

Maximizing the Impact of USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs

FOR ADVOCATES

New Ways to Address Child Summer Hunger

A healthier future for our country begins with our children. Unfortunately, many children face hunger during the summer when they lose access to school meals. Children need good nutrition to grow, learn and thrive. There are new tools to address summer hunger, including Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer EBT), and a new flexible way to offer meals to children living in hard-to-reach, rural communities.

USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs Benefit Youth

The programs help:

- **Reduce summer hunger.**
Starting in 2024, States, Indian Tribal Organizations administering the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Territories can offer \$120 per eligible child during summer on EBT cards to buy food at grocery stores and other food retailers authorized to accept Summer EBT. This helps children stay well-nourished and increases spending within communities.
 - **Summer EBT is proven to reduce hunger.**
Research shows that providing families with summer grocery benefits can reduce child hunger by 33 percent.¹
- **Provide new options for rural communities.**
In addition to Summer EBT benefits, children in rural communities can now get meals to-go or home-delivered if they live in areas when and where group summer meal service is not available. (This may be referred to as non-congregate summer meal service.)
- **Offer consistent nutrition access.**
Group summer meal sites, often operated by school districts and community partners, offer children healthy meals and enrichment activities that support learning and physical activity. These remain a key source of nutrition and interaction for children in the summertime.

¹ Food and Nutrition Service. (2016). Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Demonstration: Summary Report. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ops/sebtfinalreport.pdf>



Three Ways to Combat Summer Hunger

There are now three flexible ways to reduce child hunger in the summer:

1. In-person group meal service
2. Summer EBT **NEW!**
3. To-go/delivery meal service in rural areas **NEW!**

Learn how all three options can work together to address summer hunger and help fuel children with the nutrition they need when school is out.



Key Steps You Can Take to Maximize Summer Nutrition Options for Students and Communities

Summer EBT



Secure Funding

Urge Governors to include Summer EBT match funding in their State budgets. The USDA covers 100 percent of the EBT benefits for families and 50 percent of the cost to run the program. The remaining 50 percent must be provided through other means, such as State funds, other non-Federal public agency funding, or philanthropic funds.



Support Outreach

Educate your networks, programs, and families. After your State, Indian Tribal Organization, or Territory opts into Summer EBT, help promote awareness about the new benefits among organizations that serve families with eligible children and lift up best practices.



Help with Questions

Direct parents to the right source of information. Parents will have questions when they receive their Summer EBT card and other information about this benefit. Connect them to Summer EBT customer service.



Rural To-Go/Delivery and Group Meal Services



Expand Rural Offerings

Educate new providers and sponsors. Raise awareness among potential meal service providers and site sponsors about the new to-go/delivery option for serving summer meals to children in rural communities.



Support Public Outreach

Inform families about meal service options. Students and families are still learning what summer nutrition options are available to them. Help spread the word about Summer EBT, in-person, and rural to-go/home-delivered meal services available in your community.

Reduce Summer Hunger. You have the power to make a difference for children and their families.

Learn more >

