

SCHOOL MEAL/FEEDING PROGRAM(S)

School year: 2020–2021

- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program

Lead Agency: United States Department of Agriculture

NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND STANDARDS

- National school feeding policy
- Nutrition
- Food safety
- Health
- Agriculture
- Private sector involvement

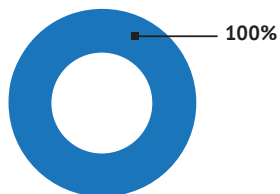
Line item in the national budget...

- Yes No No response

BUDGET

Total: USD 18,200,000,000*

- Government: USD 18,200,000,000
- International donors**: USD 0
- Private sector: USD 0
- Other donors: USD 0



Includes funding from the United States Department of Agriculture Yes No Not applicable

*This includes federal cash reimbursements and commodities provided. It does not include state expenditures, State Administrative Expense Funds, local expenditures, or parental payments, which the federal government does not track regularly but which would add significantly to the total.

**International donations by United Nations agencies or non-governmental organizations often represent funding from multiple donors.

INFRASTRUCTURE

All schools in the United States have electricity, piped water, flush toilets, and dedicated eating spaces/cafeterias, and most schools have kitchens and clean water. Schools kitchens are typically equipped with refrigeration and electric or gas stoves.

MEALS/SNACKS/MODALITY

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Snacks
- Take-home rations
- Other*

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, The United States Department of Agriculture allowed school meals to be picked up or delivered for consumption at home.

- Grains, cereals
- Roots, tubers
- Legumes, pulses, nuts
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Green, leafy vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Fruits
- Oil
- Salt
- Sugar

- Dairy milk
- Yogurt drink
- Fruit juice
- Tea
- Water
- Other

Prohibited food items: In general, schools must serve foods that 'credit' towards the meal pattern requirements. Some foods do not count as a 'credit,' such as condiments, seasonings, and certain other foods. Schools are not prohibited from offering these foods to students, but are prohibited from serving them as part of the reimbursable meal.

FOOD SOURCES

- Purchased (domestic)
- Purchased (foreign)
- In-kind (domestic)
- In-kind (foreign)

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

- Handwashing with soap
- Height measurement
- Weight measurement
- Testing for anemia
- Deworming treatment
- Eye testing/eyeglasses
- Hearing testing/treatment
- Dental cleaning/testing
- Menstrual hygiene
- Drinking water
- Water purification

COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Food and nutrition
- Agriculture
- School gardens
- Hygiene
- Health
- Reproductive health
- HIV prevention
- Physical education

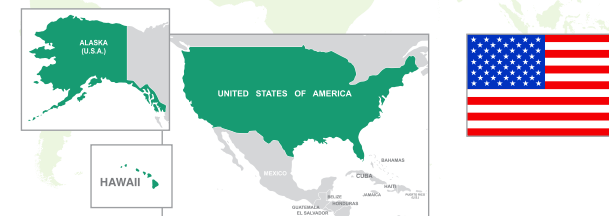
The checked items were provided in most or all participating schools.



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United States of America

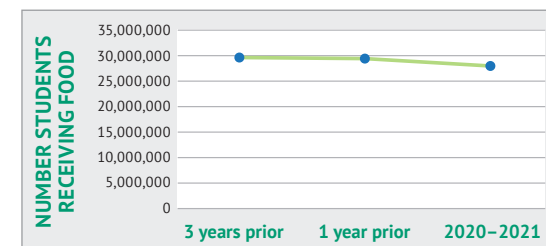


SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

CHILDREN RECEIVING FOOD, 2020–2021

School level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving food
Pre-school	12,015,598	8,710,142	*
Primary school	24,300,000	24,300,000	16,100,000
Secondary school	25,200,000	25,200,000	11,900,000
Total	61,515,598	58,210,142	28,000,000

* Included in primary school numbers



COVERAGE: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

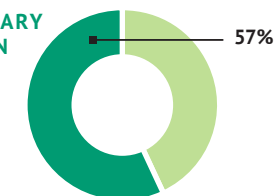
Total number primary and secondary school-age children: 49,500,000

Receiving school food: ■ 28,000,000

Food was also provided to some students in...

- Pre-schools
- Vocational/trade schools
- Other

All public school students can access school food through the school meal programs. Students of lower income can receive free or reduced price meals, while other students can purchase food at the full price.



NUTRITION

School feeding program(s) included/involved the following:

- Fortified foods**
- Bio-fortified foods
- Micronutrient supplements
- Nutritionists involved**
- Special training for cooks/caterers in nutrition**
- Objective to meet nutritional goals**
- Objective to reduce obesity**

Food items fortified/biofortified:

Grains/cereals, dairy products, salt

Micronutrients:

Iron, iodine, zinc, folic acid, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, calcium, selenium, fluoride, vitamin A, vitamin B12, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin D

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nutritionists are engaged at the state or school district level, and the USDA also hires nutritionists to work on child nutrition programs at the federal level. Efforts to prevent or mitigate overweight/obesity include nutritional requirements for school meals/snacks. The availability of food and nutrition education and health education in the school curriculum varies by state and district.

STUDIES CONDUCTED

USDA child nutrition program studies are found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/child-nutrition-programs>

RESEARCH NEEDED

None specified

SPECIAL NOTES

Some population numbers from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) were used to complete this report. In the United States, the federal government is responsible for funding and program structure/policy for school meal programs; states are responsible for administration, oversight, and support; and local school districts operate the program on a day-to-day basis. Some information is therefore not available at the federal level. This report is inclusive of the Summer Food Service Program, which does not usually function as a school meal program, but did so for part of Fiscal Year 2020 as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response.

