USDA’s Actions on Food and Nutrition Security: Child Nutrition Updates

NOPREN State-of-Science Webinar Series

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- Heather Hopwood, MPH, Senior Technical Advisor, School Meals Policy Division, Child Nutrition Programs, FNS
- Raisa Alstodt, MBA, PMP, Program Analyst, Summer EBT, Child Nutrition Programs, FNS
- Elizabeth Campbell, RDN, Branch Chief, External Affairs, FNS

May 13, 2024
1 in 4 Americans is served by USDA’s nutrition assistance programs
USDA’s Four-Pillar Approach

Meaningful Support

Healthy Food

Collaborative Action

Equitable Systems
Recent FNS Food & Nutrition Security Investments

- Increasing SNAP Benefits to Support Healthy Eating
- Bringing SNAP and WIC Shopping Online
- Modernizing WIC to Improve Reach
- Strengthening Evidence to Inform FNS Policy and Nutrition Services
- Supporting a Diverse WIC Workforce
- Restructuring SNAP-Ed
The MyPlate National Strategic Partnership is a public-private collaboration, bringing stakeholders across many sectors together to promote the MyPlate symbol and messaging to consumers.
USDA Food and Nutrition Service Panelists

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Raisa Alstodt, MBA, PMP
Program Analyst
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USDA Supports Healthy School Meals for All

Heather Hopwood
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National Priority

• White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, & Health: National Strategy
  o School meals: integral part of the school day
  o Expand access to free school meals: + 9 million students by 2032
COVID Flexibility (March 2020-June 2022)

Free meals for all children
Healthy School Meals for All: Current Landscape

Source: Food Research & Action Center
USDA Support for Healthy School Meals for All

- Expand Community Eligibility Provision
  - Final Rule published September 2023
  - FY 2025 Budget Proposal

- Strengthen School Meals

- With FRAC, convene meetings with HSMFA States
Expand Community Eligibility Provision

• Lower eligibility threshold to 25%
  • Expand access to
    o 3,000 schools; 5 million students

• President’s FY 2025 Budget Proposal
  o Increase reimbursements to CEP schools
  o Statewide group
Community Eligibility Provision Benefits

**Students**
- Decreased hunger
- Reduced social stigma
- Positive impacts on student’s diet quality & academic performance

**Households**
- No application
- No meal charges
- Stretches household food budgets
- Improves household food security

**Schools**
- Decreased administrative burden
- Streamlined meal service
- No school meal debt
Learn More!

Community Eligibility Provision Resource Center:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/community-eligibility-provision

• CEP Memos
• Estimator Tool
• CEP Data
• Webinars
Strengthen School Meals: FINAL RULE
CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS MEAL PATTERNS

Major Provisions:

1. Added Sugars
   - Product-based Limits in SBP/NSLP (July 1, 2025)
   - Weekly Limits (July 1, 2027)

2. Sodium
   - Maintain current sodium limits through SY 2026-2027
   - One Reduction (July 1, 2027)

3. Flavored Milk (no change)

4. Whole Grains (no change)
Resources to Support Implementation: Meal Pattern Updates

- Comparison Chart: Proposed vs. Final Standards
- Implementation Timelines: CACFP, SFSP & School Meals
- Media Toolkit
- Infographics
- Videos
- Questions & Answers

Final Rule Website
Opportunities

• Collaborate on an all-of-society approach to end hunger, improve nutrition and physical activity, and reduce diet-related diseases and disparities

• Support Healthy School Meals for All activities and schools adopting the Community Eligibility Provision

• Amplify positive messages about school meals

• Support school meals as an integral part of the school day

• Support complementary policies:
  • Enough time to eat
  • Recess before lunch
  • Closed campus
Research

- **Community Eligibility Provision Evaluation Study** (2014)

- **Community Eligibility Provision Characteristics Study, School Year 2016-2017** (2022)

- **Systematic Review** (2021)
Summer EBT Overview

Raisa Alstodt
Program Analyst
Child Nutrition Programs
Food and Nutrition Services
USDA’s newest permanent nutrition program: Summer EBT
FNS Programs Over the Years

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) (1946)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP) Pilots (1966)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Pilots (1972)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) (1968)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (1964)
- Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) Demos (2010)
- Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) (2020)
- Summer EBT (2022)
Today’s Agenda

- Background
- Overview of Summer EBT
Summer should be a time for fun, not hunger

Food insecurity rises during the summer, when nearly 30 million children who participate in USDA’s school meals programs lose access to these nutritious meals.
Summer EBT Works!

- Summer EBT benefits reduced the most severe category of food insecurity among children during the summer by one-third compared to those receiving no benefits.
- Children who participated ate more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and dairy than those who didn't get Summer EBT.
- Participants generally were satisfied with how the projects operated and found the benefits easy to use.
- Retailers noted that their summer business increased significantly due to Summer EBT benefit use.
Lessons Learned From Summer EBT Demonstrations

The findings from these evaluations play an important role in shaping program operations for the permanent Summer EBT program.

The strategies USDA has adopted:

- Using a range of diverse outreach techniques.
- Implementing a year-round approach to program implementation and operations.
- Requiring centralized, statewide data systems and application processes.
- Encouraging flexibility in distribution and rollover of benefits.
Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

- On EBT cards (worked the same as SNAP cards)
- Available through the duration of the pandemic, including the summer months
- Temporary program due to school closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023

The law permanently authorized a **nationwide Summer EBT** program!
Launching in 2024! 
Summer EBT 
Could benefit more than 29 million children
USDA Guidance

- New regulations at 7 CFR 292- Published December 2023
- USDA issued early guidance prior to rule publication
- [https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt)
  - Implementation Toolkit
  - Outreach Toolkit
Guiding Principles for Summer EBT

- Effectively deliver benefits to eligible families
- Streamline program administration
- Minimize burden on schools
- Provide states temporary flexibilities where possible, as they work to stand up Summer EBT
Streamlined Certification

- Direct certification with SNAP, FDPIR, TANF
  - Includes Medicaid in DC-M demo states
- Categorically eligible (e.g. homeless children)
- Certified for F/RP meals by application
Administrative Matching Funds
We can ensure no child goes hungry in the summer!
Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids
Thank You & Stay Connected

www.usda.gov/nutrition-security

@USDANutrition

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