

A photograph of a school entrance. On the left, a white sign on a black frame stands on a concrete step. The sign reads 'GRAB & GO MEALS FOR KIDS M-F 10:00-12:00' with three arrows pointing right. The background shows a brick building with two red doors. The door on the right has a poster on it. Green metal railings are visible on the left and right sides of the entrance.

**GRAB & GO
MEALS
FOR KIDS
M-F
10:00-12:00
➡➡➡**

SCHOOL CLOSURES DURING COVID-19: OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION IN MEAL SERVICE

Eliza W. Kinsey, PhD, MPH | Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health | August 11, 2020

RESEARCH TEAM



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SCHOOL MEALS ARE A VITAL COMPONENT OF THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET

In 2019, the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program served approximately 15 million breakfasts and 30 million lunches daily at low or no cost to low-income students.

K-12 schools serve more than 7 billion meals to students each year

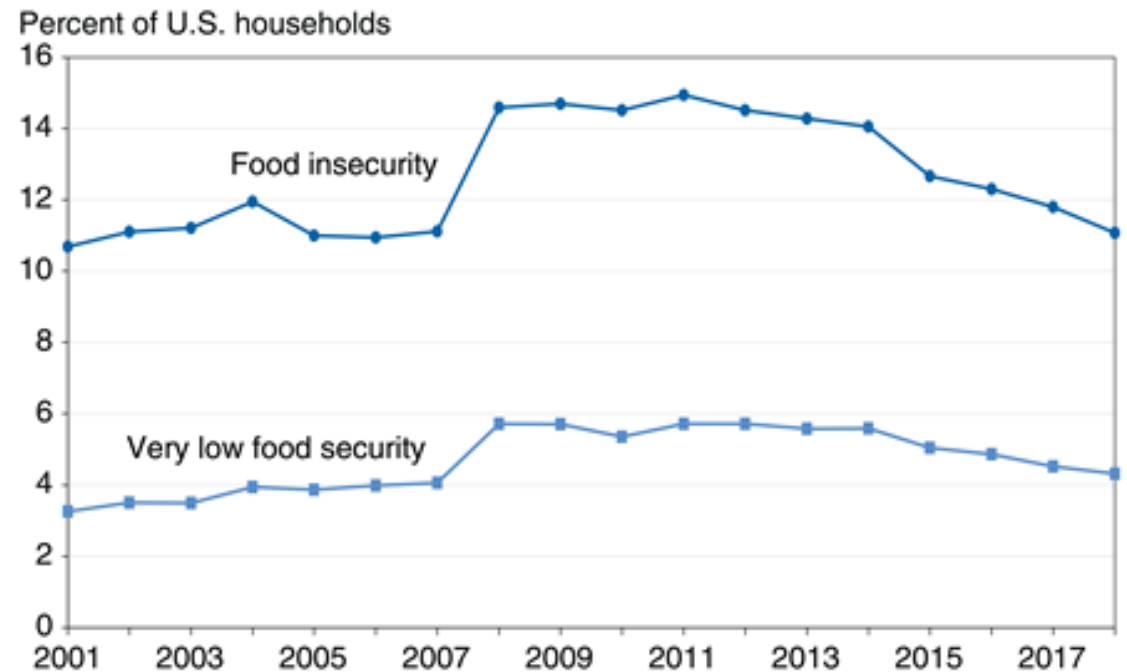
>75% of all students participating in the school meals program qualify for FRP meals

LOSS OF ACCESS TO SCHOOL MEALS PUTS MILLIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS AT INCREASED RISK OF FOOD INSECURITY

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. household food insecurity rate was 11.1% and 14% among families with children (2018 estimates).

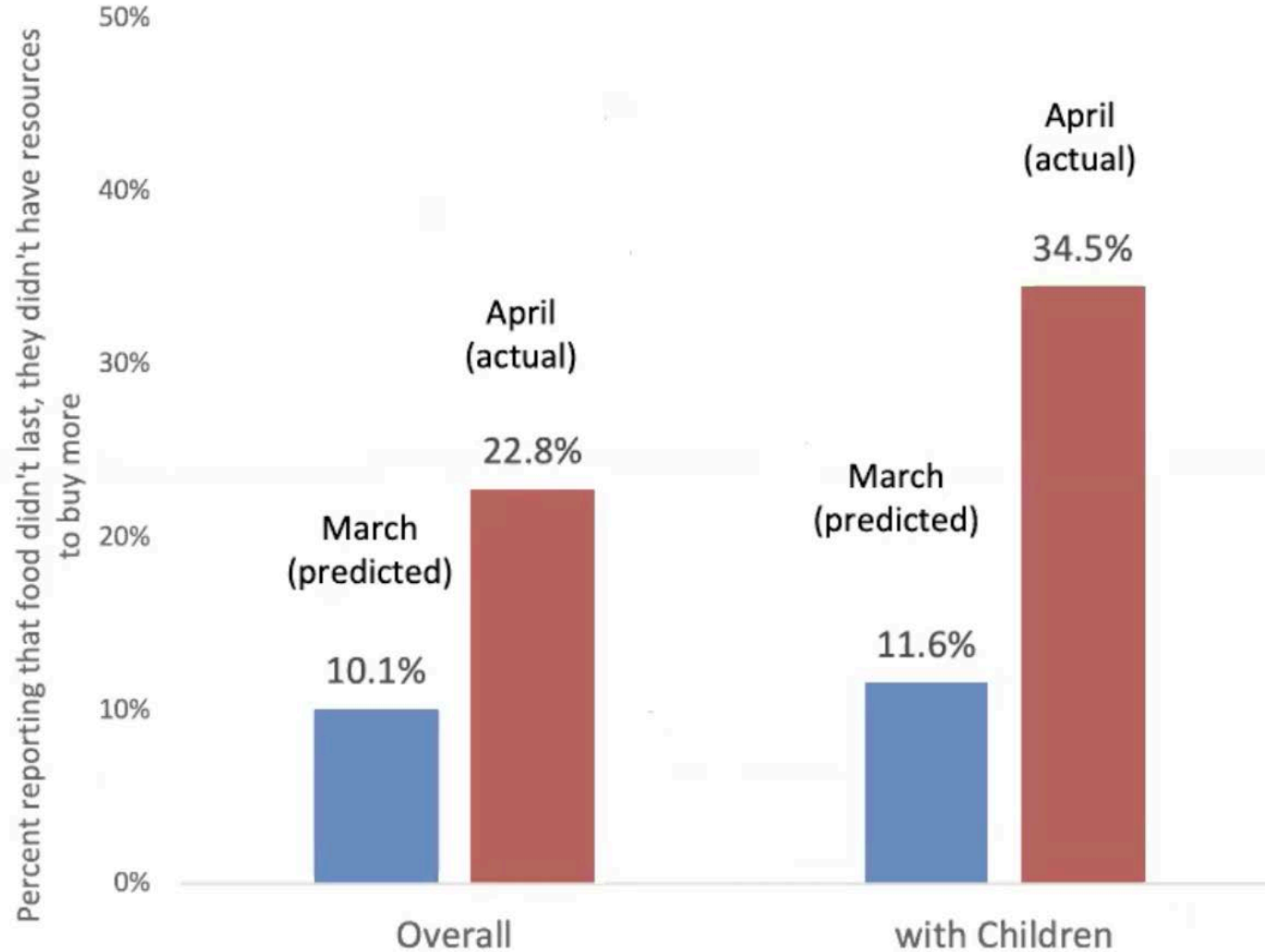
In 2018, nearly 1 in 7 children (about 11 million) lived in a food insecure household, with higher rates in Black and Hispanic households.

Prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security, 2001-2018



Note: Food insecurity includes low and very low food security.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements, U.S. Census Bureau.

In April Food Insecurity **Doubled** Overall and **Tripled** for those with Children



Source: Northwestern's Institute for Policy Research (COVID Impact Survey)

SCHOOL MEALS REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY AND ARE A VITAL SOURCE OF NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN

NSLP participation associated with a 14% reduction in food insufficiency

Access to SBP reduced risk of marginal food insecurity and likelihood of skipping breakfast, especially among low-income children

School meals significantly contribute to daily dietary intake and are generally more nutritious than meals from other sources, including home-packed meals

MISSED MEALS FROM CLOSURES MAY SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT CHILDREN'S HEALTH, NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY

Impacts likely magnified for low-income and Black and Hispanic children who are already at greater risk for poor health outcomes and are more likely to be eligible for FRP meals and to participate in school meals.

OUR RESEARCH

1. Illustrate the impact of COVID-19 on student access to food by estimating the number of missed meals (breakfasts and lunches not being served in schools resulting from the pandemic)
2. Highlight innovative meal replacement efforts being implemented by states and school districts, including a specific case study from Maryland
3. Explore lessons learned from this crisis with the goal of informing and strengthening future nutrition policies for out-of-school time, including summer meals and unexpected school closures

MISSED MEALS ESTIMATES

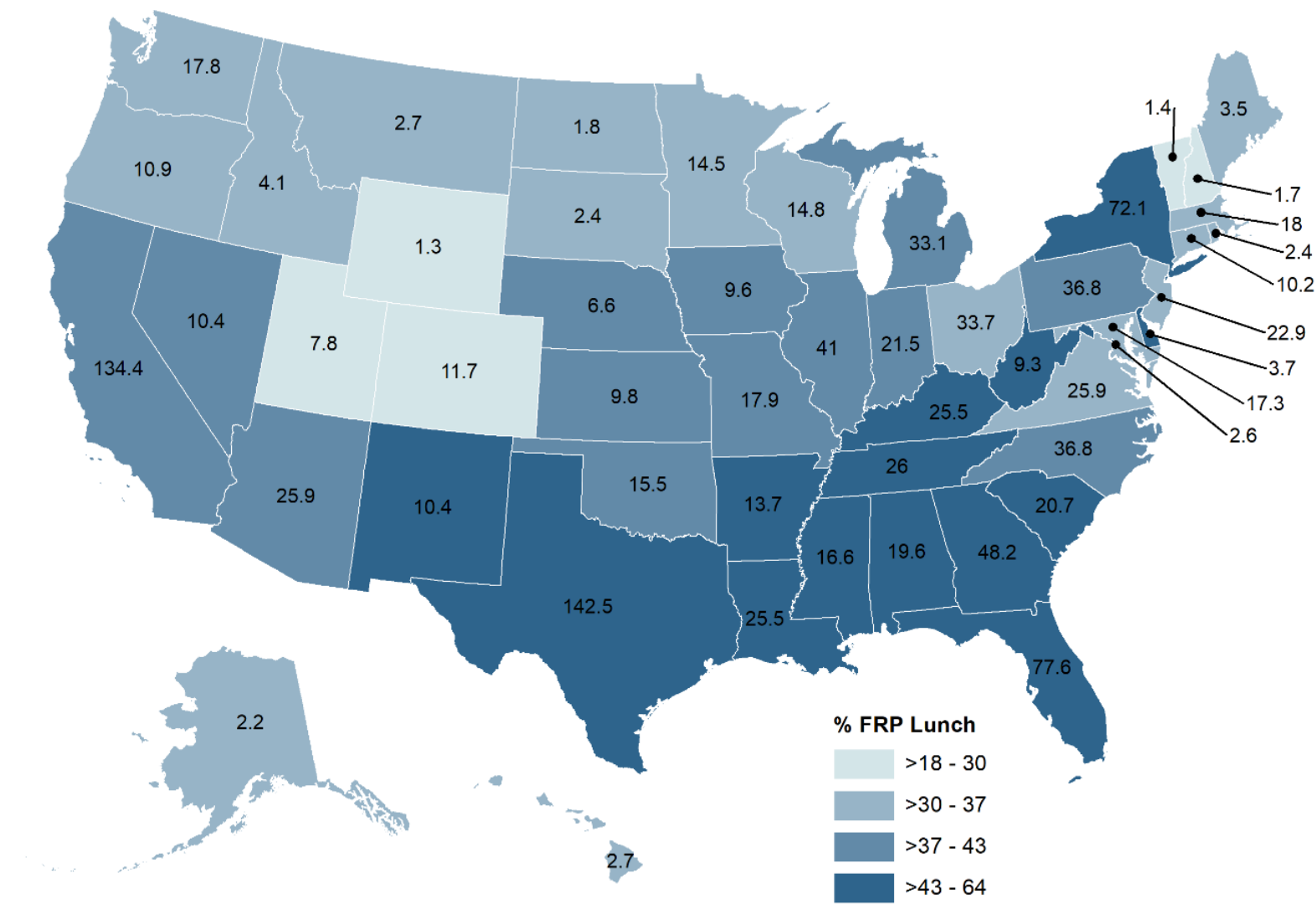
Estimate of missed breakfasts and lunches per week from March 2 – May 1, 2020 using school closure reports from Education Week and state-level free and reduced-price participation in NSLP and SBP for 2019



