

# Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) and Illinois Schools – Summer 2026

In Partnership with the Illinois Department  
of Human Services (DHS)

Webinar: May 5, 2026

# What is Summer EBT?

- The Illinois Plan for Operations and Management of Summer EBT 2026 *is pending USDA approval. (We are hopeful approval will be soon!)*
- Summer EBT is a federal nutrition program that provides a grocery benefit during the summer months to families with children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.
- The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 ([P.L 117-328](#)) authorized this permanent, nationwide program beginning in 2024.
- Summer EBT is designed to reduce childhood hunger.
- Illinois will participate in this new nationwide permanent Summer EBT program.
- Eligible children will receive a one-time benefit of \$120 per summer on an EBT card to purchase food.

# Summer EBT Benefits - Summer 2026

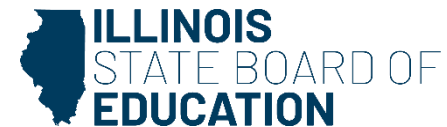
ISBE, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), will implement this program with support from NSLP participating schools.

## ISBE Roles (partnering agency)

- Collect required data from ALL eligible schools, based on requirements established by Illinois-approved plan
- Through a data-share agreement with IDHS, share eligible student data with them for benefit issuance
- Provide technical assistance to Illinois schools about Summer EBT

## IDHS Roles (coordinating agency)

- Issue SEBT benefits to ALL eligible students, in accordance with the approved Illinois plan
- Provide customer service to Summer EBT families regarding access and use of their benefits
- Process Summer EBT household applications for households, when needed



# Who is Eligible for Summer EBT?

In general, students who are income-eligible, able to be directly certified, or categorically eligible for free or reduced-price school meals are eligible for Summer EBT.

There are two main pathways to eligibility for Summer EBT:

1. Streamlined Certification (Streamlined certification is intended to capture the bulk of the participating population because it enables families to receive benefits automatically.)
2. Summer EBT application

