

Summer Nutrition Programs

USDA Is Enhancing the Summer Nutrition Programs

New opportunities to fight child hunger during the summer!

A healthier future for our country begins with our children. Children need consistent access to nutritious foods to be healthy now and throughout their lives. Nearly 30 million children participate in USDA's school breakfast and lunch programs during the school year. **However, when schools are closed, kids lose access to these healthy meals and are at higher risk of food and nutrition insecurity.**

Despite best efforts, group summer meal sites historically only reach 1 in 6 children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the school year. Now, with new authorities from Congress allowing for additional ways to combat summer hunger, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is working with States, Indian Tribal Organizations, territories, schools, and countless other dedicated partners to ensure children have the nourishment they need throughout the summer. **This is an unprecedented opportunity to dramatically reduce child summer hunger.**

Experiencing food insecurity as a child can have long-term impacts on academic achievement as well as mental and physical health.

What's new with USDA summer nutrition programs?

USDA summer nutrition programs can now reach more kids than ever before. In addition to traditional in-person summer meal sites, there are two new options.



There are now **three ways to serve kids** through USDA's summer nutrition programs:

- NEW!** **To-go or delivered meals in rural communities:** Summer meal operators now have the option to provide meals via grab-n-go or delivery, also known as non-congregate meal service, in rural communities where in-person meal service is not available.
- Group meal sites for kids:** Meals served and eaten onsite at community centers, schools, and other central locations remain a vital part of the summer nutrition programs, providing a sense of community and enrichment opportunities for kids.
- NEW!** **Food benefits for purchasing groceries:** Starting in summer 2024, States, certain Indian Tribal Organizations, and territories can provide benefits—officially called Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer, or Summer EBT—to families of eligible children for purchasing food in the summer months at authorized retailers.



Our Goals

In partnership with States, Indian Tribal Organizations, territories, community organizations, and other stakeholders, FNS is working to:



Increase food and nutrition security for children when school is out through effective implementation of all three approaches to ensure children have the nutrition they need throughout the summer.



Promote holistic summer programming that combines access to nutritious food with recreational, educational, and other enrichment opportunities.



Expand the reach of summer nutrition programs in rural communities across the country.



Raise awareness of summer nutrition programs, including ensuring all families eligible for Summer EBT have access to its benefits.

FNS is committed to supporting States, Indian Tribal Organizations, and territories with resources, technical assistance, and more as communities roll out these newly available tools.

Together we can ensure that every child has the nourishment they need during the summer months.

[Learn more >](#)