Table 1. National weekly and cumulative missed free and reduced-price school meals (breakfast and lunch), March 2 – May 1, 2020

Date	Weekly Meals	Cumulative Meals
Mar 2-6	36,802	36,802
Mar 9-13	2,598,526	2,635,328
Mar 16-20	124,824,223	127,459,551
Mar 23-27	169,479,514	296,939,064
Mar 30 - Apr 3	169,619,512	466,558,576
Apr 6-10	169,619,512	636,178,088
Apr 13-17	169,619,512	805,797,601
Apr 20-24	169,619,512	975,417,113
Apr 27 - May 1	169,619,512	1,145,036,625

Free and reduced-price (FRP) participating students as a percentage of total student enrollment and state cumulative missed free and reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches (millions, March 2 – May 1, 2020)



COVID-19 SCHOOL MEALS INNOVATIVE RESPONSES

USDA granted 18 nationwide waivers between March 20 and May 1 to provide flexibilities for states to determine where and how school meals could be served during school closures

Intention of the waivers was to ease program operations and protect the health of students and program staff

INNOVATIONS

- Outdoor meal delivery sites in central locations (e.g. parking lots of schools, community centers, apartment complexes)
- Home meal delivery
- Expanded meal service to 7 days per week
- Distributing one week of meals at one time
- Providing bulk items (e.g. gallon of milk, rather than single-serve cartons)
- Expanded age eligibility – 0-18 years in some districts and students with disabilities age 18-26
- Partnerships with food banks to provide items for the whole household at a single site



CHALLENGES

- Weather
- Virus exposure for staff and volunteers
- Modified procurement, preparation and distribution methods
- Food supply chain issues
- Childcare challenges for staff
- Uncertainty about COVID relief bill funds distribution

MARYLAND CASE STUDY

Statewide school closures announced on Thursday, March 12 with replacement meals beginning Monday, March 16

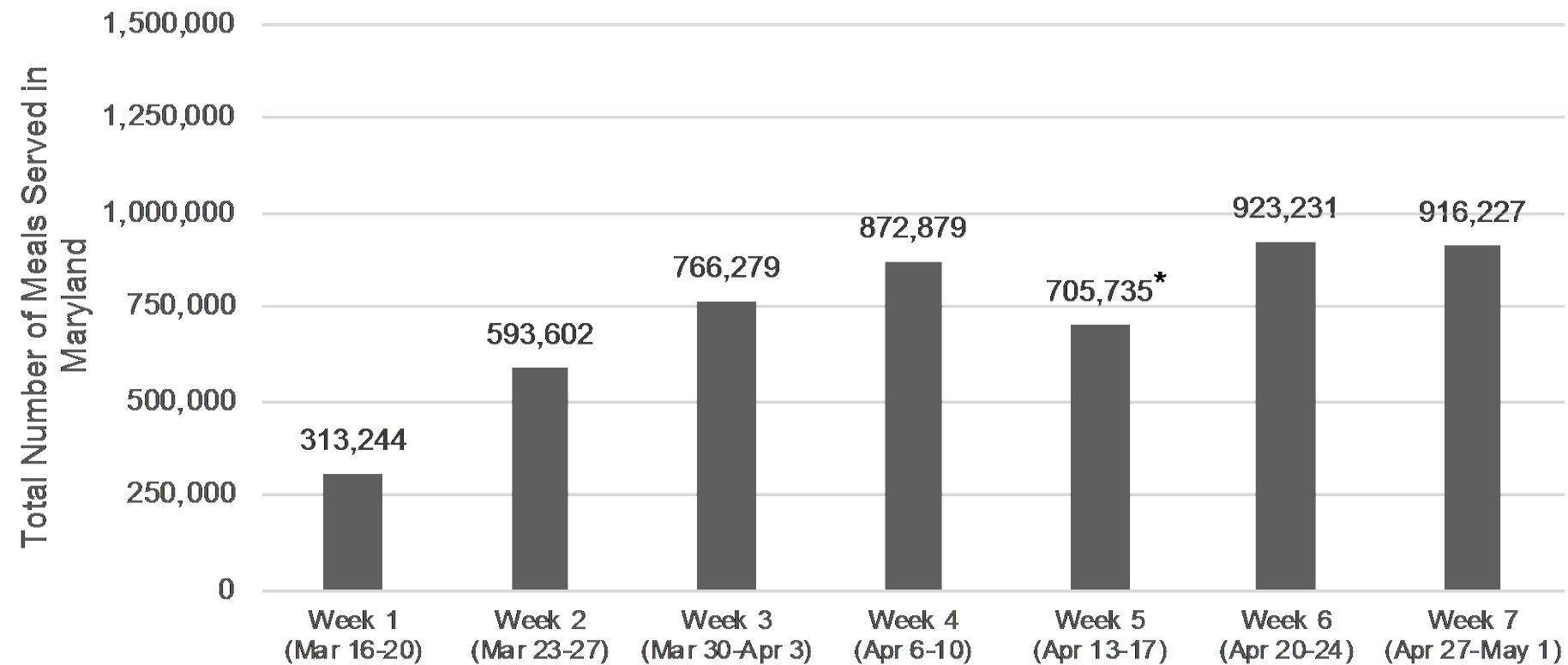
Department of Education collaborated with state's 24 school districts to develop a plan

Applied for and granted 6 USDA waivers within first 3 weeks of shutdowns

- Also received state-specific approval for home meal delivery and extended approval of area eligibility to serve catchment areas where 30% of students were FRP eligible (formerly 50%)

More waivers granted in following weeks

Figure 2. Number of breakfast and lunch meals served per week in Maryland During Covid-19 School Closures, March 16 – May 3, 2020.



