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SUN Bucks Program to Feed One Million North Carolina School Children this Summer

Find summer nutrition programs at: www.dpi.nc.gov/summer-meals

Governor Roy Cooper hosted Administrator of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services Cindy Long to celebrate the launch of SUN Bucks (ncdhhs.gov/sunbucks), the state's newest food assistance program to help prevent child hunger. Governor Cooper thanked six philanthropic partners in North Carolina who are contributing generously to support SUN Bucks, joining leaders from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) and the NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) to successfully launch the program.

North Carolina will receive around \$120 million in federal benefits to feed over a million school children in North Carolina this summer. The first benefits from the SUN Bucks program will begin to be issued to eligible families across the state next week.

"Summer can be a hard time for children who rely on our public schools for a healthy school breakfast and lunch," said Governor Cooper. "Nearly one in six North Carolina children face food insecurity at home and this effort helps make sure they get the nutritious food they need."

North Carolina is one of only three states in the Food and Nutrition Services Southeast Region to take advantage of the new USDA program. The purpose of SUN Bucks, also referred to as Summer EBT, is to provide food assistance to school-aged children and help bridge the financial gap for families during the summer months.

The North Carolina SUN Bucks program is a cross-sector collaboration between USDA, NCDHHS, NCDPI and philanthropic partners. The program was made possible by contributions from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, Smithfield Foods, The Leon Levine Foundation, Dogwood Health Trust, Cone Health Foundation and Brighthouse Financial.

"We applaud North Carolina for stepping up as a leader and implementing Summer EBT in its inaugural year," said Administrator Long. "This is an unprecedented opportunity to dramatically reduce child summer hunger. We at USDA are excited to be partnering with North Carolina this summer and look forward helping more states come on board for Summer 2025."

Families will receive a one-time payment of \$120 per eligible child to purchase nutritious foods during the summer - a critical benefit for the 1 in 6 children in North Carolina who live in households without consistent access to food.

"Access to good food is essential to good health and well-being," said NC Health and Human Services Secretary Kody H. Kinsley. "Every kid should be able to enjoy the summer without worrying where their next meal will come from. SUN Bucks helps to ensure children in North Carolina have access to the healthy nutrition they need to thrive."

Nearly 60% of public school students across the state qualify for free and reduced-price meals at school and are at higher risk for hunger when the school year ends. SUN Bucks is the newest addition to an array of nutrition programs aimed at ensuring these students continue to get nutritious foods while out of school for the summer. Find the nutrition programs at dpi.nc.gov/summer-meals.

"Every dollar counts for families working to put enough food on the table while kids are out of school," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt. "Our goal for the SUN Bucks program is to help make sure no child in North Carolina goes hungry this summer."

Most eligible children and families automatically qualify for the SUN Bucks program with no action needed to receive the \$120 payment. Benefits will be issued beginning Friday, June 14. Families with children who currently receive FNS will see their SUN Bucks benefits loaded onto their existing EBT card, and all other children will receive a SUN Bucks card in the mail.

For children who do not automatically qualify but may be eligible for SUN Bucks, NCDHHS will send an email and text message to families with instructions on how to apply. Applications will be accepted through Aug. 31, 2024, for the 2024 summer period.

For more information, visit the updated SUN Bucks website and SUN Bucks Frequently Asked Questions. Eligibility requirements are available in English and Spanish. To contact a SUN Bucks customer representative, families can dial 1-866-719-0141 and press option 2.

To learn more about summer nutrition programs and to find summer meal sites in your area, visit NCDPI's Summer Meals webpage.

The Month of June

June is the ancient Roman goddess of marriage and childbirth. And the month of June is still a popular month for weddings today! As a natural extension of marriage, Juno was also the goddess of childbirth. Another interpretation of the origins of "June" says that the name came from the Latin juvenis, "young people," who were celebrated at this time.

Juno, in Roman religion, was the chief goddess and female counterpart of Jupiter, like the relationship between the Greek Hera and Zeus. Perhaps not surprisingly, given her role of protector of women and children, this powerful queen of the gods was also considered the fierce protector and special counselor of the state and a guardian angel warning those in times of danger.

June Calendar

- June 5 is World Environment Day - a day meant to raise environmental awareness across the globe.
- June 14 is Flag Day (U.S.). Be sure to raise the flag!
- June 16 is Father's Day
- June 19 is Juneteenth (also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day). On this day in 1865, Union General Gordon Granger read the Emancipation Proclamation aloud in Galveston, Texas, effectively liberating enslaved people in the state, which had thus far been beyond control of the Union Army.
- June 20 is the summer solstice, which heralds the start of summer in the Northern Hemisphere. It's the day with the most hours of daylight. In the Southern Hemisphere, winter begins.
- June 21 full Strawberry Moon! For the first time since 1985, Full Moon happens precisely on the summer solstice, when the Sun is highest up. Because the Moon is always opposite the Sun, this year, you will see that the Moon is 10 widths lower on the horizon than the Sun ever is. If you're awake in the hour after midnight, check to see how very low the Moon is. The low point on the horizon may not seem exciting, but we promise it's worth staying up for. It's a sight that won't return for another 18 years!

The Full Moon is normally our brightest night. But this month, it ascends so little that the thick northern air will paint it yellow or orange and subdue its light. Moreover, its extreme southerly position will keep it aloft for just a few short hours, leaving that night mostly black.

• June 24 brings Midsummer Day, also St. John the Baptist's Feast Day. Traditionally, this was the midpoint of the growing season, halfway between planting and harvesting.

June's birth flowers are the rose and the honeysuckle. The rose, indicates love or desire. The honeysuckle denotes the bonds of love, or generous and devoted affection.

June's birthstone is generally considered to be the Pearl. Pearls are associated with purity, honesty, and calmness. If you dream of a pearl ring, expect romance.

Funny, Random & Weird Holidays

- June 6 Thursday - Drive-In Movie Day
- June 7 Friday - VCR Day & National Doughnut Day
- June 8 Saturday - Best Friends Day
- June 9 Sunday - Donald Duck Day
- June 10 Monday - Iced Tea Day
- June 11 Tuesday - Corn on the Cob Day
- June 12 Wednesday - Red Rose Day

Dollar Day Yard Sale is Saturday

Faith-Based Center of Hope will have a "Dollar Day Yard Sale" on Saturday, June 8 beginning at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot across from Papa Joe's Pizza, at 911 East Caswell Street in Wadesboro. All proceeds will go to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Contributions and donations are appreciated. For more information please contact Vancine Sturdivant, CEO at 704-294-0480 or Patricia Robinson, Secretary at 704-848-4995.

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4TH OF JULY PARADE

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Lilesville Town Hall at 704-848-4711

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