

Maximizing the Impact of USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs in Your State

FOR GOVERNORS

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. To address summer hunger, Congress passed bipartisan legislation in 2022 creating a permanent benefit program, called 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 Your State

- **Summer EBT helps families and boosts local economies.**
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
- **Rural communities have new options.**
In addition to Summer EBT benefits, States can now allow sites in rural communities when and where group summer meal service is not available to provide kids with meals to-go or via home delivery. (This may be referred to as non-congregate summer meal service.)
- **Group meal sites remain vital.**
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.



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.



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>

Key Steps You Can Take to Maximize Summer Nutrition Options in Your State

Summer EBT



Set Summer EBT as a Priority. Summer EBT provides a unique opportunity to fill the summer meal gap. Governors can highlight Summer EBT in their State during State and budget addresses. Governors can also champion a legislative agenda that includes considerations such as authority to collect and share student eligibility data at the State level.



Secure Administrative Funding. 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. Governors can help identify and secure sources of this funding.



Promote Cross-Agency Collaboration. Running Summer EBT will require State agencies to collaborate in new ways. Governors can promote sharing of ideas, resources, and strategies across agencies by convening a cross-agency Summer EBT committee.



Educate Constituents. State agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations will need to conduct extensive outreach to ensure families are aware of Summer EBT. Governors can use their platform to help educate constituents about the new program.



Encourage Collaboration with Indian Tribal Organizations. This includes streamlined application processes and data sharing with Tribal Nations and WIC Tribal Organizations that can operate their own Summer EBT programs.



Rural To-Go/Delivery and Group Meal Services



Expand Rural Offerings. Raise awareness about the new option for serving summer meals to children in rural communities among potential meal service providers and site sponsors.



Support Public Education 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 State.

Reduce Summer Hunger. You have the power to make a difference for students and families in your State.

Learn more >