**Many districts took some days off of meal service for spring break*

NOTE: average number of free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch meals served each week before Covid-19 pandemic = 2,469,585

LESSONS LEARNED

1. School nutrition programs are playing a vital role in responding to student and family needs.
2. School nutrition operations during the pandemic have underscored the challenges of feeding children when schools are not in session and identified possible solutions.
3. The COVID-19 crisis has spurred innovation in school nutrition services.
4. Children across the country are missing out on the critical school meals they relied on when schools were in session.

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THANK YOU!

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EXTRA SLIDES

REPLACEMENT MEALS ESTIMATES

West Virginia:	1.4 million meals weekly at 393 feeding sites
NYC:	3 million meals March 13-April 13 at 435 sites
Philadelphia:	1 million meals to 182,000 children at 49 sites March 16-April 20
San Francisco:	38,893 meals/day totally 194,465 meals/week. 862,000 meals at 18 sites March 16-May 8

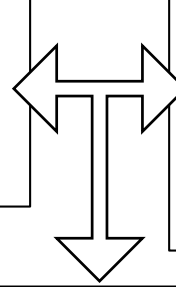


Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT): What We Know & Don't Know

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Georgetown University Law Center
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Healthy Eating Research (HER)

A national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Duke University



NOPREN Food Insecurity & School Wellness Working Groups

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO)

COVID-19 School Nutrition Implications Working Group

380+ researchers, advocacy organization representatives and practitioners, and 185+ students

Practice, Policy Implementation Collaborators

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- American Heart Association (AHA) – Voices for Healthy Kids (VHA)
- Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)
- Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
- Hunger Free America
- Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative—University of Arkansas
- Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education and Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- National Farm to School Network
- National Science Foundation Social Science Extreme Events Research Network
- Nutrition Policy Institute (NPI), University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Nutrition Research Advisory Coalition
- School Nutrition Association (SNA)
- Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign
- Trust for America's Health
- Urban School Food Alliance
- Other NOPREN Working Groups (Early Childhood Education, Healthy Food Retail)
- PAPREN (CDC-sponsored Physical Activity Policy Research and Evaluation Network) Pressing Issues Working Group

Subcommittees/Projects

Shared Data Collection Methods

- Survey
- Qualitative
- Implementation processes

Special Impact Topics

- Accelerated weight gain
- Innovations in meal service
- **Pandemic/summer EBT**
- Meals during instructional breaks
- Financial/operational health
- Early childhood
- Summer meal programs
- School/early childhood reopening
- State responses assessment
- Policy/advocacy

Case Studies

- Large urban district responses

Products *(as of August 9, 2020)*

- Website
- Supported fellowship and co-chairs
- Student internship matchmaking tool
- Student summer seminar series and virtual poster session
- Resource manager, listserv, weekly resource digest
- 2 data collection repositories
- 17 peer-reviewed research articles - accepted, under review or development
- 2 HER research briefs (+ one under development)
- 2 fact sheets (+ one under development)
- 3 Op-Eds
- 2 News article features
- 9 presentations and webinars

What is Pandemic EBT?

- **The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020**
 - Congressional authorization
- **Provides the Secretary of Agriculture authority**
 - USDA administration
- **to approve state agency plans**
 - State administration
- **for temporary emergency standards of eligibility and levels of benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.**
 - Temporary
 - Emergency standards of eligibility
 - Levels of benefit
 - Existing Congressional authorization and framework

What is Pandemic EBT?

- Children who would receive free or reduced price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act if not for the school closure are eligible under this provision.
 - How determined – through SNAP, non-SNAP, CEP schools
 - How to apply – no SS# (Public Charge Rule concerns)
 - What about children in Head Start, CACFP, WIC, other social service programs not enrolled in schools?
- State agencies may submit plans in any case in which a school is closed for at least 5 consecutive days during a public health emergency designation during which the school would otherwise be in session.
 - State plans – reviewed – and approved
 - At least 5 days (written pre COVID and pre the majority of nation's schools closing for academic year)
 - State public health emergency designation
 - What about summer? What about next school year?

Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC)

- Innovative but limited demonstration project
 - Distributes a monthly benefit during the summer on SNAP or WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals
- In 2010, Congress (P.L. 111-80) authorized and appropriated funding for the USDA to implement and rigorously evaluate this program from summers 2011 to 2019
 - In summer 2011, 11,400 children were served through SEBTC; by 2016, more than 209, 000 children in 9 states and 2 tribal nations were served
 - Rigorous research found:
 - The benefit of \$60 per month per child reduced the most severe category of food insecurity among children during the summer by one-third and the \$30 benefit was as effective.
 - Households redeemed benefits at similar rates in the \$30 versus \$60 monthly benefit categories. Children in households receiving the \$60 benefit ate slightly more nutritious foods (fruits and vegetables, whole grains, dairy foods, and less added sugars) than children in the \$30 group, and both had positive nutrition outcomes compared with children with no benefit.
- Therefore, PEBT is seen as a natural experiment occurring regarding the expansion of this type of program



Notable Articles of 2019
1 exclusive collection



PERSPECTIVE
Universal Masking in Hospitals
in the Covid-19 Era

**IMAGES IN CLINICAL
MEDICINE**
Orbital Hydatid Cyst



EDIT
Anti-
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Canc

Perspective

Feeding Low-Income Children during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Caroline G. Dunn, Ph.D., R.D., Erica Kenney, Sc.D., M.P.H., Sheila E. Fleischhacker, J.D., Ph.D., and Sara N. Bleich, Ph.D.



