

CALPADS Update Flash #297 (Revised June 12, 2025)



Date: June 12, 2025 (Revised)

NOTE: This Flash supersedes the original Flash #297 dated March 24, 2025.

To: Local Educational Agency (LEA) Representatives

From: California Department of Education (CDE) – CALPADS Team

This Flash supersedes previously published Flash #297 dated March 24, 2025. LEAs that downloaded Flash #297 should replace it with this Flash, which has been updated to reflect two important changes and new information about SUN Bucks verification requirements. All other content is the same and has been reorganized to better convey the updated information. The updates include:

- All “streamline certified” school-age children (ages 6 – 18) (i.e., students who are directly certified or categorically eligible based on their homeless, migrant, or foster status), are eligible for SUN Bucks benefits **regardless whether they are enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program**. There are no changes for children ages 0 – 5 and 19 – 22 (inclusive) who are directly certified or categorically eligible. These students must be enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program to be eligible for benefits.
- The Supplemental SUN Bucks Collection (SSBC) that is uploaded to the Education Data Collection System (EDCS) includes two additional fields.
- New information about SUN Bucks verification requirements can be found in the “UBA Verification Requirements” section further in this document.

Summer 2025 SUN Bucks

This Flash provides an overview of California’s implementation of the summer 2025 SUN Bucks program, which requires students enrolled in schools operating a federal meals program under a provision to use a new Universal Benefits Application (UBA) that is fully compliant with federal SUN Bucks requirements. The 2025 SUN Bucks eligibility period is July 1, 2024 – September 2, 2025 (inclusive).

Student Eligibility

Streamline Certified

Streamline certified students automatically receive SUN Bucks benefits if they are school-age (ages 6 – 18 at any point during the eligibility period) and regardless whether they are enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program. Streamline certified students do not have to submit an application to their LEAs and are automatically eligible for SUN Bucks benefits if they are:

- Participating in CalFresh, CalWORKs, or Medi-Cal at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); or
- Categorically eligible based on their homeless, migrant, or foster records in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS).

Students participating in CalFresh, CalWORKs, or Medi-Cal (at or below 185 percent of the FPL) are pulled directly from the authoritative source systems that maintain those data. LEAs identify these students based on whether they are directly certified through CALPADS or through a local match process that they may conduct with their county welfare department.

Categorically eligible students include homeless, migrant, or students in foster care. Currently, homeless and migrant students are identified based on program records that LEAs submit to CALPADS. Students in foster care are identified through the statewide match of CALPADS enrollment data and the authoritative source data for foster children/youth maintained by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Students identified as foster youth through this matching process are provided to LEAs in CALPADS.

For streamline certified students, LEAs must upload enrollment/exit records and maintain homeless and migrant program records in CALPADS; no additional application is required. Since identification of students in foster care is a function of CALPADS through the California Department of Education (CDE)-CDSS statewide data match, LEAs do not upload any program records for these students. Similarly, beginning July 1, 2025, LEAs will be receiving the migrant status of enrolled students through CALPADS from data sourced through the Migrant Student Information System (MSIN), which is the authoritative source for these data, and will not upload any program records for migrant students.

Non-Streamline Certified

Non-streamline certified students may be eligible for 2025 SUN Bucks benefits if they are ages 0 – 22 (inclusive) and were enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program during the eligibility period. Eligible students must have:

- A Universal Benefits Application (UBA) or National School Lunch Program (NSLP) application that has been approved by the LEA; or
- Benefits extended by the LEA based on the direct certification of another member of the student's household.

Non-streamline certified students ages 0 – 5 and 19 – 22 (inclusive) may also be eligible for 2025 SUN Bucks benefits *without an NSLP application or UBA*, if they are enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program at any time during the eligibility period, and:

- Were directly certified through CALPADS or through a direct certification matching process conducted between the LEA and their county welfare department; or
- Have homeless, migrant, or foster records in CALPADS.

