


### **FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION**

<b>Policy Number:</b>	AT 26-02
<b>Policy Title:</b>	Maryland SUN Bucks - Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)
<b>Release Date:</b>	September 16, 2025
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Immediately Upon Receipt
<b>Approved By:</b>	Augustin Ntabaganyimana Executive Director Family Investment Administration
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<b>Required Actions:</b>	Implementation of Maryland SUN Bucks Program
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<b>Related Federal Law</b>	<a href="#">42 U.S.C. § 1762</a> ; <a href="#">7 CFR § 292.1-292.31</a>
<b>Related State Laws</b>	<a href="#">Human Services Article § 5-501.1, Ann. Code of Md.</a>
<b>COMAR</b>	To Be Determined
<b>State Plan Implications?</b>	No

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 <p><b>Maryland</b> Department of Human Services</p> <p>Department of Human Services 25 S Charles Street Baltimore MD 21201</p>	<p align="center"><b>FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION (FIA) ACTION TRANSMITTAL</b></p>
<p><b>Control Number: # 26-02</b></p>	<p><b>Effective Date: Immediately Upon Receipt</b> <b>Issuance Date: September 16, 2025</b></p>

**TO: LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES (LDSS)  
DIRECTORS, LDSS DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR  
FAMILY INVESTMENT, FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND  
ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

**FROM: AUGUSTIN NTABAGANYIMANA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** 

**RE: MARYLAND SUN BUCKS - SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFIT  
TRANSFER (EBT)**

**PROGRAM AFFECTED: MARYLAND SUN BUCKS - SUMMER EBT**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS**

### **1 Purpose**

This Action Transmittal (AT) provides an overview of policy and procedures to administer the Maryland SUN Bucks program.

### **2 Summary**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 ([PL 117-328](#)) authorized a permanent, nationwide Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer EBT) program beginning in 2024. The Summer EBT program in Maryland is called “Maryland SUN Bucks.” Starting in June 2024, the Department of Human Services (DHS), in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), launched Maryland SUN Bucks as a federally funded nutrition program designed to promote food security among school-aged children during the summer months when school is out and families cannot access school nutrition programs. Building on the state’s existing Summer Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program, Maryland SUN Bucks served a record 605,000 children across the state with more than \$72 million in new funding from the federal government.

### 3 Definitions

**Community Eligibility Provision (CEP):** A National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal service option that allows schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) in high-poverty areas to offer meals at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications.

**Compulsory school age:** The age range during which attendance in school is required by a State. In Maryland, the compulsory school age is 5-18 years.

**Homeless child:** A child identified as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as specified under section 725(a) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ([42 U.S.C. 11434a\(2\)](#)) by the local educational agency liaison, director of a homeless shelter or other individual identified by FNS.

**Instructional year:** The period from July 1 of the prior year through one day before the summer operational period begins (June 14).

**Migrant child:** A child identified as meeting the definition of migrant in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C. 6399](#)) by the State or local Migrant Education Program coordinator or the local educational liaison, or other individual identified by FNS.

**NSLP/SBP:** The National School Lunch Program established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and/or the School Breakfast Program established under the Child Nutrition Act. This is also known as the Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS).

**Period of eligibility:** The period from the first day of the instructional year, as defined in this section, immediately preceding the summer operational period, as defined in this section, through the last day of the summer operational period.

**Runaway child:** A child identified as a runaway receiving assistance under a program under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act ([42 U.S.C. 5701](#) et seq.) by the local educational liaison, or other individual, per guidance issued by FNS.

**Statewide Processing Model:** A centralized system that streamlines processes to evenly distribute tasks among the 23 participating jurisdictions.

**Summer Operational Period:** The benefit period that generally reflects the period between the end of classes during the current school year and the start of classes for the next school year. The Summer Operational Period is June 15-August 31 in Maryland.

## 4 Policy

This Action Transmittal implements the Maryland SUN Bucks program. As the administering agency (in collaboration with MSDE), Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) are responsible for overseeing the Maryland SUN Bucks program.

To ensure that children have access to healthy and nutritious meals when school is not in session during the summer period, the Maryland SUN Bucks program provides \$40 per month for each eligible child for the months of June, July, and August (a total of \$120 per child) for families to buy groceries.

