

## **Summer EBT**

### **Background**

Since the late 1960s, the federal government has provided assistance for summer meals served to children through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which provides funding for meals served by nonprofit organizations, school districts, and public agencies to children during the summer. The Seamless Summer Option (SSO), which was authorized in 2004, allows school districts to operate a modified version of the school meals programs (the National School Lunch Program [NSLP] and School Breakfast Program [SBP]) into the summer. Traditionally, summer meals have been consumed on-site with other participants (referred to as congregate feeding)

(<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11633>, retrieved 2/2/2024).

### **Authority**

In December 2022, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328) enabled off-site consumption of summer meals for children living in rural areas. It also authorized a permanent, nationwide Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer EBT) Program for Children to provide eligible households with benefits over the summer that can be redeemed for groceries. Summer EBT has operated as a demonstration project since 2011. The summer meal and Summer EBT programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

(<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11633>, retrieved 2/2/2024).

On December 29, 2023, The [interim final rule](#) amended the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option (SSO). Summer EBT program information is included in the interim final rule and program regulations [7 CFR 292](#).

### **How Do Students Qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Meals?**

LEA with an agreement with USBE Child Nutrition Programs are required to adhere to program regulations. Each school year, school foodservice programs are required to send out a media release about the programs and how to apply for free or reduced-price school lunch.

1. The application prototype and letters to households are provided by USDA Food and Nutrition Service and can be accessed <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/applying-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals>.
2. Student's can also qualify and be directly certified for free or reduced-price meals without a household application when they participate in other qualifying programs such as SNAP, TANF, FDPIR ([7 CFR 245](#)).

To qualify, students must participate in a qualifying state program (SNAP, TANF)

Household size and income levels must meet [Income Eligibility Guidelines](#).

### **Disclosure of Household/Student information**

Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information is addressed in [7 CFR 245](#) and the [National School Lunch Act](#).

1. Reference the Data Sharing Agreement for additional information.
2. USDA requires states to develop an outreach and communication plan to households when operating Summer EBT.