CALPADS does not collect *all* the discrete pieces of information necessary to identify whether non-streamline certified students are eligible for SUN Bucks benefits.

Therefore, LEAs must upload these data in the Supplemental SUN Bucks Collection (SSBC) to the Educational Data Collection System (EDCS) for these students to be identified as eligible for SUN Bucks benefits. For more information, refer to the *"Supplemental SUN Bucks Collection to the Educational Data Collection System"* section further in this document.

UBAs and NSLP Applications

What is the Universal Benefits Application?

The Universal Benefits Application (UBA) is a template developed by the CDE that is fully compliant with federal SUN Bucks requirements. It is very similar to the NSLP application, but there are distinct differences that **do not** make them interchangeable. The CDE has posted the UBA template on the CDE website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/documents/uba2025-26.docx> and has provided the template to student information system (SIS) vendors. Note: A slightly revised UBA template has been posted on the CDE website. The template no longer includes the optional "last four digits of the social security number," nor does it include the check boxes for foster and migrant students since those data are already captured from authoritative sources.

Note: LEAs may implement an electronic version of the form if all information required by the federal regulations detailing application requirements outlined in CFR Title 7, Section 292.13 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-292/subpart-C/section-292.13>) is collected.

Who does *not* need to submit a UBA?

- School-age students (6 – 18) who are streamline certified do not need to submit a UBA, regardless whether they are enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program.
- Students ages 0 – 5 and 19 – 22 (inclusive) who are enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program and who are directly certified in CALPADS.
- Students ages 0 – 5 and 19 – 22 (inclusive) who are enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program and who were not directly certified in CALPADS but who were directly certified through a local match process that LEAs conduct with their county welfare department. *Note: While these students do not need to submit UBAs or NSLP applications to the LEA, LEAs will need to submit records to EDCS indicating that these students were directly certified through a local match process.*
- Students ages 0 – 5 and 19 – 22 (inclusive) who are enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program and who received extended benefits. *Note: While these students do not need to submit UBAs or NSLP applications to the LEA, LEAs will need to submit records to EDCS indicating that these students received extended benefits.*

Who must submit a UBA or NSLP Application?

- Students, ages 0 – 22, enrolled in a school participating in a federal meals program who are not streamline certified, directly certified, or the recipient of extended benefits (see Table 1 in this document).

Note that schools operating under Standard Counting and Claiming or Provision 2 (P2) (base-year) are required to collect NSLP applications each school year. Students enrolled in Standard Counting and Claiming schools who submitted an Alternative Income Form (AIF) but not an NSLP application, must submit an NSLP application to be eligible for SUN Bucks benefits.

Which application must students submit to be eligible for SUN Bucks?

The type of application that students must submit to be eligible for SUN Bucks benefits depends on how the school operates the federal meals program. Table 1 in this document summarizes which application must be used for different school meal program participation models. Note that while the UBA or NSLP application may be

used for Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) purposes, the AIF cannot be used for SUN Bucks benefits or federal meals eligibility.

Table 1: Application Type Required Based on Participation Model

School Meal Program Participation Model	SUN Bucks Application Requirement
Standard Counting and Claiming	Only NSLP Applications – Collect annually for FRPM/SUN Bucks eligibility; may also be used for LCFF purposes
Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)	Universal Benefits Applications – Collect annually for SUN Bucks eligibility; may also be used for LCFF purposes
Provision 2 (P2)	NSLP Applications – Collect during LEAs' P2 base year for FRPM/SUN Bucks eligibility; may also be used for LCFF purposes Universal Benefits Applications – Collect during non-base years for SUN Bucks eligibility; may also be used for LCFF purposes

When must *students and families* submit UBAs or NSLP applications to receive 2025 and/or 2026 SUN Bucks benefits? What federal Income Eligibility Guidelines must LEAs use when evaluating applications?