AGRICULTURE, EMPLOYMENT, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Jobs created by school feeding programs*

Cooks and food preparers
Transporters
Off-site processors
Food packagers and handlers
Monitoring
Food service management
Safety and quality inspectors
Other

**If blank, no response was provided.*

Farmers were involved with the school feeding program(s)...

Yes No No response

Other private sector (for profit) actors were involved...

Yes No No response

There was a focus on creating jobs or leadership or income-generating opportunities for...

Women Other groups
 Youth No response

There was community engagement (by parents or others) in the school feeding program(s)...

Yes No No response

Were there links between food banks and the school feeding program(s)?

Yes No There are no food banks in this country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

While the procurement patterns for school meals vary by state, district, and school, many school food authorities purchase at least some local food. Farms of all sizes provide foods for the school meal programs and receive agricultural subsidies for this purpose. Communities also participate in the design of local school wellness policies, which aim to promote student wellness, prevent and reduce childhood obesity, and ensure that school meals meet certain nutrition guidelines.

CONTACTS: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Agency: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Website: [Website: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn)

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

There have been several recent successes related to school meal programs in the United States. (1) "Farm to School" programs have brought tasty and fresh food into schools and have also forged important links between schools and local producers. While USDA has provided some funding and support for these efforts, the real energy is found at the local level. (2) Students increasingly access food beyond the National School Lunch Program by participating in the School Breakfast Program or other programs that include after-school feeding, particularly in low-income communities. This expansion was made possible thanks to the longstanding and successful school lunch program that is deeply integrated into the schools. (3) The school meal programs support American agriculture through U.S. Government market support programs that purchase food from growers and stabilize prices. (4) The school meal programs receive support from the nutrition and health communities, particularly through nutrition standards/requirements. (5) In the past two years, the school meal programs demonstrated an ability to be flexible in program operations to reach children with food during a global pandemic. Among the challenges related to school meal programs, it remains necessary to make healthy eating a norm and improve children's eating behavior in order to combat childhood obesity.

EMERGENCIES/COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During the 2020–2021 school year, some schools in the United States were open while others operated remotely. The federal budget for the school meal programs increased in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and school feeding operations were maintained. However, the number of students reached by the school meal programs declined, as did the frequency of feeding and the level of variety on the school meal menu. Meals/snacks were sometimes prepared at school but made available to be picked up and eaten at home, and sometimes ingredients were made available for pick up or were delivered to students' homes. In addition, a new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Program provided the families of school children with debit-type cards that could be used to purchase food at stores in lieu of school meals. The decentralized management of school meal programs in the United States served as a strength when responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing local decision makers to act with flexibility and creativity and to learn from one another.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Lead implementer(s): United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Food and Nutrition Service

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide a social safety net
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals
- To prevent or mitigate obesity
- To meet agricultural goals

MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:

- In-school meals
- In-school snacks
- Other

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:

- 5 times per week during the school year

TARGETING:

Universal (Students of lower income receive free or reduced price meals, while other students can purchase food at the full price.)

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR?

School level	# Students	% Girls	% Boys
Pre-school	Unknown	–	–
Primary school	16,100,000	–	–
Secondary school	11,900,000	–	–
Total	28,000,000	–	–

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:

Grains, cereals*	Poultry	Salt*
Roots, tubers	Fish	Sugar
Legumes, pulses, nuts	Green, leafy vegetables	Dairy milk
Dairy products*	Other vegetables	Fruit juice
Eggs	Fruits	Water
Meat	Oil	

* fortified

FOOD SOURCES:

82.5% Purchased (domestic) **17.5% In-kind (domestic)**
0% Purchased (foreign) 0% In-kind (foreign)

If blank, no response was provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The National School Lunch Program began in 1946. Lunches are required to include several basic components, such as vegetables, fruits, meat or meat alternate, fluid milk, and grains. Local school districts then determine the menu based on these components. To limit food waste, the program includes a provision that allows students to decline some food items, and schools can also donate leftover foods.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Lead implementer(s): United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Food and Nutrition Service

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide a social safety net
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals
- To prevent or mitigate obesity
- To meet agricultural goals

MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:

- In-school meals

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:

- 5 times per week during the school year

TARGETING:

Universal (Students of lower income receive free or reduced price meals, while other students can purchase food at the full price.)

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR?

School level	# Students	% Girls	% Boys
Pre-school	Unknown	–	–
Primary school	Unknown	–	–
Secondary school	Unknown	–	–
Total	12,300,000	–	–

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:

Grains, cereals*	Poultry	Salt*
Roots, tubers	Fish	Sugar
Legumes, pulses, nuts	Green, leafy vegetables	Dairy milk
Dairy products*	Other vegetables	Fruit juice
Eggs	Fruits	Water
Meat	Oil	

* fortified

FOOD SOURCES:

- Purchased (domestic) In-kind (domestic)
 Purchased (foreign) In-kind (foreign)

If blank, no response was provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The School Breakfast Program began in 1966. School breakfasts must include several basic components, including fruits (or vegetables), fluid milk, and grains. The grains can be substituted for meat or meat alternate once a minimum grain requirement has been met.