### 4.1 Eligibility

Eligibility for Maryland SUN Bucks is based on the household and income eligibility standards for the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program, known as Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) in Maryland.

Children are determined eligible for Maryland SUN Bucks in one of two ways:

- A. Direct Certification. Directly certified students do not need to apply for Maryland SUN Bucks. Students will be directly certified as eligible if at any point since July 1 of the prior year the child:
  - a. Received a needs-based benefit (SNAP, TCA, MA);
  - i. Not all Medical Assistance coverage groups are directly certified for SUN Bucks, only those with income thresholds of 185% or less of the federal poverty level (P07, P13, and F02).
  - b. Was in foster care, a migrant, runaway, or experienced homelessness; or
  - c. Applied for and received NSLP/SBP (FARMS).

*Opting Out of Maryland SUN Bucks.* Families that have been directly certified may choose not to participate in Maryland SUN Bucks. Parents or guardians of a child can opt out of Maryland SUN Bucks for the current summer by calling the customer service phone number, 1-800-332-6347, and selecting the option for Maryland SUN Bucks. This will route the caller to a Maryland SUN Bucks staff member who will document the request in E&E. The household must destroy the Maryland SUN Bucks card or allow the benefits to expunge after 122 days. This will not prevent the child(ren) from being directly certified in future years.

- B. Application and Eligibility Determination. Children who are not directly certified may be eligible for Maryland SUN Bucks, but must apply. Children who attend a NSLP/SBP (FARMS) Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school but do not meet the direct certification requirements will not be automatically enrolled. Their parents/guardians must apply for the Maryland SUN Bucks program. Children who attend NSLP/SBP (FARMS) CEP schools must meet the income eligibility requirements of the NSLP/SBP (FARMS) to be eligible for Maryland SUN Bucks.

The following children are ineligible for Maryland Sun Bucks:

- A. Children, irrespective of age, who are not enrolled in a school that participates in the NSLP/SBP (FARMS) program (homeschooled children fall into this category), UNLESS they meet the direct certification requirements.
- B. Children in households that exceed income NSLP/SBP (FARMS) eligibility thresholds.

## **4.2 Application**

Households may apply for Maryland SUN Bucks in the following ways:

- A. Online Application (preferred). An application for Maryland SUN Bucks may be submitted online via the [Maryland Benefits Consumer Portal \(https://benefits.maryland.gov/\)](https://benefits.maryland.gov/).
- B. Paper Application. Paper applications are available for download internally from [Knowledge Base \(https://kb.dhs.maryland.gov/\)](https://kb.dhs.maryland.gov/) or externally on the [Maryland SUN Bucks website \(https://dhs.maryland.gov/sunbucks/\)](https://dhs.maryland.gov/sunbucks/) and can be dropped off, emailed, or faxed to any LDSS.
  - a. Completed paper applications submitted to a Local Department of Social Services must be entered into the Consumer Portal by a Maryland SUN Bucks staff member within 24 hours of receipt. The application must be scanned/uploaded to Case Documents in the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system.
- C. No Phone Applications. Applications for Maryland SUN Bucks may not be taken over the phone. If a customer is not able to complete their application on the Maryland Benefits Consumer Portal and is not able to come into a Local Department of Social Services for assistance applying via Maryland Benefits, the LDSS must send (by the customer's preferred method-mail, email, or fax) a Maryland SUN Bucks paper application.

All Maryland SUN Bucks applications must be reviewed within 10 days and eligibility determined within 15 days of receipt by the agency.

The length of Maryland SUN Bucks eligibility as a result of an approved application depends on the application date. Approved applications submitted in the months of:

- A. June is determined to be eligible for the current summer.
- B. July or August are determined to be financially eligible for both the current and immediately following summers; or,
- C. September through May will only be determined eligible for the following summer.

#### **4.2.1 Verification Requirements**

Households applying for Maryland SUN Bucks are not subject to mandatory verification. Instead, Maryland SUN Bucks applications are subject to verification for cause. Verification for cause means that verification is not required unless something on the application is questionable. For example, if the agency is aware that the applicant provided conflicting or inconsistent information on the application, the case worker would request verification. There are no mandatory clearances for Maryland SUN Bucks (BEACON, SVES, SOIQi, The Work Number, EDRS, etc.) but these systems may be used by the case worker to verify questionable information.