Students enrolled in schools participating in a federal meals program, and who are not streamline certified, must submit UBAs or NSLP applications to their LEA as described in Table 2 below to receive 2025 and/or 2026 SUN Bucks benefits. The LEA must evaluate applications submitted within a school year (SY), which is July 1 – June 30, based on the Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG) for the SY. Generally, the IEG are posted in March/April for the subsequent SY beginning July 1. The 2025 IEG to be used for applications submitted July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 can be found at the CDE's Income Eligibility Scales for School Year 2025–26 web page:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/rs/scales2526.asp>

Table 2: UBA/NSLP Student Submission Dates

Students who submit UBAs/NSLP applications to their LEA/school...	Must be evaluated based on IEG for SY...	Makes them eligible for 2025 SUN Bucks	Makes them eligible for 2026 SUN Bucks	Makes them eligible for LCFF Count
Before July 1, 2025	2024–25	Yes	No	Not applicable
On or after July 1, 2025 but on or before September 2, 2025	2025–26	Yes	Yes	Yes, for 2025–26, if enrolled on Census Day (Oct 1, 2025)
After September 2, 2025 but on or before October 31, 2025	2025–26	No	Yes	Yes, for 2025–26, if enrolled on Census Day
On November 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026	2025–26	No	Yes	No
On or after July 1, 2026 through August 31, 2026	2026–27	No	Yes	Yes, for 2026–27, if enrolled on Census Day

What records must CALPADS have, or must LEAs submit to the CDE for students to be identified as eligible for SUN Bucks benefits?

To ensure that streamline certified and non-streamline certified students are identified as eligible for 2025 SUN Bucks benefits, LEAs should follow existing best practices for maintaining student enrollment, information, and program records in CALPADS, which is to update these records on an ongoing basis throughout the year. For SUN Bucks purposes:

- CALPADS must have enrollment records that show students were enrolled at any time during the eligibility period in a school participating in a federal meals program (for non-streamline students);

AND

- CALPADS must have records showing students are directly certified, homeless, migrant, foster;

OR

EDCS must have records indicating students have:

- Submitted a UBA that the LEA approved; or
- Submitted a NSLP application that the LEA approved; or
- For students ages 0 – 5 or 19 – 22 (inclusive), been directly certified through a local match conducted by the LEA and their county welfare department; or
- Benefits extended by the LEA to the student based on the direct certification of another member of the student's household.

How often must SUN Bucks eligibility be determined?

SUN Bucks eligibility must be determined *annually*. This means that students enrolled in CEP schools who are not streamline certified must *annually* establish their eligibility for SUN Bucks benefits by submitting UBAs. Students enrolled in P2 schools must submit NSLP applications when schools are establishing their base year, and they must submit UBAs during non-base years. Standard Counting and Claiming schools are already required to annually collect NSLP applications.

Supplemental SUN Bucks Collection (SSBC) to the Education Data Collection System (EDCS)

LEAs participating in federal meal programs will need to submit records to the Education Data Collection System (EDCS), in the Supplemental SUN Bucks Collection (SSBC), for most of their students who are not streamline certified. The EDCS is the system in which LEAs currently submit data for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and the State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE) collections.

EDCS is currently open for all collections. The SSBC opened in EDCS on June 9, 2025 and will remain open for the 2025 SUN Bucks data through **December 31, 2025**. For information about accessing EDCS and the SSBC, visit the CDE's Education Data Collection System web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/dc/edcs.asp>

What data are submitted on the SSBC?

For SSBC, LEAs will need to submit the following data:

- County-District-School (CDS) code where the student is enrolled
- The student's Statewide Student Identifier (SSID)
- The student's Local Student Identifier; and
- At least one of the following:
 - The date the LEA-approved UBA was submitted to the LEA; or
 - The date the LEA-approved NSLP application was submitted to the LEA; or

- The date the LEA extended benefits to the student based on the direct certification (for CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level) of another member of the student's household; or
- For students ages 0 – 5 and 19 – 22 (inclusive), the date the student was directly certified through a **local matching process** conducted between the LEA and their county welfare department. Note: LEAs should not submit any students directly certified through CALPADS.

