



HNS # 04-2026

Original Signed

MEMORANDUM

To: National School Lunch Program Operators, School Food Authorities and AzEDS Data / Student Information System Coordinators

From: Melissa Conner, Senior Deputy Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services Division

Date: March 20, 2026

Subject: Announcing the 2026 Summer EBT SUN Bucks Program and Requirements for School Food Authorities

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services (HNS), in partnership with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES), will administer the 2026 Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (SUN Bucks). The SUN Bucks program provides a one-time summer benefit amount of \$120 per eligible child to purchase groceries during the summer when school is not in session. To ensure accurate and timely issuance for 2026 SUN Bucks, this memorandum outlines the reporting requirements for National School Lunch Program (NSLP) School Food Authorities (SFAs) and Student Information System (SIS) coordinators along with the SFA's responsibility to promote the SUN Bucks household application. ADE recommends all SFAs register to attend the upcoming *What You Need to Know About Data & Access to SUN Bucks Benefits* webinar.

What reporting actions are required by the SFA?

- View the resources available on the [Information for Administrators and School Leaders webpage](#) under the Operational Guidance accordion. These resources will instruct SFAs on actions that must be taken to ensure student data has been reported to ADE properly. ADE will notify SFAs when these resources have been published.
- Log into ADEConnect and confirm access to the **CNP Summer EBT- SUN Bucks SFA Data Portal**. Data portal access is required for this reporting. If CNP Summer EBT- SUN Bucks SFA is not available in the SFA's ADEConnect user account, the appropriate user(s) must contact their Entity Administrator to request permissions.
- Log into the **CNP Summer EBT- SUN Bucks Data Portal** and complete a review of pre-populated student-level data including school enrollment, custodial parent/guardian name, mailing/home address, and free and reduced-price eligibility status. SFAs must edit, delete

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and/or upload student data if pre-populated student data does not match SFA records. This includes reporting any student certified free or reduced-price eligible that is not already prepopulated by ADE as eligible.

- Upload enrolled students who are **not** reported to AzEDS and have access to NSLP/School Breakfast Program (SBP) during School Year 2025-2026. This may include students enrolled in Bureau of Indian Education schools, private schools, and students attending a pre-K or federally funded Head Start that participates in the NSLP/SBP.

Who is Eligible for 2026 SUN Bucks?

While certain children attending schools that do not operate NSLP/SBP may be eligible, the information in this memorandum focuses on SUN Bucks eligibility requirements for students enrolled and attending schools operating NSLP/SBP.

To automatically be eligible for 2026 SUN Bucks, a child must:

Be enrolled and have attended at least one instructional school day at a NSLP/SBP participating site **during School Year 2025-2026,**

AND

Meet one or more of the following eligibility criteria for at least one day beginning on July 1, 2025 through August 3, 2026:

- Reside in a household that participates in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR), and/or income-based Medicaid (for Medicaid, household income provided must be at or below 185% of the federal poverty level);
- Qualify as a foster child, be certified under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act as a homeless or an unaccompanied youth, or under the Migrant Education Program, and/or be enrolled in a NSLP/SBP participating Federal Head Start Program;
- Be certified eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on an NSLP household application.

Valid Application Sources for SUN Bucks Benefits

The ADE Alternative Form for Income-Based Eligibility **does not** meet the requirement for use in determining SUN Bucks eligibility. Families will not receive benefits based solely on this form and must apply using an approved application. Valid applications include the NSLP or SUN Bucks household application.

Promoting the SUN Bucks Household Application

SFAs are responsible for sharing information about 2026 SUN Bucks and for promoting the SUN Bucks household application to families who are not automatically certified as eligible for the SUN Bucks benefit, but who may otherwise qualify. Only children who were enrolled and attended at least one

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instructional school day at an NSLP/SBP participating site during School Year 2025–2026 and meet the following conditions should be notified of the ability to apply:

Were enrolled at an NSLP/SBP participating site and were not previously certified as eligible for free or reduced-price meals;

OR

Are not automatically certified as eligible for SUN Bucks, but who were enrolled at a Community Eligibility Provision, Provision 2 or Provision 3 participating site that did not distribute NSLP household applications and therefore could not be determined eligible through the NSLP household application.

Custodial parents and legal guardians may access the 2026 SUN Bucks household application by visiting the ADE SUN Bucks [website](#) where both an online application and a paper version are available. To apply online, custodial parents and legal guardians will first be directed to complete the SUN Bucks Eligibility Screener Guide (available in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)) to determine whether submission of an application is required. ADE will manage and process SUN Bucks household applications and notify families of their benefit eligibility based on a submitted application. Households who are determined eligible based on submission of a SUN Bucks application will receive an approval letter in the mail. 2026 SUN Bucks household applications must be received by August 3, 2026.

Training Information and Resources

ADE will be hosting an informational webinar: *What You Need to Know About Data & Access to SUN Bucks Benefits*, on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, from 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm. SFAs may register for this webinar in the [ADE Professional Learning and Development \(APLD\)](#).

Additional resources are expected to be posted under Operational Guidance on [ADE's Information for Administrators and School Leaders webpage for SUN Bucks](#).

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1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

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