



Help ensure kids get the nutrition they need while school is out. [AFSC.ORG/NOHUNGERSUMMER](https://afsc.org/NOHUNGERSUMMER)

The SUN Bucks program (also known as Summer EBT) is a new program to help more low-income children get the food they need when school is out. It provides a benefit card worth \$120 in groceries per summer for every child eligible for free or reduced school lunches. This can make the difference between food security and a hungry summer for millions of children.

Unfortunately, as of now **11 states have chosen not to implement the program by the summer of 2025**. Those states include:

- Alaska
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Iowa
- Mississippi
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Wyoming
- In addition, Tennessee is participating in 2024 but has announced that it will not continue the program after this summer.

AFSC's No Hunger Summer campaign is working with allies in these states to encourage their administrations to implement the program in 2025—and make it permanent.

This toolkit offers several ways for individuals and groups in these states can join our efforts to improve nutrition and ensure basic food justice for children.

TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT: nohungersummer@afsc.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why join the No Hunger Summer campaign?

There has been a growing recognition over the last several years that millions of children rely on school meals for a substantial part of their nutritional needs. The COVID pandemic was a reminder that the needs of children don't stop when school is not in session. During the public health emergency, school children were provided with a Pandemic EBT to buy more groceries while at home. That benefit expired with the end of the emergency.

Today, an estimated **30 million children nationwide could benefit from the SUN Bucks (Summer EBT) program**. Unfortunately, around **10 million of those children live in states that have opted out of the program**.

Some state administrations have refused the program on ideological grounds, preferring for children to go hungry rather than enjoy public benefits. Others have hesitated because states must share the costs of administering the program, although the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks.

Our No Hunger Summer campaign aims to change this situation. We know from experience that with consistent grassroots advocacy over time, states have reversed harmful policies to benefit the public good. A great example is the expansion of Medicaid in several states.

What are the benefits of SUN Bucks?

In addition to helping kids get the nutrition they need, the program helps low-income families provide meals for kids. That lessens the strain on already strapped household budgets. The boost in the food budget also makes healthier foods like fresh fruits and vegetables more accessible.

There are economic benefits, as well. The \$120 per summer benefit goes directly to local businesses, farms, and farmers markets. In addition, **each dollar spent on EBT food assistance generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in local economic activity**, according to the USDA. That, in turn, supports local jobs.

What about summer feeding programs for kids?

The Summer Food Service Program is federally funded and administered by states. It provides meals for children in low-income communities in specific sites. However, the reach of such programs is limited, and the program does not allow for choice in the same way as the SUN Bucks program, which is intended to supplement—not replace—the summer feeding program.

What's the timeline for this campaign?

The campaign starts the summer of 2024, which is exactly when kids and families will be missing out on this vital program. However, we'll work to keep the pressure up all year, escalating the visibility of the campaign as 2025 approaches.

What if we try and my state still doesn't opt in?

While we'd like all states to offer SUN Bucks EBT by the summer of 2025, that may not happen. However, this is a permanent program, so there is always the year after. Struggles like this often take time. Administrations come and go, and even resistant ones can sometimes be worn down over time by consistent efforts. The more states that implement the program and experience the benefits, the greater the pressure will be on holdout states.

How do I join the No Hunger Summer campaign?

Contact AFSC at nohungersummer@afsc.org.

We are available to help with materials for outreach and advocacy, social media, writing, brainstorming, reaching out to allied organizations, and strategy. We are also happy to help with online or even in-person meetings in key states. Together, we can make a difference.

WAYS TO ADVOCATE

Even if you are new to organized advocacy efforts, there are several ways you can participate in the No Hunger Summer campaign as an individual or as part of a group.

AFSC can provide content, materials, and other assistance with any of the following:

REACHING OUT TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Call or email your governor. The message can be very simple: Implement the SUN Bucks EBT program so kids can have access to good food in the summer. Let them know why this is important to you and your community. Remember, this isn't a one-and-done process. Keep the calls and emails coming. And don't forget to ask family, friends, and neighbors to sign and spread the word. Look up your governor's contact information here: <https://www.usa.gov/state-governor>.

Contact administrators at your state human services and education agencies with the same message.

Schedule meetings with your governor or their administrative staff. When possible, bring parents of children who could benefit from this program.

Reach out to friendly legislators about the issue. Try to be as bipartisan as possible to build broad support. Find your representatives here: <https://pluralpolicy.com/open>.

Start a petition for community members to sign. It's easy to do. Visit www.change.org to get started.

Bird-dog your decision makers. Bird-dogging is the art of attending town halls and other public events and asking politicians and government officials pointed questions. That gets them on the record. This tactic is often used during election campaigns but can be used anytime. Read more about how to do it here: afsc.org/birddog.

Reach out to local government officials such as state legislators, mayors, city counselors, and county commissions. Ask them to pass resolutions in support of implementing the SUN Bucks program. We can help with the wording of the resolutions. Non-governmental organizations may likewise be persuaded to adopt and share resolutions.

SPREADING THE WORD

Use social media to get the word out. Share AFSC's social media graphics and sample posts or create your own. Be sure to tag your governor and use a hashtag such as **#nohungersummerlowa**. If you're feeling creative, consider making short videos about the issue to share.

Distribute posters and fliers in public places, such as public libraries, religious organizations, food pantries, and social service agencies. We have templates you can use.

Connect with influencers and credible messengers and get them involved. Aside from parents, these could include teachers and other education workers, coaches, religious leaders, business owners and associations, and social service providers.

Create sign-on letters. Invite sympathetic groups and individuals to add their names. We can provide sample wording for this.

Join or build coalitions of sympathetic people and organizations. Wherever you live, there are child advocacy organizations, social service agencies, ministerial councils, or other interfaith religious associations, and other potential allies. If this is unfamiliar territory for you, we can help you find allied groups. When like-minded people get together, they are bound to come up with new and creative ideas.

Involve children and young people in the campaign. Organized youth groups are often looking for community service projects. And politicians are sometimes more responsive to requests from children or children's groups than from other members of their constituency.

GETTING MEDIA ATTENTION

Prepare letters to the editor and op-eds. The Food Research and Action Council has prepared state-specific fact sheets that you can use to draft these. Find them here: afsc.org/FRACfactsheets. AFSC can also help with messaging.

Organize press conferences, media events, and rallies featuring parents, kids, and community leaders. We can provide support in coordinating that. Even holding signs in high-traffic areas can raise visibility and awareness.

Cultivate relationships with sympathetic reporters and commentators. Send them information about the importance of the SUN Bucks program. If possible, provide them with contacts for experts and families they can interview. We can assist with media pitching.

Call in to local talk radio programs. Let their audiences know about SUN Bucks and how it can benefit your community.

For more information, visit afsc.org/nohungersummer
Contact: nohungersummer@afsc.org

ABOUT AFSC

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that works with people of all faiths and backgrounds. Founded in 1917, AFSC has a long history of working for peace, human rights, and justice in the U.S. and around the world.

Our work with food justice for children began with a massive child feeding program in Europe in the wake of World War I, providing millions of meals for hungry children in Central and Eastern Europe. That work has continued over the years through supporting sustainable food production, protecting Indigenous practices and access to resources, joining in solidarity with farmworkers, and advocating for policies that promote food security at the federal, state, and local levels.