Beginning in 2025, a randomly selected Verification Sample must be reviewed for accuracy each year. The verification sample is equal to three (3) percent of all applications approved via the application process from the start of the instructional year (July 1) through April 1 of the school year immediately preceding the summer operational period. Verification procedures are detailed in the [Maryland SUN Bucks Policy and Procedures Manual](#).

Households that are selected as part of the verification sample are not eligible to receive Maryland SUN Bucks until they provide the required verifications.

#### **4.2.2 Household Income**

Household income includes any money received by any household member, including children. Household income includes (but is not limited to) earnings, wages, TCA, pensions, support payments (child/alimony), unemployment compensation, Social Security benefits (SSI/SSDI), cash amounts received or withdrawn from any source such as savings, investments, or trust accounts, etc.

The total household income from any 30-day period since July 1 of the prior year may not exceed 185% of the federal poverty level for the household size (as indicated in the tables below). The income eligibility guidelines for

Maryland SUN Bucks follow the income guidelines for the NSLP/SBP (FARMS) and are updated on July 1 of every year.

**INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**  
(Effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026)

Household Size	Free Meals					Reduced-Price Meals				
	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Twice per month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$20,345	\$1,696	\$848	\$783	\$392	\$28,953	\$2,413	\$1,207	\$1,114	\$557
2	27,495	2,292	1,146	1,058	529	39,128	3,261	1,631	1,505	753
3	34,645	2,888	1,444	1,333	667	49,303	4,109	2,055	1,897	949
4	41,795	3,483	1,742	1,608	804	59,478	4,957	2,479	2,288	1,144
5	48,945	4,079	2,040	1,883	942	69,653	5,805	2,903	2,679	1,340
6	56,095	4,675	2,338	2,158	1,079	79,828	6,653	3,327	3,071	1,536
7	63,245	5,271	2,636	2,433	1,217	90,003	7,501	3,751	3,462	1,731
8	70,395	5,867	2,934	2,708	1,354	100,178	8,349	4,175	3,853	1,927
For each additional family member add...	\$7,150	\$596	\$298	\$275	\$138	\$10,175	\$848	\$424	\$392	\$196

### 4.2.3 Household Members

Household members include all adults and children who reside in the household, including people residing in the household who are not related to the child. People residing in the household who are not applying for Maryland SUN Bucks also count as household members.

### 4.2.4 Citizenship/Alien Status

Applicants are not required to be United States citizens and are not required to have qualified alien status to be eligible for Maryland SUN Bucks. Do not ask about citizenship or immigration status.

### 4.2.5 Social Security Number

Maryland SUN Bucks applications do not require a Social Security number. Customers may choose to provide a Social Security number, which can be used to assist with data matching, but this is not required to complete an application or for eligibility. Customers may provide a Social Security number on a strictly voluntary basis.

