

## **Governor Moore Announces Expanded Maryland SUN Bucks Program Fed More than Half a Million Children in Inaugural Year**

**ANNAPOLIS, MD** — Governor Wes Moore today announced that the expanded Maryland SUN Bucks program, administered through Maryland Department of Human Services, helped feed more than 586,000 children this past summer. Maryland issued \$70.59 million in federally-funded grocery buying benefits from June to August, making SUN Bucks the largest investment to combat childhood hunger during the summer months in Maryland's history.

"No child should ever go hungry – and yet, we know that putting food on the table is a challenge for many Maryland families," **said Gov. Moore**. "That's why our administration launched a frontal assault on child poverty by bringing those closest to the challenges to the table to help us find solutions. Maryland SUN Bucks marks our latest action to ensure that our children can stay healthy as they learn and grow – and it won't be the last."

Maryland SUN Bucks built upon Maryland's existing Summer SNAP program and expanded the reach six-fold. Families in all of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions received benefits and local government matching funds were not required. The Eastern Shore witnessed a tenfold increase in participation, while Western Maryland experienced a remarkable 71-fold rise.

"In its inaugural year, Maryland SUN Bucks has proven to be a tremendous success, making a significant difference across the entire state," **said Maryland Department of Human Services Secretary Rafael López**. "These results demonstrate our commitment to ending childhood poverty. We are reaching more children than ever before and helping more families put meals on the table."

The Maryland SUN Bucks program featured a simple application process with automatic enrollment for families who already receive SNAP and Temporary Cash Assistance or Medicaid. Families received \$40 per month for June, July and August for a combined \$120 total for each eligible child.

More than 99% of children who received Maryland SUN Bucks were automatically enrolled, including school-aged children and teens who receive free and reduced-price meals, who live in out-of-home care, or who are unhoused or homeless. Families received benefits directly on their Electronic Benefits Transfer cards or via Maryland SUN Bucks card.

Individuals who applied later in the summer received retroactive benefits for earlier months. Those approved between July 1 and August 31 will also receive SUN Bucks for next summer.

For more information about Maryland SUN Bucks, visit [dhs.maryland.gov/sunbucks](https://dhs.maryland.gov/sunbucks).

###