

Virginia SUN Bucks FAQ Document

Q. What is Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: Virginia SUN Bucks is a federal food benefit program created to reduce childhood hunger. It provides eligible children with a one-time \$120 food benefit on a SUN Bucks card to purchase groceries. Many families will get the benefit without applying, while some will need to apply.

Q: Is my child automatically eligible for SUN Bucks if we receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits?

A: Most children eligible to receive Virginia SUN Bucks will receive the benefit automatically without having to fill out an application. Your child is automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks if they receive SNAP benefits.

Q: Is my child automatically eligible for SUN Bucks if we receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits?

A: Most children eligible to receive Virginia SUN Bucks will receive the benefit automatically without having to fill out an application. Your child is automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks if they receive TANF benefits.

Q: Is my child automatically eligible for SUN Bucks if we receive Medical Assistance?

A: Most children eligible to receive Virginia SUN Bucks will receive the benefit automatically without having to fill out an application. Your child is automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks if they receive Medical Assistance, and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Visit <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines> to see if you make too much to participate in Virginia SUN Bucks.

Q: Is my child automatically eligible for SUN Bucks if we participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)?

A: Most children eligible to receive Virginia SUN Bucks will receive the benefit automatically without having to fill out an application. Your child is automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks if they annually submit an application to the school and received free or reduced-price school meals during the 2024-2025 school year through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). To learn more about NSLP, please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp>.

Q: How do I know if my family needs to apply for Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: You must apply for Virginia SUN Bucks if your child did not submit an annual application with their school and receive free or reduced-price school meals or your family does not participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance (MA) program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Visit <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines> to see if you make too much to participate in Virginia SUN Bucks.

Some schools provide free meals to kids without an application. If your child attends one of these schools and does not participate in SNAP, TANF or a Medical Assistance program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines, you should apply!

Q: How do I know if my child is ineligible for Virginia SUN Bucks and should NOT apply?

A: Your household may be ineligible if your income is above the program limit. The total amount of money your household can make depends on how many people live with you. Visit <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines> to see if you make too much to participate in Virginia SUN Bucks.

Another way your child may be ineligible for Virginia SUN Bucks is if they are homeschooled, attend a virtual school or a non-public school that does not participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and your family does not participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance program and the household size and income limit is more than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Visit <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines> to see if you make too much to participate in Virginia SUN Bucks.

Q: I don't think my family is automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks. How do I apply?

A: You can apply by contacting the Virginia SUN Bucks Call Center beginning July 1 through August 30 by calling 866-513-1414 (toll-free) Monday through Friday from 9:15 a.m.– 6 p.m. to fill out an application over the phone.

You may also download and print an application at <https://virginiasunbucks.com>, then mail it to 5600 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA, 23060. Mailed applications must be received by September 2, 2025, with a post mark date of August 30.

Q: If my children are not enrolled in a National School Lunch Program (NSLP) school and are not receiving benefits through SNAP, TANF or a Medical Assistance program, are they still eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: No, children who are not attending a school who participates in the NSLP may only establish eligibility for Virginia SUN Bucks if they are receiving benefits through SNAP, TANF or a Medical Assistance program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Visit <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Q: My child's school does not participate in a free or reduced meals program and my family is low-income, so is my child eligible for this program?

A: Children not attending a school that offers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), but are participating in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or a Medical Assistance program, and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines, are automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks.

If your child is not receiving SNAP, TANF or Medical Assistance and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines, you may apply. There are income limits for eligibility, so your household income must be within the maximum income limits for your household size. You can check the Virginia SUN Bucks income eligibility guidelines at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Q: How do I know if I'm eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks based on my income?

A: Your household is automatically eligible if your family participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Medical Assistance programs and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines, or your child applied to their school and received free or reduced-price school meals.

If your family does not meet one of those eligibility factors, then your household must meet the Virginia SUN Bucks income guidelines. You can find additional information about the Virginia SUN Bucks income guidelines at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Please note that Virginia SUN Bucks may have a different income limit than other benefit programs.

Q: My income increased. How will that affect my child's eligibility for Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: If your child was eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks and the household size and income limit is less than the Sun Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines at any point between July 2024 and the end of June 2025, your child remains eligible for benefits even if your income later increases.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines> for the time you apply for school meals or Virginia SUN Bucks.

Q: If my income increases, will I have to pay the money back?

A: No. If your income later increases, you will not have to pay back your benefits.

Q: My income decreased. How will that affect my child's eligibility for Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: If your income decreases, you may become eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines> for the time you apply for school meals or Virginia SUN Bucks.

