



## CHILD NUTRITION: NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP)

### DESCRIPTION:

Provides federal assistance, in the form of cash and commodities, to elementary and secondary schools that provide lunch to school children. Federal subsidies currently range from about 30cents to \$3.00 per meal (depending on the type of meal/snack and the income of the recipient, with subsidies higher in Alaska and Hawaii). Total amount of assistance is based on the number of free, reduced-price, and paid lunches served. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the program from the federal level.

### AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION & U.S. CODE CITATION:

- Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296)
- Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.)

### CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES OF JURISDICTION:

- House Committee on Agriculture
- Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- House Committee on Appropriations
- Senate Appropriations Committee
- House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

### ELIGIBILITY:

Children are eligible to receive free school lunches if their household income is below 130% of federal poverty guidelines, or if they receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or services, or if they are in foster care, migrant, runaway, or homeless. Children are eligible to receive reduced-price school lunches if their household income is between 130% and 185% of federal poverty guidelines. Schools with 40% or more of students identified as categorically eligible for free meals may serve free meals to all students at the school.

### KEY COMPONENTS:

- Public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions may participate in the school lunch program.
- Schools must serve lunches that meet federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price lunches to eligible children.
- School food authorities can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in afterschool educational or enrichment programs.
- The NSLP's meal pattern and nutritional standards are based on the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans, developed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

### SCHOOL REIMBURSEMENT:

The USDA reimburses schools in the NSLP in the form of a cash reimbursement for each meal they serve. The current (July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015) basic cash reimbursement rates for non-severe need are:

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM		LESS THAN 60%	LESS THAN 60% + 6 CENTS	60% OR MORE	60% OR MORE + 6 CENTS	MAXIMUM RATE	MAXIMUM RATE + 6 CENTS
<b>Contiguous States</b>	Paid	0.28	0.34	0.30	0.36	0.36	0.42
	Reduced Price	2.58	2.64	2.60	2.66	2.75	2.81
	Free	2.98	3.04	3.00	3.06	3.15	3.21
<b>Alaska</b>	Paid	0.46	0.52	0.48	0.54	0.57	0.63
	Reduced Price	4.44	4.50	4.46	4.52	4.69	4.75
	Free	4.84	4.90	4.86	4.92	5.09	5.15
<b>Hawaii</b>	Paid	0.33	0.39	0.35	0.41	0.41	0.47
	Reduced Price	3.09	3.15	3.11	3.17	3.28	3.34
	Free	3.49	3.55	3.51	3.57	3.68	3.74

School food authorities that are certified to be in compliance with the updated meal requirements will receive an additional six cents of federal cash reimbursement for each meal served. This bonus will be adjusted for inflation in subsequent years. The above rates exclude the additional six cents. Higher reimbursement rates are also in effect for Alaska and Hawaii, and for schools with high percentages of low-income students.

**DATA:**

In FY2014, an average of 30.3 million students (down from approximately 30.6 million in FY2013) participated each school day, 19.1 million received a free lunch, 2.5 million received a lunch at reduced price, and 8.7 million received a full-price (paid) lunch.

**NCSL STAFF CONTACTS:**

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