Article

5 References

AS COVID-19 SPREADS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, SCHOOLS and care facilities are balancing their role of helping to prevent disease transmission while ensuring access to food for children who rely on the federal nutrition safety net. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program serve nearly 35 million children daily, delivering meals and financial assistance to families in need.¹ With such programs interrupted, an essential part of the Covid-19 response will be feeding children from low-income families.

fill up to two thirds of children
e brought from home. The sho
immune response, which increas

PRELIMINARY SUGGESTED APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN U.S. CHILDREN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Centralize and widely distribute information about schools and school districts offering meals during school closure

Decrease social exposures and reduce the time and transportation burden for families by providing multiple days' worth of meals, allowing for drive-through meal pickup (when reasonable), or coordinating meal delivery

Extend emergency benefits to caregivers of children in child care facilities participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and authorize use into periods beyond the Covid-19 response, such as summer months or other emergencies

Codify efforts to expand Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program access and benefits during future pandemics

Examine and amend policies that reduce or deter participation in the nutrition safety net (e.g., the public charge rule)

Metrics

Page Views



68,403

Citations



20

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2005638>

The Impact of Increasing SNAP Benefits on Stabilizing the Economy, Reducing Poverty and Food Insecurity amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Healthy Eating
Research

Research Brief, April 2020

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for administering the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), which provides participants with monthly financial assistance to purchase food. SNAP is by far the largest federal nutrition safety net program serving [38 million people](#) in the United States—nearly half of whom are children. SNAP is proven to [reduce](#) poverty and food insecurity. With [unemployment currently at a record high](#) as a result of COVID-19—an unprecedented public health crisis with significant economic effects—SNAP participation is expected to increase significantly.

This brief provides evidence regarding the potential positive impact of a SNAP benefit increase on the economy and on SNAP households in the context of the current SNAP benefit allotment. We also discuss the SNAP provisions in the three congressional COVID-19 aid bills that have already been enacted.

Recent COVID-19 Stimulus Bills

To date, Congress has passed three COVID-19 stimulus bills ([PL 116-123](#); [PL 116-127](#); [PL 116-136](#)) including SNAP provisions, such as funding for emergency benefits and increased program operating flexibilities as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency ([Table 1](#)). Individually and collectively, these SNAP provisions should help families during COVID-19. However, due to the fact that SNAP is administered at the state level, [waivers will need to be submitted and approved by USDA](#) on a state-by-state basis. This will likely result in large variation in state use of these provisions, producing a patchwork of state emergency allotments and implementation practices across the country. Such a patchwork approach is unlikely to be successful in meeting the needs of all eligible program participants across the United States and will limit the ability of these additional investments to effectively boost and stabilize the economy.

In addition, these supplemental benefits and program flexibilities are time limited by the federal public health emergency declaration for COVID-19. They are not currently tied to the resulting economic impacts, such as rising unemployment rates, which may take years to reverse. With the United States potentially entering one of [the deepest recessions](#) in its history, Congress is expected to pass additional stimulus bills. As a result, advocacy groups (e.g., the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) and the [Food Research & Action Center \(FRAC\)](#)) are calling on Congress to [increase the SNAP maximum benefit 15 percent](#) (\$100 per month for a family of four).

