

The School Lunch/School Breakfast Programs

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was created 65 years ago by Congress "as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children". It began after the government noted nutritional deficiencies in the men who responded to the draft and was enacted so that all children could have at least one healthful meal per day. The School Breakfast Program (SBP) began in 1966 as a pilot program in recognition of the relationship between food, good nutrition, and children's ability to develop and learn. The SBP reaches needy children; over 77% of children eating school breakfast are low income. It raises the nutrition level of children, providing 1/4 or more of a child's daily required key nutrients.

Hungry children are more susceptible to illness, are more likely to experience anxiety or depression, and have more disciplinary problems in school, according to a Kleinman and Murphy study published in *Pediatrics* in 1998. Children who have nourishing meals have the best chance for learning and success in school. Each school day an estimated 555,712 free and reduced price lunches, 532,057 full price lunches, 229,173 free and reduced price breakfasts and 68,166 full price breakfasts are served to PA students.

 Who can provide the service?	The National School Lunch and the School Breakfast Programs are entitlement programs. All public and nonprofit private schools and Residential Child Care Institutions can participate in these programs.																															
 How is it financed?	The federal government guarantees funding for all participating students. During 2010-11, PA received nearly \$368 million in federal funds for the two programs. Even full price meals received a small federal subsidy. PA invests nearly \$33 million annually in school breakfast and lunch. Federal and state government reimburse schools for these meals as follows: <table border="1" data-bbox="363 827 1533 1024" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2">State Rates</th> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2">Federal Rates</th> </tr> <tr> <th>w/o Nutrition Standards</th> <th>w/ Nutrition Standards</th> <th>Lunch</th> <th>Breakfast</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Breakfast</td> <td>10¢</td> <td>11¢</td> <td>Full Price</td> <td>26 or 28¢</td> <td>27¢</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lunch Rate 1</td> <td>10¢</td> <td>11¢</td> <td rowspan="3">Reduced Price</td> <td rowspan="3">\$2.37 or \$2.39</td> <td rowspan="3">\$1.21 or \$1.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lunch Rate 2</td> <td>12¢</td> <td>14¢</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lunch Rate 3</td> <td>14¢</td> <td>17¢</td> <td>Free</td> <td>\$2.77 or \$2.79</td> <td>\$1.51 or \$1.80</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Schools that do not serve breakfast receive Lunch Rate 1. Schools that serve breakfast to less than 20% of enrolled students receive Lunch Rate 2. Schools that serve breakfast to 20% or more of enrolled students receive Lunch Rate 3.</p>		State Rates			Federal Rates		w/o Nutrition Standards	w/ Nutrition Standards	Lunch	Breakfast	Breakfast	10¢	11¢	Full Price	26 or 28¢	27¢	Lunch Rate 1	10¢	11¢	Reduced Price	\$2.37 or \$2.39	\$1.21 or \$1.50	Lunch Rate 2	12¢	14¢	Lunch Rate 3	14¢	17¢	Free	\$2.77 or \$2.79	\$1.51 or \$1.80
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 Who can receive this service	School breakfasts and lunches are either free, reduced-price, or full price. Children who are below 130% of poverty are eligible for Free Meals; students who are between 130 - 185% of poverty are eligible for Reduced-Price Meals with the following exceptions: 1) school-aged children in a SNAP or TANF household and most foster children are eligible for free meals regardless of income, 2) at schools with a "Universal School Breakfast Program", all students receive free school breakfast. To receive free or reduced-priced school meals, parents must submit either a paper application (from the school) or an online application (through COMPASS).																															
 What is provided?	<p>School breakfast provides an average of at least 1/4 of a child's required key nutrients. The guidelines list 4 components: milk; a vegetable or fruit or full strength vegetable or fruit juice; 2 servings of bread/cereal or 2 servings of meat/other high protein food like peanut butter or eggs or one serving of each. School Lunch consists of 1/3 of a child's required key nutrients. The traditional meal plan consists of 4 food components for lunch: meat or meat alternate; grains or bread (must be whole grain, enriched, or contain germ or bran); 2 vegetables or fruit; and milk.</p>																															
 Contact	Dianne Dabulis, RD, MPA, LDN at the PA Department of Education at 1-800-331-0129, ext.322854.																															
 Suggestions For advocacy	<p>Find out how your local school districts performed in our School Breakfast Report Card last year, which can be found at www.pahunger.org. If your district does not yet offer breakfast, encourage them to do so.</p> <p>School meal programs, along with SNAP, WIC, summer food, afterschool snacks and meals, and child care food, make up our nation's nutrition safety net and must be protected during the Super Committee's works to produce \$1.5 trillion in entitlement cuts and any and all following efforts to reduce the deficit through cuts to programs that protect the most vulnerable Americans. Visit www.pahunger.org for related advocacy opportunities.</p>																															