

School Breakfast Program Basics

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally-funded meal program for students in public, nonprofit private, and residential child-care institutions. On the federal level, it is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, and on the state level, by the New York State Education Department. The program requires schools to offer meals at free and reduced-price rates and to meet federal nutrition requirements.

How the SBP Works

The SBP operates similarly to the National School Lunch Program. Breakfast can be served before school or sometime during the morning. Students' families can fill out an application at any point during the school year to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.

In New York State, all severe need elementary schools in districts with at least 125,000 inhabitants are required to participate in the SBP. Schools are considered severe need if at least 40 percent of the lunches served during the previous school year were free or reduced-price. In severe need public schools of all grade levels, the state reimburses all expenses exceeding revenues in the first year of implementation.

Who Can Participate

Any student can eat school breakfast.

Based on family income, some students:

- Are categorically eligible—automatically eligible—for free meals without needing to verify household income
- Can apply for free or reduced-price meals by submitting an application to their school

In New York State, certain categorically eligible students are “directly certified” because they live in households that receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and/or certain households that receive Medicaid benefits. Direct certification is an electronic matching process that identifies these students, allowing them to be automatically enrolled for free meals.

Qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Meals

Categorical Eligibility

Children are categorically eligible for free meals if they:

- Live in a household that participates in SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Are homeless, migrant, in foster care, or in Head Start
- Are Medicaid recipients and/or live in households receiving Medicaid benefits that are identified through direct certification. These recipients are identified by the Medicaid Program with income levels at or below 133 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).

By Application

Children can qualify for free or reduced-price meals [by application](#) if their household:

- Lives at or below 130 percent of the FPL (eligible for free meals)
- Lives at or below 185 percent of the FPL (eligible for reduced-price meals)

Learn more about income guidelines [here](#).

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Funding and Reimbursement

Schools receive reimbursement from the state and federal government for each breakfast served. The reimbursement amount depends on whether a student qualifies for free, reduced-price or paid meals.

School Breakfast Program Reimbursement Rates

2016-2017 School Year —effective July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017			
	FEDERAL	FEDERAL “SEVERE NEED”	STATE
FREE	\$1.71	\$2.04	\$0.1013
REDUCED-PRICE	\$1.41	\$1.74	\$0.1566
FULL PRICE/PAID	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.0023

Offering Breakfast at No Charge

Schools can offer breakfast at no charge—universal breakfast—to all students through the following options:

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

Any district, group of schools in a district, or individual school with 40% or more students “categorically eligible” for free school meals can participate. CEP allows schools to use federal funding to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. CEP simplifies administrative processes, reduces labor costs for schools, and improves efficiency by eliminating free and reduced-price meal applications, which can be confusing for families and burdensome for schools.

Provision 2

Provision 2 schools have the option to serve breakfast, lunch, or both to all students at no charge. Schools are required to collect, process and verify meal applications; directly certify students; and keep track of meals by fee category during only the first year of the four-year Provision 2 cycle. Reimbursement during the next three years is determined by applying the percentages of free, reduced-price, and paid meals served during the first year to the total meal count for the claiming month. Under Provision 2, schools must serve meals to all participating children at no charge for a period of four years. Schools that only serve breakfast under Provision 2 must continue to collect school meal applications, but do not have to do individual counting and claiming for breakfast.

Non-pricing

The application and meal tracking processes are consistent with the SBP program, however, no fees are collected from students. Schools continue to receive reimbursement for the meals served under the three-tier federal fee categories. Typically, schools have absorbed the cost differential into district operational budgets.

On the Menu

Each breakfast reimbursed through the SBP must, according to federal nutrition guidelines, include fruits and/or vegetables, a grain, a meat or meat alternative and milk.

Recently updated meal nutrition standards increased the amount of fruit served, required all grains to be whole grain-rich, required lower fat and nonfat milk only and limited calories and sodium. [Research shows](#) that the new standards are working well to improve the school nutrition environment and student outcomes.



FoodHelpNY.org
 SummerMealsNY.org
 SchoolMealsHubNY.org
 AfterschoolMealsNY.org
 HungerSolutionsNY.org

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