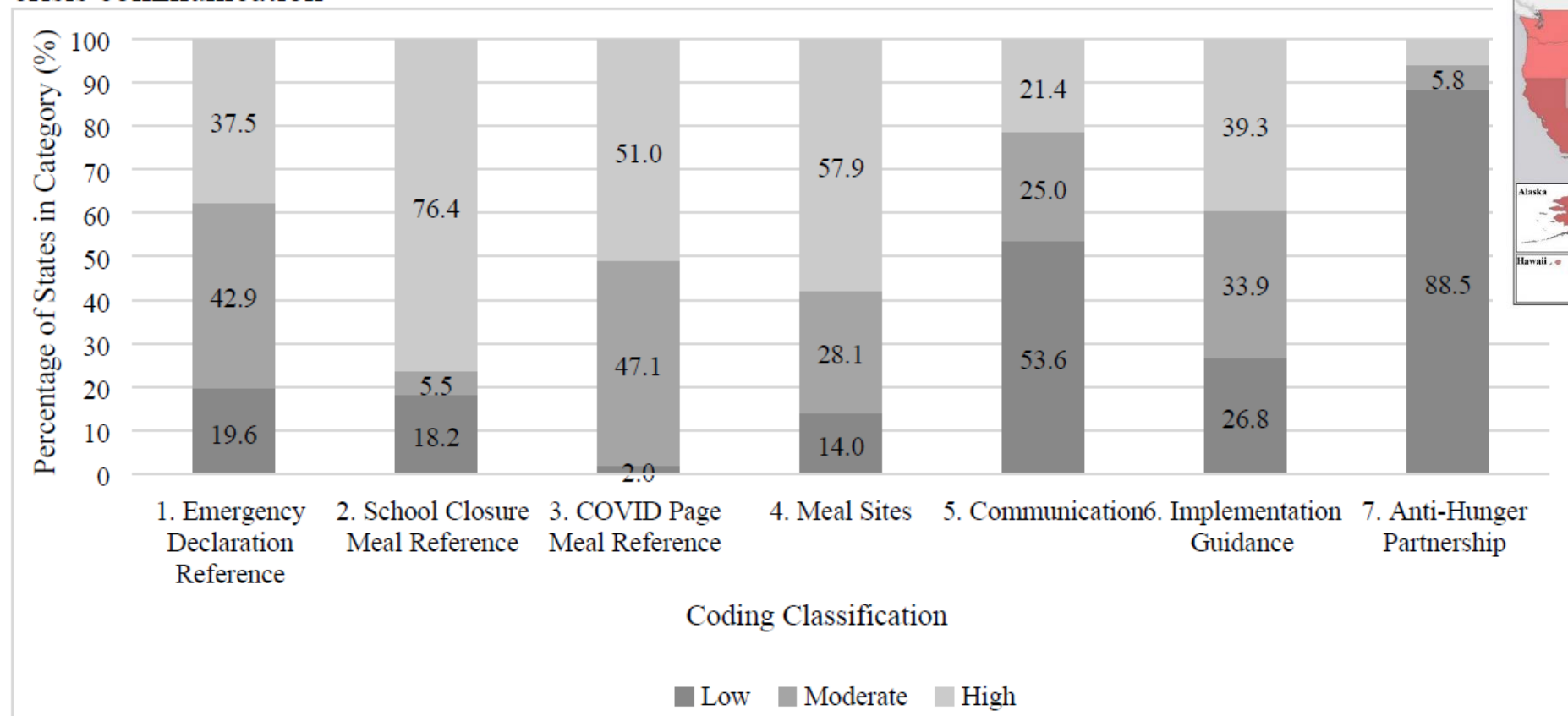


Leveraging SNAP to alleviate poverty — a proven policy approach needed now

thehill.com

Bleich S, Dunn C, Fleischhacker S. March 29, 2020

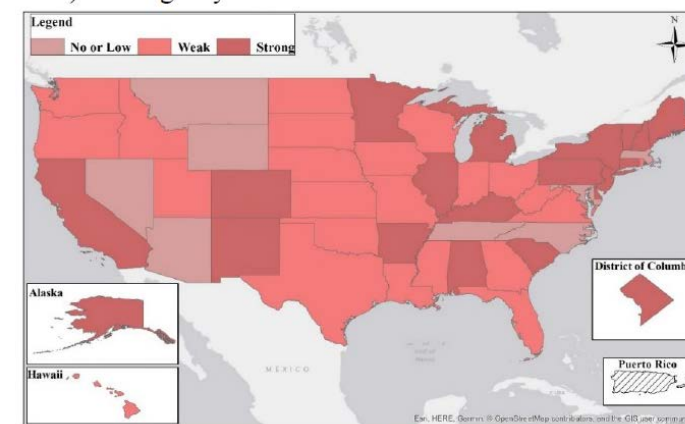
Figure 1. Percentage of jurisdictions scoring low, medium or high according to seven criteria in crisis communication



Note: Sample sizes differ depending on usage of data. Emergency Declaration Reference of School Closures (n=56 states/territories); School Closure Meal Reference (n=53); Education COVID Page Reference (n=51); Meal Sites (n=56); Communication/Outreach (n=56); Implementation Guidance (n=56); Anti-Hunger Partnership (n=51).

Figure 2. Results from geospatial analyses

a) Emergency Declaration



State Guidance on Coronavirus Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

PROGRAMS > FNS DISASTER ASSISTANCE > FNS RESPONDS TO COVID-19 > SNAP COVID-19 WAIVERS > PANDEMIC EBT (P-EBT)

EO Guidance Document

FNS-GD-2020-0109

Resource Type

Policy Memos

Guidance Documents

Resource Materials

[State Guidance Memo](#)

[P-EBT Questions & Answers](#)

[P-EBT/EA Reporting Questions & Answers](#)

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 provides the Secretary of Agriculture authority to approve state agency plans for temporary emergency standards of eligibility and levels of benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. Children who would receive free or reduced price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act if not for the school closure are eligible under this provision. State agencies may submit plans in any case in which a school is closed for at least 5 consecutive days during a public health emergency designation during which the school would otherwise be in session.

The following states have been approved to operate a Pandemic EBT program.

[Alabama](#)

[Alaska](#)

[Arizona](#)

[Arkansas](#)

[California](#)

[Colorado](#)

[Connecticut](#)

[Delaware](#)

[District of Columbia](#)

[Florida](#)

[Georgia](#)

[Hawaii](#)

[Illinois](#)

[Indiana](#)

[Iowa](#)

[Kansas](#)

[Kentucky](#)

[Louisiana](#)

[Maine](#)

[Maryland](#)

[Massachusetts](#)

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[Mississippi](#)

[Missouri](#)

[Montana](#)

[Nebraska](#)

[Nevada](#)

[New Hampshire](#)

[New Jersey](#)

[New Mexico](#)

[New York](#)

[North Carolina](#)

[North Dakota](#)

[Ohio](#)

[Oklahoma](#)

[Oregon](#)

[Pennsylvania](#)

[Rhode Island](#)

[South Carolina](#)

[South Dakota](#)

[Tennessee](#)

[Texas](#)

[Utah](#)

[Vermont](#)

[Virginia](#)

[Virgin Islands](#)

[Washington](#)

[West Virginia](#)

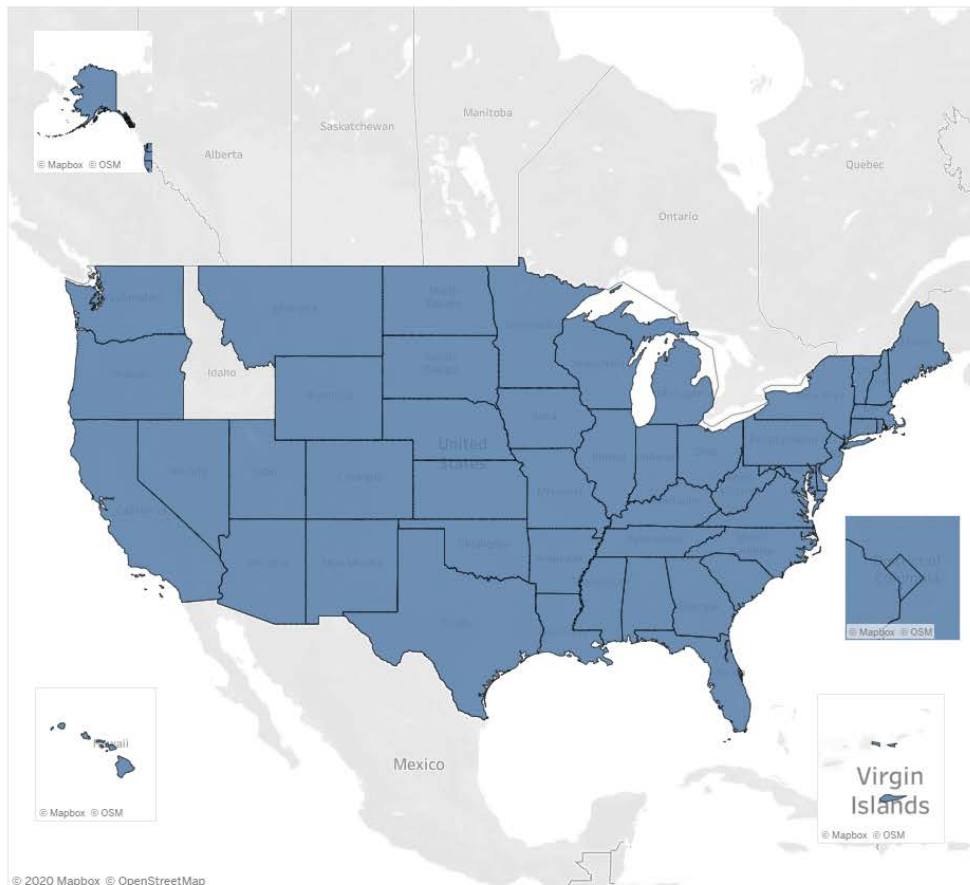
[Wisconsin](#)

[Wyoming](#)



States Approved to Implement P-EBT

Below is a map of states with approved P-EBT plans. Click on states in dark blue to see that state's plan. States in light blue have been approved but do not yet have a website. Every state has a different plan to implement P-EBT. FRAC will continually update [this list](#) and the map below as more states move forward with P-EBT implementation.