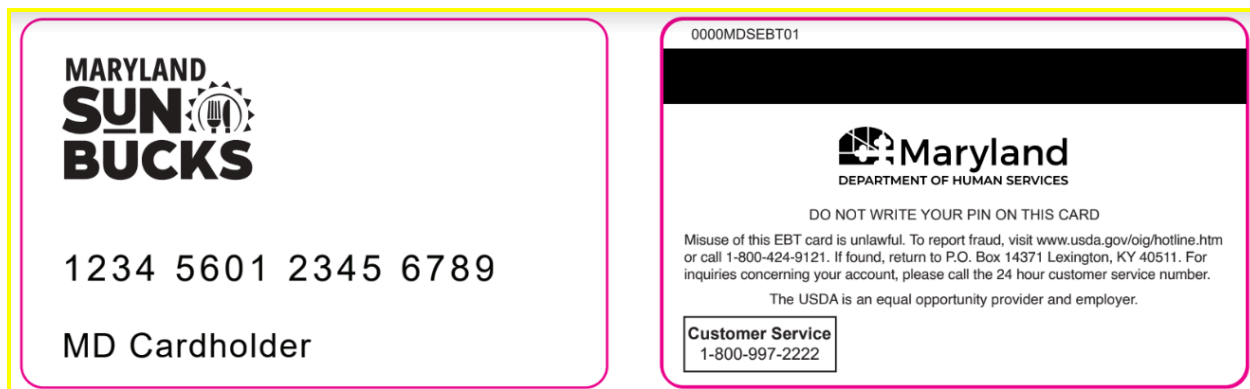
## 5 Benefit Issuance

Maryland SUN Bucks provides \$40 per month per eligible child for June, July, and August (a total of \$120 per child) for families to buy groceries during the summer break.

Maryland SUN Bucks benefits are issued on existing SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards for children who were part of a household that has received SNAP or TCA benefits since July 1 of the prior year, regardless of



whether or not the SNAP or TCA case is currently active. For children who have not previously received SNAP or TCA benefits, Maryland SUN Bucks benefits are issued on a white Maryland SUN Bucks card.



## 5.1 Expungement of Benefits

Any unused Maryland SUN Bucks benefits will automatically expunge 122 days from the date of issuance. When households participate in both Maryland SUN Bucks and SNAP, which are on an existing EBT card, Maryland SUN Bucks will automatically be used first because of the shorter timeline.

## 5.2 Maryland SUN Bucks EBT Card Replacement

A Maryland SUN Bucks customer who lost or misplaced their EBT or Maryland SUN Bucks card may request a replacement be mailed to them by calling 1-800-997-2222. If the address on file in the EBT EPPIC system is not correct when they call, the customer must call the DHS Call Center at 1-800-332-6347 and select the Maryland SUN Bucks option. Maryland SUN Bucks processing staff will update the address in the E&E system. Once updated, the address will be updated in EPPIC during overnight batch, and the EBT trainer can request that a new card be mailed once EPPIC reflects the correct address.

Since Maryland SUN Bucks carries a short expungement timeline, customers have the option to obtain an over-the-counter (vault) EBT card at ANY LDSS. If a customer requests a vault card, the EBT trainer will issue a regular Independence vault card (yellow/orange EBT card). Customers who were originally issued a Maryland SUN Bucks card are eligible for a vault card and must be given a regular yellow/orange Independence vault card because blank Maryland SUN Bucks cards are not available.



### **5.2.1 Issuing Vault Cards**

The process for EBT Trainers to issue a vault card for Maryland SUN Bucks is as follows:

1. Search for the Maryland SUN Bucks head of household in EPPIC by name and date of birth,
2. Confirm in EPPIC that the child received Maryland SUN Bucks and verify the type of card the benefits were initially issued on, first and last name, date of birth, residential, and mailing address of the original cardholder (Note: SNAP does not have to be active to issue a vault card for use of Maryland SUN Bucks).
3. Request and copy the Photo ID of the individual picking up the card (typically the parent/guardian of the child),
4. Complete the vault EBT card referral form, documenting the name, address, telephone number, and email address of the individual picking up the card.
5. Issue the vault EBT card with the individual signing a log that they received a vault EBT card. Advise the individual to keep their newly issued vault EBT card if they are eligible for any other EBT-issued benefits in the future.
6. The vault EBT card referral form and related documentation must be retained for two years.

Replacement Maryland SUN Bucks cards must be available for pickup or sent by mail within two business days following notice by the household to the agency that the card has been lost, stolen, or damaged.

## **6 Staffing Model and Responsibilities**

Maryland has implemented a regional staffing model to administer Maryland SUN Bucks. The regional model is similar to the Statewide Processing Model (SPM) except that Montgomery County is included in Region 3 for Maryland SUN Bucks purposes. Two (2) jurisdictions from each of the three (3) regions (a total of six (6) local departments) were selected to process and manage all Maryland SUN Bucks applications.

Processing jurisdictions are responsible for:

- A. Processing Maryland SUN Bucks applications (applications should only be received from households that are not directly certified).
- B. Completing the verification process for applications selected for the verification sample.

- C. Case maintenance and management;
- D. Preparing documentation and representing the agency for Maryland SUN Bucks appeals.
- E. Troubleshooting eligibility issues; and
- F. Answering the Maryland SUN Bucks hotline.