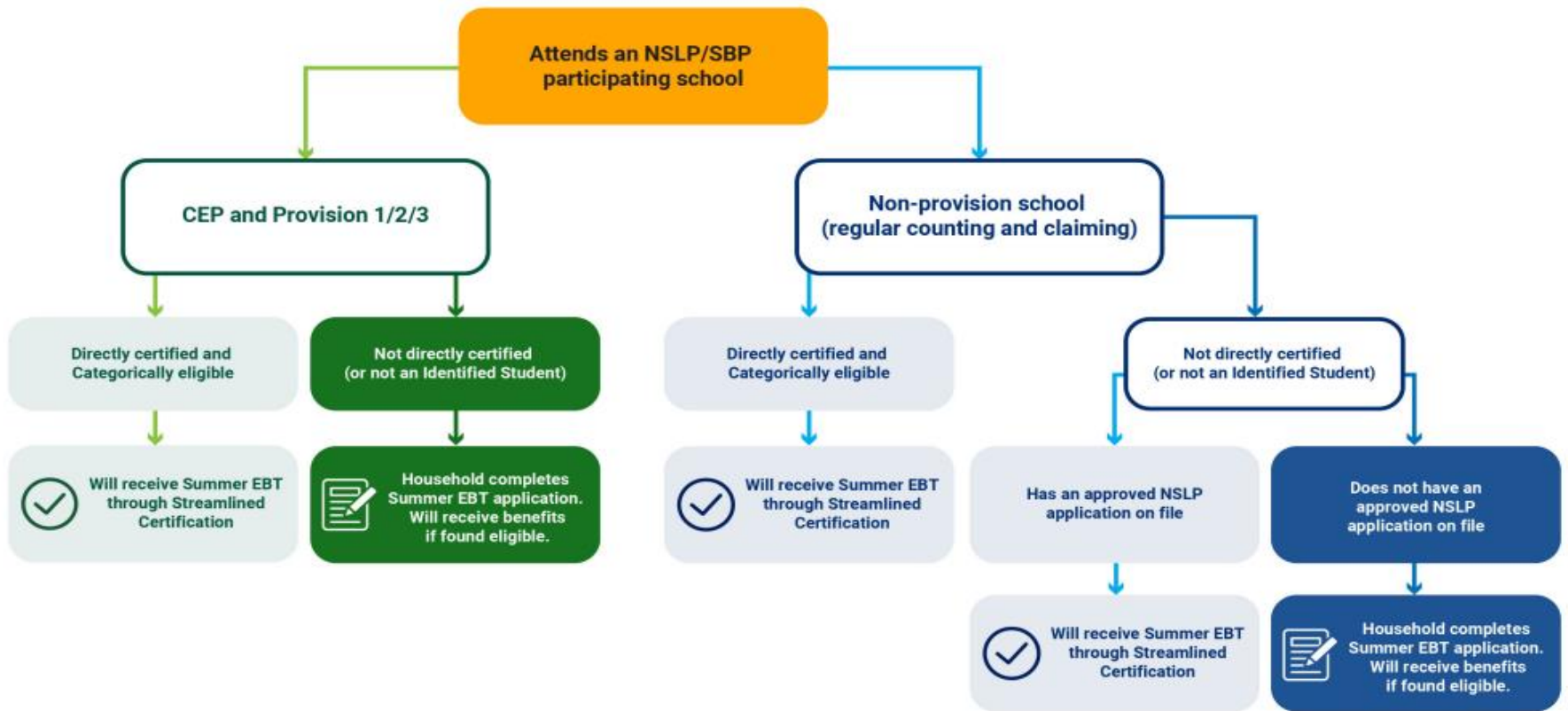
# Illinois Summer EBT for 2026

In Illinois, for the Summer EBT issuance for 2026, the following data sets will be used:

- All children who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Income-Eligible Medicaid (Free and Reduced Price eligible) as well as foster children (Youth in Care) between July 2, 2007 and August 14, 2020
- Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals **enrolled in NSLP participating school** (regardless of the student's age)
  - Information specific to the NSLP participating school will be detailed next.
    - **Non-CEP Approved Public School**
    - **CEP Approved Public School**
    - **Non-Public NSLP (CEP and Non-CEP) Participating Schools**
- A Summer EBT statewide application may be needed for students who are enrolled **in an NSLP-participating school and meet the income requirements** but not otherwise known to be eligible via ISBE data.
  - IDHS will process Summer EBT 2026 applications.
    - The Illinois Summer EBT statewide application is now available through the IDHS Summer EBT Screener through August 14, 2026.
    - Verification of eligibility is required and will be conducted by IDHS, as required.