REPORT

The effect of Pandemic EBT on measures of food hardship

Lauren Bauer, Abigail Pitts, Krista Ruffini, and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach · Thursday, July 30, 2020



DOWNLOAD

Full paper

Technical Appendix

In the spring of 2020, 55 million school-age children were not in school and tens of millions lost access to school-based nutrition assistance programs. To alleviate the effects of lost daily school meals and to help households with children meet their nutritional needs, Congress authorized a new program, Pandemic EBT, which provides families with a voucher to purchase groceries for an amount equal in value to the school meals missed from the start of school closures to the end of the 2019–20 school year. We find that Pandemic EBT reduced food hardship experienced by low-income families with children and lifted at least 2.7–3.9 million children out of hunger.



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Research Analyst - Northwestern University



Krista Ruffini
Visiting Scholar - Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank's Opportunity and Inclusive Growth Institute, Assistant Professor - Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy



Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach
Nonresident Senior Fellow - Economic Studies
 @dwschanz

HER NOPREN COVID-19 PEBT SubGroup

- Next meeting – August 24th at 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm EST
- More than 50 members
- Identified knowledge gaps and opportunities
- Question bank
- Project and product tracking
 - Nationwide
 - State
 - District
- Resource compilation
- Google doc - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/19-Tl89uTycHvm4FjMSQk5p8L-UVCoKcs/edit>



A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's lower body and legs as they walk on a concrete sidewalk. The person is wearing a dark blue skirt and black shoes. A rusty, weathered metal curb runs diagonally across the frame, separating the sidewalk from a grassy area. The person's legs are positioned on the sidewalk, just behind the curb.



Policy Updates: COVID-19 School Meal Service

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COVID-19 School Reopening: Supporting School Meals and Students' Health in School Year 2020-2021

July 2020



key recommendations

- 1) provide flexibility to school nutrition programs needed to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - e.g. SFSP/SSO waiver extension
- 2) provide emergency relief funds to address financial loss during unanticipated closures
 - see chart on next slide!
- 3) provide increased funding for school nutrition programs for school year 2020-2021
 - e.g. through reimbursement, equipment grants, fresh fruit & vegetable program, f2s grants

Lost Revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced student participation • Loss of income from à la carte sales • Loss of income from catering and vending sales • Offer vs. serve limitations increase food and waste costs • Payments for unfulfilled contracts (equipment maintenance, health inspection) • Lost fixed labor costs from school year 2019-2020 unanticipated closures
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expired foods due to unanticipated school closures • Rising cost of food, packaging and supplies • Supply chain interruptions • Low availability of individually-wrapped foods and pre-cut produce • Water bottles or installation of contactless hydration stations • Cost of disposable food wares (trays, serving cups, utensils)
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard pay for employees • Increased labor costs for additional meal periods (staggered schedule) • Increased labor costs for time spent packaging and sanitizing • Additional foodservice equipment (packaging units, carts, refrigeration, storage, thermal bags) • Purchasing of touch-free point-of-sale units and meal ordering software • Increased marketing costs to reach distance learning households • Transportation costs associated with food delivery
Safety and Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training on COVID-9 safety and sanitation • Personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, aprons) • Support equipment and signage (sneeze guards, social distancing decals, safety and hygiene signage) • Sanitation products (hand sanitizer, cleaners, soap) • Thermometers (for screening staff and students)

