



National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Description

- Provides nutritionally balanced lunches to children each school day in over 101,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions (FY 2009 totals).
- Reimburses schools for lunches and snacks served to children in after-school educational or enrichment programs.
- Reimburses at the following rates (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010): Free Lunches - \$2.68; Reduced-Price Lunches -\$2.28; Paid Lunches - \$0.25; Free Snacks - \$0.74; Reduced-Price Snacks - \$0.37; Paid Snacks - \$0.06. (Higher reimbursement rates for Alaska and Hawaii.)
- Requires that lunches meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and provide at least minimum calorie levels and one-third of Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, and calcium.
- Provides per-meal value of USDA donated food assistance, adjusted each year to reflect changes in food prices. In SY 2009, per-meal value of donated food assistance is 19.50 cents. “Bonus” foods are also provided, as available, in accordance with USDA price support and surplus removal programs.

USDA provides additional support through its Team Nutrition initiative, including training and technical assistance to school food service staff, and nutrition education for children.

Background

- The Depression years caused childhood malnourishment and as a result many young men were turned down for military service in World War II due to nutritional deficiencies. This led to the establishment of the National School Lunch Program in 1946 under the authority of the National School Lunch Act.

Participants

- Served approximately 31.2 million students in over 101,000 schools and residential childcare institutions participated in FY 2009 (daily average).
- Children from households with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level (\$28,665 for a family of four for school year 2009-2010) are eligible for free meals. Those with higher incomes may be eligible for reduced price meals.

Budget

- \$8.1 billion in FY 2008.
- \$9.0 billion in FY 2009.

Contact Information

For complete information, visit www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch or contact your State agency that administers the NSLP. View Agency listings at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd, select “Contact Us,” then “Child Nutrition Programs.”