Important Note: In addition to submitting records to EDCS, LEAs are reminded to also submit 181 records to CALPADS so that these students are included in the Unduplicated Pupil Count (UPC) for LCFF purposes.

When an SSBC file is uploaded to EDCS, does it replace or add to the records previously uploaded to EDCS?

The SSBC file is a full replacement file. That is, when an LEA uploads a file to EDCS, it replaces any data that was previously uploaded. **This means that, at any given point, LEAs should always submit all SSBC data for the 2025 SUN Bucks administration to EDCS.** When the CDE pulls data from EDCS each month during the SSBC submission window, the CDE will identify any changed or new records that must be provided to CDSS for benefit issuance. Hence, LEAs do not have to keep track of what records have already been uploaded to EDCS, and they should always submit all records for the 2025 SUN Bucks submission. Review the section entitled “*What are best practices for meeting verification requirements for 2025 SUN Bucks?*” further in this document for more detailed information on SSBC file processing.

CALPADS and EDCS Pull Dates

Data are pulled from CALPADS and EDCS at the close of business on the last business day of the month. There is no guarantee that data submitted to CALPADS or EDCS after 5 p.m. on the last business day of the month will be pulled and included in the data extract to CDSS. Data will be sent to CDSS on the first of each month, and students included in the data that month will receive SUN Bucks cards in the mail in the following 2 to 3 months. Therefore, families should wait before inquiring about the status of their cards. The specific dates that data are pulled from CALPADS and EDCS are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3: CALPADS and EDCS Pull Dates

Data pulled from EDCS and CALPADS at the close (5 pm) of the last business day of the month on ... <i>Specific dates provided below*</i>	Will be included in the extract sent to CDSS for benefit issuance on the first day of these months...
June 30, 2025	July 1, 2025

Data pulled from EDCS and CALPADS at the close (5 pm) of the last business day of the month on ... <i>Specific dates provided below*</i>	Will be included in the extract sent to CDSS for benefit issuance on the first day of these months...
July 31, 2025	August 1, 2025
August 29, 2025	September 1, 2025
September 30, 2025	October 1, 2025
October 31, 2025	November 1, 2025
November 26, 2025	December 1, 2025
December 31, 2025	January 1, 2026

*There is no guarantee that data submitted to CALPADS or EDCS after 5 p.m. on these dates will be included in the data extract sent to CDSS.

UBA Verification Requirements

Why does the SUN Bucks program require verification of applications?

To ensure the quality and integrity of the SUN Bucks program, participating LEAs must have effective processes in place to accurately determine children's eligibility for SUN Bucks benefits. One such process is verification, which requires confirming eligibility determinations made using a UBA or LEA-created SUN Bucks application by verifying information on the application with other administrative records or documentation provided by the household. Verification of SUN Bucks applications is necessary to maintain program integrity.

California's approved 2025 SUN Bucks Plan of Operations and Management (POM) outlines the LEA responsibilities surrounding UBA/SUN Bucks-compliant application verification requirements found in Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR), Part 292, Section 292.14 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-292/subpart-C/section-292.14>).

Which LEAs need to conduct SUN Bucks application verification?

Schools operating federal meal programs under the Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2 (non-base year) that made eligibility determinations from a UBA/SUN Bucks application for summer 2025 need to conduct SUN Bucks application verification.

What are the federally mandated SUN Bucks verification requirements?

LEAs are required to conduct verification of [3] percent of all UBAs approved for 2025 SUN Bucks benefits. These will include UBAs approved on or before September 2, 2025. For 2025 SUN Bucks, LEAs will be required to select [3] percent samples at three different points in time *during the summer*, conduct direct verification (if applicable), and notify households of verification activities.