Q: My household size increased. How will that affect eligibility for Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: If your household size increases, you might be eligible if your income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines. Please review the income guidelines at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Q: Will all children who attend Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools be automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: No. Attending a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school does not mean you are automatically eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks unless your family is also enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines. If you do not meet one of those criteria, but believe you would qualify based on your income, you must apply in order to receive Virginia SUN Bucks.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Q: Can homeschooled children receive Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: School-aged children who are homeschooled may be eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks only if they participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines. If you are one of these households, you automatically qualify for Virginia SUN Bucks.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Q: My family was eligible for SNAP, TANF and/or a Medical Assistance for only part of the year. Is my child still eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks benefits?

A: If your child participated between July 2024 through June 2025 in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines, your child's eligibility remains in effect for the entire year, and they are still automatically eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Q: If my child attends a year-round school, are they still eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks if they meet all other eligibility requirements?

A: Yes. Children attending year-round eligible schools are still eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks.

Q: My child attends a virtual-only school. Is my child eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: Children who attend virtual-only school may be eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks only if they participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance (MA) program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines. If you are one of these households, you automatically qualify for Virginia SUN Bucks.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>

Q: My child receives free lunch at school, so why do I need to apply?

A: Some schools provide free meals to all students without an application. If your student attends one of these schools, called Community Eligibility Provision or CEP, and your student does not participate in SNAP, TANF or a Medical Assistance program, then your child will need to apply to participate in Virginia SUN Bucks if your income meets the eligibility guidelines.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Q: My child is not automatically eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks, so when can I apply?

A: The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) will accept applications for children not automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks from July 1 through August 30. You may complete an application over the phone by calling 866-513-1414 (toll-free) Monday through Friday from 9:15 a.m. – 6 p.m. or download and print an application at <https://virginiasunbucks.com> and mail it to 5600 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA, 23060.

Mailed applications must be received by September 2, 2025, and post marked as of August 30, 2025.

Q: What information will I need to apply for Virginia SUN Bucks?

A: To prepare your application, you will be asked to provide:

- Income for each member of your household.
- Information about your child or children including their age, birth date, the county or city school division, the school they attend and mailing address.
- Each student's local student ID number, which can be found in the parent portal on the school division website.
- The last four digits of your child's Social Security number.

After you apply, some households may be contacted to provide verifications of the information stated on your application.

Q: What is the timeframe for submitting and processing applications?

A: The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is accepting applications for children not automatically eligible and enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks. You can download the application at <https://virginiasunbucks.com/> then mail it to 5600 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA where it must be post marked by August 30, 2025, and received by September 2. You may also apply over the phone starting July 1. Applications will be processed and approved by VDSS.

Q: When will VDSS issue Virginia SUN Bucks benefits?

A: Benefits will be issued on a rolling basis beginning July 2025 to children who automatically qualify and August 2025 to families who are eligible by application. Depending on when they apply, families might get their Virginia SUN Bucks benefits at different times. It may take 7-10 days from the availability date to receive your card in the mail. Households with SNAP will need to check their card balance.

Q: How will I get my benefits?

A: If your household participates in SNAP, the Virginia SUN Bucks benefits will be loaded onto your existing SNAP EBT card. If your household does not participate in SNAP, your Virginia SUN Bucks benefits will be loaded onto a new SUN Bucks card that will be mailed to the address on file with your school or application.

Q: What can I buy with Virginia SUN Bucks benefits?

A: You can use your benefits to purchase food like fruits, vegetables, meat, whole grains and dairy at grocery stores, farmers' markets and other places that accept SNAP EBT benefits. You can learn more about the Virginia EBT card by visiting https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ebt_card/.

Q: What should I do when I get my SUN Bucks card in the mail?

A: Your Virginia SUN Bucks card will arrive in the mail with a Buck Slip, which contains step-by-step instructions for activating it.

Q: How can I check the balance on my card?

A: Check how much money you have on your card before you go shopping. There are a few ways you can check your balance anytime:

- Visit www.ConnectEBT.com and select Virginia EBT from the dropdown box.
- Check your receipt when you make a purchase with the card; your remaining balance will be printed there.

- Use the point-of-sale device at the store: swipe your card, enter your PIN and do a balance inquiry.
- Call the customer service number at 866-281-2448, enter your 16-digit number on the front of your card and hear the balance inquiry.

Q: If I receive a Virginia SUN Bucks card and don't want the benefits, what do I do with the card?

A: Do not use the card. The benefits will be removed from the card and returned to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service after 122 days of non-use. You will receive a letter in the mail 30-45 days before the benefits are removed reminding you about the expungement of benefits.

You may also contact your Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) to notify them. Local DSS staff will inactivate the card so that benefits may not be used.