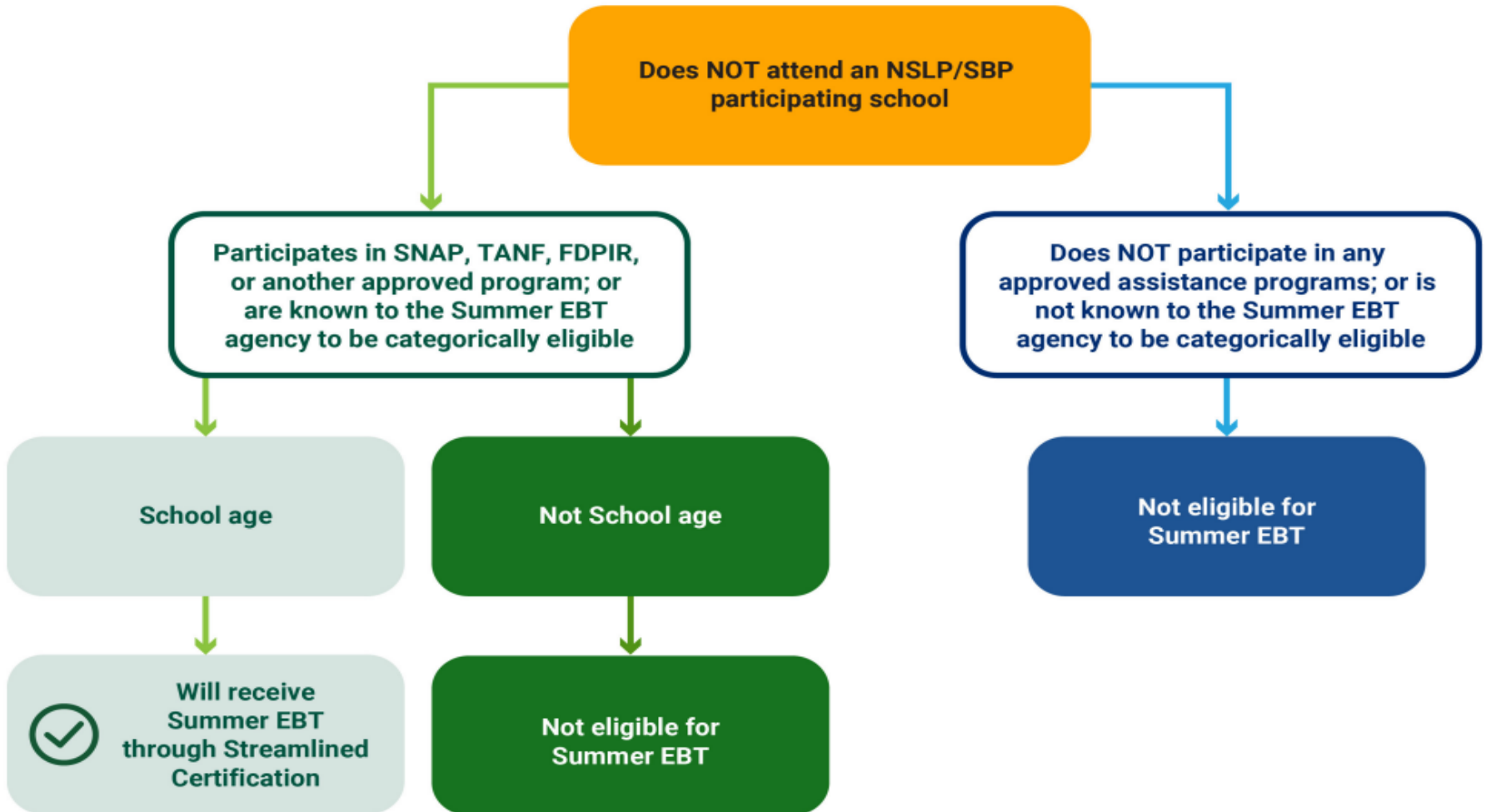
# ELIGIBILITY FLOW FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE ENROLLED IN NSLP/SBP PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Intended Audience: Summer EBT agencies and LEAs



## ELIGIBILITY FLOW FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT ENROLLED IN NSLP/SBP PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Intended Audience: Summer EBT agencies and LEAs



# Eligible Public Schools: SIS Student Mailing Address

**Please make sure that a mailing address is included in SIS for ALL enrolled students marked as low income to ensure prompt issuance of these benefits to the student directly.**

- If a mailing address is not included in SIS for an eligible Summer EBT student, IDHS will issue an eligibility notice to the student via the enrolling school address.
- Please share such notice, received at the school, to the eligible household in a timely manner.
- This notice will provide the household guidance on how to update the mailing address so that the Summer EBT benefit may be issued. This is completed via IDHS.
  - » The SEBT 2026 benefit issuance will NOT occur unless the household takes action to update the mailing address.

# Summer EBT Eligibility: Non-CEP Approved Public School

- Students eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits AND who have the low-income indicator marked in SIS will be eligible for Summer EBT benefits.
- Continue to process School Nutrition Programs household eligibility applications through the end of the school year and ensure that the SIS low-income indicator is marked for eligible enrolled students
- For SEBT benefits, ISBE uses the state SIS serving school enrollment.

# Summer EBT Eligibility: CEP Approved Public School

- Under the program requirements established by the USDA for Summer EBT 2026, schools approved under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) require students who are not directly certified or categorically eligible and who wish to receive Summer EBT benefits to reside in a household that is at or below the NSLP income threshold for reduced price meal benefits (185% of the federal poverty level) **AND** complete a Summer EBT application, subject to verification.
- For SEBT benefits, ISBE uses the state SIS serving school enrollment.