For UBAs that have been selected for verification, LEAs must first directly *verify* any applications in the sample pool that indicated participation in CalFresh, CalWORKs, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) using data from eligible programs (as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Title 7 (7 CFR), Part 292, Section 292.12 ([https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-292/subpart-C/section-292.12#p-292.12\(d\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-292/subpart-C/section-292.12#p-292.12(d)))) and other assistance programs or administrative data, where available. To directly verify these UBAs, LEAs must confirm students' participation in these programs by confirming students were directly certified in CALPADS or through a local direct certification process. If confirmed, these UBAs are verified, and no further verification activities are required by the LEA for those applications. For all other UBAs, LEAs must notify families that their UBA applications are being verified and then work with the households to collect documentation confirming the eligibility determination.

Detailed information on SUN Bucks verification requirements, derived from CFR Title 7, Part 292, Section 292.14 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-292/subpart-C/section-292.14>), can be found in the California SUN Bucks 2025 Verification Fact Sheet on the CDE's website at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/documents/sunbucksfactsheet.pdf>.

What are best practices for meeting verification requirements for 2025 SUN Bucks?

For 2025 SUN Bucks, LEAs are required to identify three (3) different points in time *during the summer* to create verification pools from which to randomly select three (3) percent of approved UBAs for verification. To meet the requirement to create three (3) verification pools, ensure that three (3) percent of all UBAs are verified, and provide families with benefits in a timely fashion, the following steps are suggested:

1. Process UBAs as soon as they are received to create the largest number of approved UBAs to be included in each verification pool.
2. **Begin uploading files to EDCS as soon as possible in June. The SSBC collection opened on June 9.** The file uploaded to EDCS is processed as a full replacement file. This means that each time LEAs submit a file, it should include *all* records for the 2025 SUN Bucks administration. The **CDE strongly encourages LEAs to begin uploading files early in June to identify any issues with records, file creation, and the upload process.**

3. Select the three required dates during the SUN Bucks summer *operational period* (June 1 – September 2) to create three (3) verification pools. To maximize the number of records each month that are sent to CDSS for benefit issuance processing, LEAs should select three (3) dates that are on or just before the first three (3) dates that data are pulled from EDCS: June 30, July 31, and August 29. Refer to the earlier section in this document entitled “*CALPADS and EDCS Pull Dates*” for all EDCS pull dates in 2025. Records uploaded to EDCS by the pull date each month will be included in the file sent to CDSS that month for benefit issuance.
4. **Verification Pool 1 (June 30 or before):** On the first selected date in June, create the verification pool of all UBAs approved up to that point. Select the [3] percent sample and do not include those UBAs in the last file uploaded to EDCS for the month of June. Since each file uploaded to EDCS fully replaces existing records in EDCS, as long as the records selected for verification are *not* included in the last file uploaded in June, the UBAs selected for verification that had previously been uploaded to EDCS will no longer be in EDCS, and therefore will not be sent to CDSS for benefit issuance.
5. **Verification Pool 2 (July 31 or before):** Create a verification pool of all approved UBAs **that were not included in Verification Pool 1**. Once Verification Pool 2 is created, take the sample, and then upload a file to EDCS that includes all UBAs, except those held back for verification from Verification Pool 2. As a full replacement file, this file can include records previously sent in June as well as any new records from Verification Pool 2 that are not part of the verification sample. LEAs may also include any verified UBAs from Verification Pool 1.
6. **Verification Pool 3 (August 29 or before):** Repeat process conducted for Verification Pool 2.
7. **Subsequent Uploads to EDCS:** Verify 3 percent of approved UBAs that were not included in Verification Pools 1–3, to ensure that 3 percent of all approved UBAs for 2025 SUN Bucks are verified. If LEAs processed UBAs as they were received, there should be a minimal number of UBAs that were not included in a Verification Pool. Subsequent uploads to EDCS should include any remaining approved UBAs that were not already uploaded, and any approved UBAs held back for verification that have since been verified. LEAs must upload a final file that includes all UBAs approved for 2025 SUN Bucks on or before December 31, 2025. LEAs are encouraged, however, to upload their final SSBC file in September or October so that families receive 2025 SUN Bucks benefits as soon as possible.