All jurisdictions are responsible for:

- A. Conducting outreach in partnership with local school systems;
- B. Helping walk-in customers submit Maryland SUN Bucks applications as needed;
- C. Issuing over-the-counter (vault) EBT cards; and
- D. Answering questions about the program.

The processing jurisdictions selected for each region are identified in the table below:

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3
Baltimore City	Prince George's	Baltimore County
Harford	Anne Arundel	Montgomery
Wicomico	Washington	Charles
Howard	Frederick	Cecil
Allegany	Dorchester	Carroll
Calvert	Caroline	Worcester
Somerset	Saint Mary's	Talbot
Garrett	Kent	Queen Anne's

## 7 Customer Service

Customers with questions, concerns, or changes to report regarding Maryland SUN Bucks can call the DHS Call Center at 1-800-332-6347. The caller will select the option for Maryland SUN Bucks and be routed to a Maryland SUN Bucks staff member in a processing jurisdiction.

## 8 Appeals

Customers have the right to appeal the following types of decisions made regarding their Maryland SUN Bucks case within 90 days of the end of the summer operational period (August 31).

- A. Eligibility determination;
- B. Direct Certification;
- C. Verification process or procedure; or
- D. Any adverse action taken against the household.

If a customer wants to file a Maryland SUN Bucks appeal, they must complete either a [Maryland SUN Bucks Fair Hearing Request Form](#) (preferred) or the agency [Fair Hearing Request Form](#) (available for download on [Knowledge Base](#) or the [Maryland SUN Bucks website](#)) and submit it to any Local Department of Social Services in person or by mail, email, or fax. Any completed Fair Hearing Request Form must be scanned to Case Documents and emailed to [sunbucks.appeals@maryland.gov](mailto:sunbucks.appeals@maryland.gov). For questions regarding the appeals process, customers should call the DHS Call Center at 1-800-332-6347 and select the Maryland SUN Bucks option.

## 9 Replacement of Benefits

When a household reports their EBT card has been lost or stolen, the agency must assume liability for benefits subsequently drawn from the account and replace any lost or stolen benefits to the household. Additionally, Maryland SUN Bucks benefits must be replaced when the household reports that food purchased with Summer EBT benefits was destroyed in a household misfortune or disaster (see [SNAP Policy Manual Section 470](#) for more information).

The Maryland SUN Bucks benefit replacement process will follow the current Stolen Benefits procedures (see [AT 25-10 Discontinued Federal Restoration of Stolen Benefits](#) for more information). Customers must complete and submit a Stolen Benefits Attestation Form. This can be completed online via the [Maryland Benefits Consumer Portal](#) or the form may be downloaded from [Knowledge Base](#), completed, and submitted to a Local Department of Social Services in person or by mail, email, or fax. Customers may also call the Customer Service Call Center at 1-800-332-6347 and select the Maryland SUN Bucks option for assistance. Stolen Benefits Attestations may not be taken over the phone. If a customer is not able to complete the form on the Maryland Benefits Consumer Portal and is not able to come into a Local Department of Social Services for assistance completing it via Maryland Benefits, the LDSS must send a [Stolen Benefits Attestation Form](#) using the

customer's preferred method of communication (mail, email, or fax).

## 10 References

### [7 CFR § 292.1-292.31](#)

Family Investment Administration (2023). [AT 23-08 Restoration of Stolen Benefits](#). Baltimore, MD: Department of Human Services.

Family Investment Administration (2025). [AT 25-01 Statewide Process Management \(SPM\)](#). Baltimore, MD: Department of Human Services.

Food and Nutrition Service (2024). [Summer EBT Q&As](#). <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt/questions-answers>. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## Inquiries

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the [FIA Policy Information Request Form](#). Montgomery County staff may submit their policy questions via email at [fia.policy@maryland.gov](mailto:fia.policy@maryland.gov). For questions related to E&E, please email [fia.bsdm@maryland.gov](mailto:fia.bsdm@maryland.gov).

cc: DHS Executive Staff  
Constituent Services  
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Office of Administrative Hearings