Community of Practice Call

COVID-19 Emergency Food Service

Jen McNeil

Founder, LunchAssist

Mickinzie Lopez

Administrative Dietitian, LunchAssist



Leyla Marandi

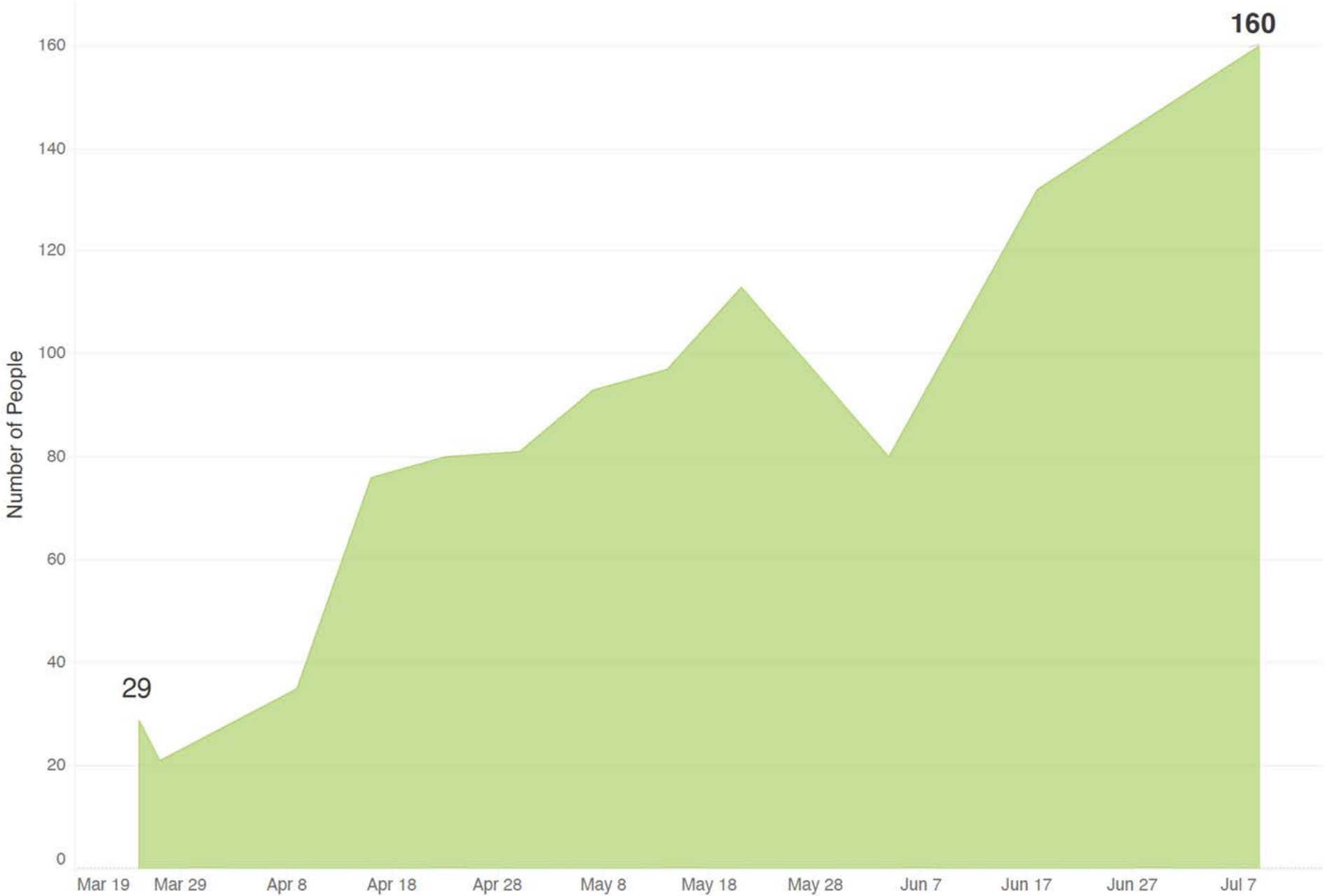
Program Manager, Center for Ecoliteracy

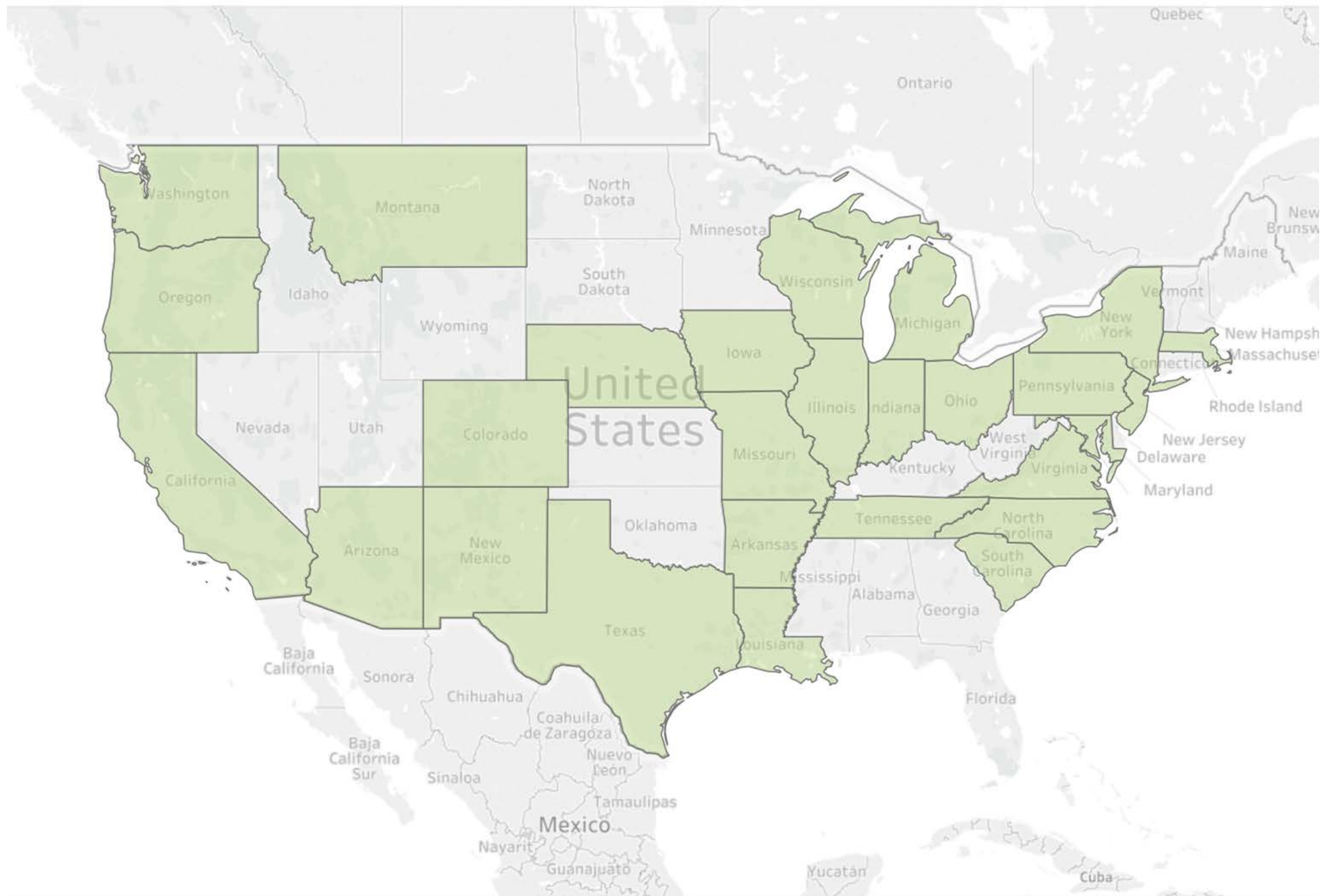


CENTER FOR
ECOLITERACY

CALIFORNIA FOOD
FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®

Community of Practice Attendance Over Time











state advocacy: emergency school meals funding

CARES act: \$112 million
for emergency meal
service

\$10 million for CA farm to
school programs



COVID-19 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLANNING RESOURCES

COVID-19 planning templates, reopening protocols, and additional resources that support school nutrition programs in return to school planning efforts.



Thank you!

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