Although LEAs may upload records to EDCS through close of business on December 31, 2025, the earlier that the records are uploaded, the sooner the students will receive their benefits. Allowing LEAs to upload UBAs through December 31 provides time to upload any UBAs initially held back for verification.

Should all approved UBAs be uploaded to EDCS?

No, only approved UBAs *not* selected for verification should be uploaded to EDCS. UBAs selected for verification should be uploaded to EDCS after they have been verified.

Who at the LEA is responsible for conducting verification?

Each LEA will determine the staff responsible for conducting verification. Cafeteria funds cannot be used to pay for SUN Bucks verification. California's 2025 SUN Bucks Plan of Operations and Management Plan, which has been approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), includes funding for LEAs to support this work.

Alternative Income Form

Background

For 2024 SUN Bucks, California was granted a waiver to allow the use of the Alternative Income Form (AIF) in place of a fully compliant SUN Bucks application. The AIF was implemented by California to identify students who met the Free and Reduced-Price Meal (FRPM) income eligibility criteria required to be included in the Unduplicated Pupil Count (UPC) used to determine supplemental and concentration grant funding under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The AIF was specifically needed because schools participating in a federal meals program under a CEP were prohibited from collecting NSLP applications that could have been used to determine income eligibility under the LCFF. Additionally, schools participating under P2 collected NSLP applications in base years and were prohibited from collecting NSLP applications in non-base years.

The USDA did not approve a waiver for California to continue using the AIF for the 2025 SUN Bucks program, and such a waiver will not be approved in the future. Therefore, to be eligible for 2025 SUN Bucks benefits, students who are not streamline certified must submit NSLP applications or UBAs—depending on how the LEA operates the federal meals program (see Table 1 in this document)—on or before September 2, 2025 and be determined eligible by their school based on their household income.

Can the AIF be collected for LCFF purposes?

Yes. While the AIF can no longer be used to identify students eligible for SUN Bucks benefits, LEAs may continue to use the AIF to identify students that may be included in the UPC for LCFF purposes. The AIF has never been used to identify students enrolled in Standard Counting and Claiming schools as eligible for free or reduced-priced meals and federal reimbursement.

LEAs opting to continue using the AIF may collect them in the spring prior to the upcoming school year. As LEAs have done in the past, **in order to be included in the UPC, LEAs must submit 181/182 records to CALPADS dated July 1, 2025 or after.**

Refer to Table 2 in this document, entitled “*UBA/NSLP Student Submission Dates*,” for the dates that applications, including the AIF, must be submitted by students to be included in the UPC.

Suggested Practices for Summer 2025 SUN Bucks

1. Target outreach to students and families that need UBAs or NSLP applications to receive 2025 SUN Bucks benefits

CEP and P2 Schools: Most students in CEP and P2 schools have already been streamline certified and do not need to submit a UBA. Since these students do not require UBAs, LEAs may want to focus UBA collection efforts on non-streamline certified students who submitted AIFs earlier in 2024–25 and were approved by LEAs for inclusion in the UPC. Since the AIF is no longer valid for SUN Bucks, these students will need to submit UBAs.

Of those students, LEAs may want to prioritize:

- Collecting and submitting UBAs before the end of the school year from students who are in Grade 12 in the 2024–25 school year. If these students graduate or otherwise complete and are no longer enrolled, LEAs will not be able to submit UBA records to EDCS for the students.
- Collecting and submitting UBAs between July 1, 2025 and September 2, 2025 (inclusive), from all other students enrolled in 2024–25 who will be returning in the 2025–26 school year. These applications allow students to be eligible for *both* 2025 and 2026 SUN Bucks.
- Collecting and submitting UBAs between July 1, 2025 and September 2, 2025 (inclusive), from all students enrolling in the LEA for the first time in 2025–26 (generally transitional kindergarten or kindergarten students). These applications allow students to be eligible for *both* 2025 and 2026 SUN Bucks.