Q: What should I do if I receive a duplicate benefit or receive benefits in error?

A: Do not use the card. Call your Local Department of Social Services to report the mistake. Local DSS staff will inactivate the card so that benefits may not be used.

Q: If I was overpaid and have spent all the benefits, will I have to pay back the money?

A: As of 2025, if you are issued duplicate or overpayments, you should reach out to your Local Department of Social services to report it. You will be responsible for repaying any benefits you have used for which your household was not eligible to receive.

Q: I lost my card. What should I do?

A: To replace a lost card, call Connect customer service at 866-281-2448 (TTY-relay services for hearing/speech impaired at 800-828-1120) to cancel the lost card and request a new one.

Q: What should I do with the Virginia SUN Bucks card when my benefits are used up?

A: Please keep your SNAP EBT card because the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) plans to issue Virginia SUN Bucks benefits on existing cards next year.

Q: I have multiple children. Will I get a card for each child?

A: Virginia SUN Bucks benefits will be loaded onto one card for all eligible children in your family. If your family receives SNAP benefits, Virginia SUN Bucks will be loaded onto your existing SNAP EBT card. There may be some instances where more than one card is issued to eligible children if different parents or guardians are reported to their school and do not match the SNAP household information.

Q: When will my Virginia SUN Bucks benefit expire?

A: Once you receive your benefits, you have 122 days to use them. After 122 days, the benefits will be removed from your card. We'll send you a notice 30 days before your benefits are set to expire.

Q: My card was stolen. Can I get replacement benefits?

A: The USDA-Food and Nutrition Service does not have the authority to replace benefits stolen through card skimming, card cloning or similar fraudulent methods.

Q: What if I'm supposed to get a Virginia SUN Bucks card without applying, but had a recent change in address?

A: Addresses are updated in the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) system, with information provided by you and/or your child's school. If you believe you have not received your card because of an incorrect address, contact your Local Department of Social Services, who will update your address and mail or make available to you a replacement.

Q: How do you determine the name of the parent on the card?

A: The parent's name on the card will be determined by how the child is first found eligible for the Virginia SUN Bucks program.

1. Children who are eligible for this program because of participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will have their benefits loaded onto their parent's SNAP card.
2. Children who are eligible for this program because of their participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, certain income-eligible Medical Assistance, or foster care will have benefits loaded onto a Virginia SUN Bucks card in the name and address of the parent on file in the qualifying program.
3. Children who are eligible for the program because they applied for and receive free or reduced-price meals at school will have a SUN Bucks card sent in the name of a parent and address in the school's student information system.
4. Children who are eligible for the program because they applied for Virginia SUN Bucks over the phone or a paper SUN Bucks application will receive benefits on a card issued to the parent or guardian and address who applied for the program.
5. Children who are eligible for the program because of participation in the Foster Care Program will have their benefits loaded onto a card in their foster parent's name or a **representative of the Local Department of Social Services.**

Q: What if I receive a card with a name on it that is not the parent, guardian or student?

A: The Virginia SUN Bucks card might be issued in the name of the parent or guardian listed in the student's school records or case file for other benefits or in the student's name. It's okay to use the card given to you as long as you take care of the student and provide their meals. If you're not taking care of the child, and the benefits were given to you by mistake, please do not use the card and contact the Local Department of Social Services to report this information.

Q: How will homeless students get their SUN Bucks?

A: Children experiencing homelessness will get their Virginia SUN Bucks cards sent to the address listed in the file at their school.

If you are submitting a Virginia SUN Bucks application and are unhoused, please use the address where you receive mail.

Q: How will migrant students get their SUN Bucks?

A: For migrant children who automatically qualify for Virginia SUN Bucks, the Virginia SUN Bucks card will be sent to the last known address on file with their school or benefits caseworker or to their Local Department of Social Services.

If you are submitting a Virginia SUN Bucks application and are a migrant, please use the address where you receive mail.

Q: How will students in foster care get their Sun Bucks?

A: Children in foster care will get their Virginia SUN Bucks cards sent to the address listed in the file at their LDSS office.

If you are submitting a Virginia SUN Bucks application, please use the address where you receive mail.

Q: Where can I get program updates?

A: The Virginia SUN Bucks webpage located at <https://virginiasunbucks.com/> will be updated regularly with new information about the program.

To be the first to know about updates and other announcements about the SUN Bucks program, follow VDSS on Facebook, Instagram and www.VirginiaSunbucks.com. You can link to our social media profiles at the top of the Virginia SUN Bucks webpage.

Q: Will participating in Virginia SUN Bucks hurt my immigration status?

A: No, receiving Virginia SUN Bucks does not affect your child or your family's immigration status.

Q: Does receiving Virginia SUN Bucks disqualify me from other summer food programs?