# Summer EBT Eligibility: All Nonpublic NSLP Participating Schools

- **Non-CEP Nonpublic Schools:**
  - Students eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits AND uploaded into WINS as SEBT 2026 eligible will be eligible for Summer EBT benefits.
- **CEP Nonpublic Schools:**
  - Students who are directly certified/categorically eligible who can be validated by IDHS AND uploaded into WINS as SEBT 2026 eligible will be eligible for Summer EBT benefits.
  - Students who meet the income eligibility guidelines and are enrolled in an eligible school will need to submit the SEBT 2026 application. These students are uploaded so that enrollment information can be validated.
  - Continue to process School Nutrition Programs household eligibility applications through the end of the school year and ensure all eligible students are uploaded in WINS
  - **This link will be available in WINS soon, once the Illinois SEBT plan is approved by USDA. We will share more guidance with eligible nonpublic schools once available.**

# Statewide Summer EBT Application

- For summer 2026, while most eligible students will be determined eligible for Summer EBT based on known data at IDHS/ISBE, if an eligible student is not known to be eligible, that household may complete a Summer EBT application to be eligible for benefits.
- Households should be encouraged to check SEBT eligibility via the *Summer EBT Screener* on [www.abe.illinois.gov](http://www.abe.illinois.gov).
  - If needed, the Summer EBT application is available through the *Summer EBT Screener*.
- IDHS will process all Summer EBT applications.
  - Paper Summer EBT applications are available on the DHS Summer EBT website.
- The last day to apply for Summer EBT 2026 in Illinois is August 14, 2026, the end of the Illinois summer operational period.
- Verification is required for Summer EBT applications, and IDHS will conduct when applicable.

# Summer EBT 2025

## Distribute Outreach Materials to Your Community

- Information about Summer EBT is encouraged to be posted on social media, distributed to eligible students via email, or included in school newsletters.



# SUN Programs Communication Toolkit (USDA)

- The [USDA Communication Toolkit](#) includes all SUN Programs:
  - SUN Meals
  - SUN Meals-To-Go
  - SUN Bucks/Summer EBT



AMS > [SUMMER NUTRITION PROGRAMS](#) > [COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT](#)

### Nutrition Programs

This communications toolkit contains materials for use by agencies implementing the SUN programs - SUN Meals, SUN Meals To-Go, and/or SUN Bucks.

Many are customizable so you can tailor them to your specific state, Tribe, or territory. View these [instructions](#) to learn how to customize the materials. Many materials are also available in multiple languages.

- Summer Food Service
- Meals To-Go (Summer Food Program)
- Summer EBT

#### Communications Toolkit

- Branding Materials
- Social Media Content
- Graphics & Videos
- Print Materials
- Factsheets
- Communication Templates

February 14, 2025

# USDA SUN Programs Flyer

## Feed Their Summer Smiles With SUN Programs!

Make this summer one to remember with SUN Programs: USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids. Meals and grocery benefits help keep your kids fueled up for summer.



### SUN MEALS

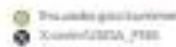
Children 18 and under can enjoy meals together at eligible meal sites. SUN Meals are free and help your kids get the nutrition they need all summer long.

### SUN MEALS TO-GO

In some rural areas, SUN Meals can be picked up or delivered right to your home!

### SUN BUCKS

With SUN Bucks, get \$120 per eligible school-aged child to buy more of their favorite foods, from fresh fruits and vegetables to pantry staples, supporting delicious and healthy meals at home.



Scan to find out about meal options and grocery benefits @ your site.



USDA is an equal-opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Summer 2024

## Any SEBT Questions From Schools?

Please contact ISBE Nutrition Department SEBT team at:

- 800-545-7892 in Illinois only, or 217-782-2491
- [sebt@isbe.net](mailto:sebt@isbe.net)

Visit [ISBE SEBT website](#) for complete SEBT information.

## Any SEBT Questions From Households?

Please contact IDHS Summer EBT at:

- 833-621-0737
- Submit a [Summer EBT General Inquiry Request](#)

Encourage households to visit the [IDHS SEBT website](#).