Standard Counting and Claiming Schools: For Standard Counting and Claiming schools, identify non-streamline certified students who have not submitted an NSLP application. If the school also collected AIFs, the school might target outreach to students with approved AIFs and without approved NSLP applications on file.

2. Modify business processes in CEP and P2 schools for UBA collection in 2024–25 to also support 2026 SUN Bucks

Modifying business practices for the collection of UBAs in 2024–25 will support the collection of UBAs for 2026 SUN Bucks (eligibility period July 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026). Any UBAs collected and evaluated at the *beginning* of the 2025–26 school year supports both 2025 SUN Bucks and 2026 SUN Bucks. Additionally, LEAs should continue to collect and process UBAs after September 2, 2025 through October 31, 2025 as those students will also be included in the UPC for the 2025–26 school year.

LEAs are reminded that after October 31, 2025 and throughout the rest of the eligibility period, LEAs should continue to collect UBAs from newly enrolled students, or students whose economic circumstances change, so that the students are able to receive 2026 SUN Bucks benefits.

3. Develop a process for approving and verifying UBAs that meets verification requirements and maximizes the number of students who are sent to CDSS for benefit issuance.

Refer to an earlier section in this document entitled *“What are best practices for meeting verification requirements for 2025 SUN Bucks?”*

Summary of Key Tasks for LEA Staff for 2025 SUN Bucks

- Develop a plan for collecting UBAs (or NSLP applications in Standard Counting and Claiming Schools) to ensure that students receive SUN Bucks benefits, and determine how the AIF might be used to ensure an accurate UPC count. The plan will depend on the school meal program participation model (Standard Counting and Claiming, CEP, or P2) used by schools in the LEA.
- For 2025 SUN Bucks, determine a strategy for collecting necessary applications. For LEAs with CEP and P2 schools, the focus should be on how to distribute, collect, and process UBAs, targeting outreach to certain students. For LEAs with Standard Counting and Claiming schools, the focus should be on students who did not submit an NSLP application but have an approved AIF (refer to the section earlier in this document entitled *“Target outreach to students that need UBAs or NSLP applications to receive 2025 SUN Bucks benefits”*).
- Ensure that UBAs and NSLP applications are collected, processed, and maintained throughout the year, so that data are available to upload to EDCS.
- Develop a process for meeting verification requirements for 2025 SUN Bucks.
- As a best practice, ensure that enrollments/exits and program records for homeless students (191) are updated throughout the year. This will help ensure that the data are updated prior to each pull of data, which occurs on the first of each month (March 1, 2025 through January 1, 2026).
- Student addresses for 2025 SUN Bucks have already been pulled. Benefit cards for any students who do not have an address in CALPADS will be sent to the LEA's district office. Therefore, LEAs should plan for how these cards will be distributed.

Resources

The USDA has developed a SUN Bucks outreach toolkit for use that is posted on their website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summer/toolkit>. The outreach toolkit includes videos,

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facts sheets, and customizable resources in a variety of languages to inform households about SUN Bucks and how to use their benefits.

In addition, the CDSS provides resources via their CDSS SUN Bucks web page at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/sun-bucks> and outreach materials for SUN Bucks partners on the CDSS's SUN Bucks Resources web page at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/sun-bucks/partners>.

The CDE has a SUN Bucks (Summer EBT) web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sunbucks.asp> with resources geared toward LEAs.

Contact Information

For household questions, the CDSS has a customer service helpline: (877) 328-9677.

General information about SUN Bucks can be found on the CDSS's SUN Bucks web page at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/sun-bucks>.

For LEA questions ONLY, please contact SummerEBT@cde.ca.gov. This email address is not for household inquiries about SUN Bucks.

For CALPADS questions, please submit a Service Desk ticket to calpads-support@cde.ca.gov.

For EDCS questions, please contact educationdatacollection@cde.ca.gov

For questions about the Alternative Income Form and the Local Control Funding Formula, please contact PASE@cde.ca.gov.