A: No, receiving Virginia SUN Bucks does not disqualify your child from participating in other food programs. For free summer meals for kids, visit the USDA Food and Nutrition Service [Summer Meals for Kids Site Finder](#) to find a location in your area for children 18 and under.

Q: Will I have to apply for Virginia SUN Bucks each year?

A: Unless your child is automatically enrolled in Virginia SUN Bucks by participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance (MA) program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines, you must apply each year because your family's circumstances can change from year to year.

Income guidelines are located at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/sebt-income-eligibility-guidelines>

Q: When I apply for Virginia SUN Bucks, do I need to provide any documents to prove my child is eligible for the benefit?

A: This year, some households may be contacted to provide documentation to support the information provided on the application.

Q: I'm a worker who wants to help families understand Virginia SUN Bucks. What materials do you have?

A: Thank you for your partnership with Virginia SUN Bucks. We have developed a partner toolkit that includes translated materials, sample household letters, and flyers to help with your outreach efforts. Learn more at <https://virginiasunbucks.com/>.

Q: Can I fax my application?

A: We cannot accept faxed applications. If you would like to apply for Virginia SUN Bucks you can apply by phone at 866-513-1414 by August 30 or download an application from <https://virginiasunbucks.com/> and mail it to 5600 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060. All mailed applications must be received by September 2 and post marked as of August 30.

Q: My friend received their Virginia SUN Bucks card, but I haven't. Do I need to reapply?

A: No. Families eligible for this food benefit receive their cards at different times, depending on when their application was received and approved.

Q: How do I update my address or date of birth?

A: You can update it with your school first, then contact your Local Department of Social Services to have your address or date of birth updated.

Q: Will I receive a notification that I was approved for SUN Bucks?

A: If the child annually applied for and received free or reduced-price meals at school with the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP), or the family participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or a Medical Assistance program and the household size and income limit is less than the SUN Bucks Income Eligibility Guidelines, your child will automatically be enrolled in SUN Bucks and will not receive a written notification.

Q: If my child is denied Virginia SUN Bucks, how can I appeal the decision?

A: The procedures for appeals and fair hearings related to Virginia SUN Bucks eligibility will generally follow the current appeal and fair hearing procedures for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program (NSLP). Hearing procedures will allow families to appeal an eligibility determination made by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and allow VDSS to challenge the child's continued eligibility.

To appeal your Virginia SUN Bucks denial decision and request a fair hearing, you may start the appeal and fair hearing process either in writing or by phone.

All written requests for appeals may be submitted by mail to the following address:
Virginia SUN Bucks Appeals c/o Benefit Programs
Virginia Department of Social Services
5600 Cox Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Individuals may also request a Virginia SUN Bucks appeal by calling 804-726-7000.

Q: What is the deadline to request a fair hearing?

A: If you want a fair hearing about your current Virginia SUN Bucks benefits, you may request a fair hearing any time before November 18, 2025, within four months of your application.

Q: What do I need for my request to appeal?

A: You need to include information that would allow VDSS to identify and contact you regarding your request, including your case number on the denial notice. Also, include what you are appealing and why you believe the denial determination is in error. Do not include dates of birth and Social Security numbers in emailed inquiries unless the email is encrypted.

Q: What takes place in the Virginia SUN Bucks appeal and fair hearing process?

A: The first step is to hold a virtual or phone pre-hearing meeting. At the pre-hearing meeting, we will discuss the reason for the denial, and you can explain why you think you are eligible for Virginia SUN Bucks benefits. At the meeting, you may be represented by an authorized representative, legal counsel, relative or friend. Your failure to request or participate in a pre-hearing meeting has no effect on your right to appeal and have a fair hearing, or on your right to continued participation.

If you want to continue the process after the pre-hearing meeting, then your information is forwarded to VDSS Appeals and Fair Hearings, who will ensure that:

- The fair hearing will be held quickly and easily, and you will be given adequate notice about the time and place of the hearing, which is usually conducted virtually by telephone or video conference.
- The hearing will be conducted, and the decision made, by a hearing official who did not participate in making the initial decision to deny benefits or in any previously held conference.
- Prior to and during the fair hearing, you can:
 - Be helped or represented by an attorney or other person.
 - Examine, before and during the hearing, any documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal.
 - Present verbal evidence or documents supporting your position without unnecessary interference.
 - Question or deny any testimony or other evidence and confront and cross-examine any opposing witnesses.

The hearing official's decision will be based on the verbal evidence and documents presented at the hearing and made a part of the hearing record.

Q: Can I get free legal help?

A: You may be able to get free legal help from Virginia Legal Aid by calling 866-534-5243 or visiting www.valegalaid.org for more information.