifies for the benefit (185% or less of the federal poverty level). To qualify for SUN Bucks for 2024, an application must be submitted by August 31, 2024. Any applications submitted on or after September 1, 2024, will be held and considered only for SUN Bucks for the summer of 2025.

Benefit Issuance:

For the summer of 2024, a household will receive a $120 Summer EBT/SUN Bucks benefit (which equals $40 for each summer month) for every eligible child in the household.

The benefit will be issued at the household level, meaning if multiple eligible students are in a household, the benefit will be combined into one issuance amount. The benefit will be issued to the family's existing state EBT card (for SNAP or TANF) or on a new SUN Bucks card that is mailed, in most cases, to the household contact and address DHS has on file for that household. **Schools are not able to change this information.** If your SNAP, TANF, or Medical Assistance information needs to be updated, contact your County Assistance Office. If the household does not have a SNAP, TANF, or Medical Assistance case with DHS, the address that the school has on file will be used.

DHS will issue the 2024 Summer EBT/SUN Bucks benefits from late August to September 2024. All benefits should be issued by the end of October 2024. This may seem late for a benefit intended to assist eligible children and families over the summer months. DHS is building new processes and systems to meet USDA guidelines for this new program. Families are asked to be patient and understanding during this implementation year. The intent is for the benefit to be issued earlier in the summer break in future years.

Schools cannot assist families with Summer EBT/SUN Bucks benefit questions. Schools cannot access the state's Summer EBT/SUN Bucks system or records.

Summer EBT/SUN Bucks Resources for Families:

DHS and their County Assistance Offices offer family support for Summer EBT/SUN Bucks.

The DHS Summer EBT/SUN Bucks webpage for families can be found here: http://www.dhs.pa.gov/SunBucks. This webpage provides information about the benefit, Frequently Asked Questions, the SUN Bucks family application, and an eligibility navigator tool to help families determine if they need to apply.

County Assistance Offices can provide family support for all Summer EBT/SUN Bucks questions. A CAO locator tool is found here: https://www.dhs.pa.gov/services/assistance/pages/cao-contact.aspx

The Statewide Customer Service Center can be reached by phone at 1-877-395-8930, or 1-215-560-7226 in Philadelphia.

Note: DHS asks families not to call the County Assistance Offices or Statewide Customer Service lines regarding not receiving Summer EBT/SUN Bucks before the end of August 2024, when almost all the Summer EBT/SUN Bucks benefits for automatically eligible children have been issued.

SNAP, TANF, and Medical Assistance households that need to update their address with DHS should do so as soon as possible.