



FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

School Breakfast Program

What Is the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost breakfasts to children each school day in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP started in 1966 as a pilot project and was made a permanent entitlement program by Congress in 1975.

Who Administers SBP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SBP at the Federal level. At the State level, SBP is administered by State agencies, which operate through agreements with local school food authorities.

How Does SBP Work?

The SBP is operated by public or nonprofit private schools at the high school level or below. Public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions and charter schools may also participate in SBP as public schools. Schools and institutions that choose to participate in SBP must serve breakfasts that meet the Federal nutrition requirements and offer them at a free or reduced price to all eligible children. In exchange, participating institutions receive cash subsidies from USDA for each reimbursable meal served.

How Can Children Participate in Free or Reduced-Price School Breakfast?

Children may be determined “categorically eligible” for free meals through participation in certain Federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally funded Head Start Program or a comparable State-funded pre-kindergarten program are also categorically eligible for free meals.

Children can also qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on their household income and family size. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. Schools may not charge children more than 30 cents for a reduced-price breakfast. To see the current Income Eligibility Guidelines, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Where Can I Go To Learn More About SBP?

For more information, please contact the State agency responsible for administration of SBP in your State: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SBP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov.

| Key School Breakfast Program Data | FY 2015 | FY 2016 | FY 2017 | FY 2018 | FY 2019 (estimate) |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| Average participation (in millions) | 14.0 | 14.6 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 14.8 |
| Breakfasts served (in millions) | 2,334.1 | 2,448.3 | 2,412.9 | 2,422.4 | 2,450.9 |

FY = Fiscal Year