

School Nutrition Programs

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) was formed in 1946, the same year the National School Lunch Program was founded, and our members have been on the forefront of advocating for Child Nutrition Programs ever since. SNA represents 55,000 school nutrition professionals nationwide who are providing healthy school meals that help students succeed in the classroom and beyond. Our members include the cooks, cashiers and cafeteria managers in K through 12 schools; district level employees who oversee everything from menu planning to procurement; individuals overseeing child nutrition programs at the state agency level; and industry members working to provide healthy foods, supplies, equipment and software for school cafeterias. SNA has 49 state affiliates and thus is authority on all issues related to school meal programs.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), via the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Agency administers several programs that provide healthy food to children including the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Special Milk Program. Administered by State agencies, each of these programs helps fight hunger and obesity by reimbursing organizations such as schools, child care centers, and after-school programs for providing healthy meals to children. Well over half of the USDA budget is dedicated to nutrition assistance programs, which includes FNS as well as SNAP and WIC.

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

President Harry Truman established the National School Lunch Program in 1946. He did so largely in response to the number of WWII recruits that were rejected due to malnutrition.

NSLP is the largest of the federal child nutrition programs both in terms of spending and children served. Today, the school lunch program serves more than 31 million students per day. NSLP meals must meet the nutritional guidelines as laid out in the Healthy, Hungry-Free Kids Act of 2010.

In 2012, more than 31.6 million children each day got their lunch through NSLP and since the modern program began, more than 224 billion lunches have been served. The NSLP in FY2012 cost \$11.6 billion.

68.1% of students who participate in the school lunch program receive their lunch free or at a reduced cost. NSLP operates in 99% of all public schools and 85% of private schools.

Lunch prices are divided into the following three categories: free, reduced and paid. Students from families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130% and 185% are eligible for reduced price meals.

The SY2031-2014 reimbursement rates are \$2.93 for free lunches, \$2.53 for reduced-price lunches and \$.28 for paid lunches. School food programs that are certified to be in compliance with the new meal regulations will receive an additional 6 cents per school lunch meal.

The School Breakfast Program (SBP)

SBP began as a 700 school pilot under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. SBP was made permanent in 1975.

Today, 12.9 million children start their day with a school breakfast with 10.1 million receiving free or reduced breakfast. The program is operated in over 89,000 schools and institutions.

The reimbursement rates for SY2013-2014 were \$1.58 for free breakfasts, \$1.28 for reduced-price breakfasts and \$.28 for paid breakfasts. In FY2012, the SBP cost \$3.3 billion.

Seamless Summer/Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

SFSP began as part of a pilot program in 1968, but became a separate program in 1975. The Seamless Summer Option began in 2009. Summer meal sites operate in areas where at least half of children are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Sponsors receive reimbursements from the USDA to serve free, healthy meals to children at a central site during the summer months. The rates are the same as the NSLP and in FY 2012, the program cost \$398 million.

Afterschool Snack and Supper Programs

The Afterschool Snack Program began in 1998, as an expansion of both the NSLP and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Reimbursement was made available to all states with the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Eligibility standards are different and CACFP programs adhere to a different set of meal pattern guidelines. To be eligible for reimbursement from the federal government, a program must offer activities in addition to a meal.

3.3 million children receive a snack or meal through these programs. The reimbursement rates are similar to the NSLP.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) and Special Milk Program (SMP)

The FFVP is a federally assisted program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to students in participating elementary schools during the school day. It began as a pilot program in 2002 and was made permanent in 2008 to target elementary schools with the highest free and reduced rates in states.

Elementary schools participating in the program receive between \$50-\$75 per student and the total cost in FY2012 was \$150 million.

The SMP provides milk to children in schools, child care institutions and eligible camps that do not participate in other Federal child nutrition meal service programs. In 2012, 3,647 schools and residential child care institutions participated, along with 571 summer camps and 482 non-residential child care institutions.

Schools with NSLP or SBP may also participate to provide milk to children in half-day kindergarten programs where children do not have access to the school meal programs.

In Fiscal Year 2012, over 61 million half pints of milk were served through SMP and the program cost \$12.3 million.