

Report on the Summer Food for Children  
Demonstration Projects for Fiscal Year 2013

---

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food and Nutrition Service  
A Report to Congress

December 2013

## Acknowledgements

This document synthesizes the efforts, insights, talents and objectivity of three groups of researchers. The administrative data review for the Phase 2 demonstrations is directed by Anne Peterson for Insight Policy Research. Lynn Elinson oversees Westat's primary data collections and analyses for the Phase 2 demonstrations. Phase 3, The Summer EBT for Children (SEBTC) evaluations, is led by Ann Collins of Abt Associates (Abt) and Ronette Briefel of Mathematica Policy Research (MPR).

This report is based on the following documents:

Phase 2:

Elinson, L., Bethel, J., Machado, J., Milfort, R., Karakus, M. (2011). *Evaluation of the Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations: 2011 Status Report*. Prepared by Westat under GSA Contract No. GS-23F-8144H. Alexandria, VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Project Officer: Chan Chanhatasilpa. Alexandria, VA.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/DemoProjects/SummerFood/Default.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/DemoProjects/SummerFood/Default.htm)

Elinson, L., Bethel, J., Deak, M. A., Li, S., Karakus, M., Borger, C., Milfort, R. (2012). *Evaluation of the Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations. 2011 Demonstration Evaluation Report*. Prepared by Westat under GSA Contract No. GS-23F-8144H. Project Officer: Chan Chanhatasilpa. Alexandria VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/ora/MENU/Published/CNP/FILES/eSFSP\\_2011Demo.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/MENU/Published/CNP/FILES/eSFSP_2011Demo.pdf)

Elinson, L. (2012) *Congressional Status Report on the 2012 Enhanced Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations*. Prepared by Westat under GSA Contract No. GS-23F-8144H. Project Officer: Chan Chanhatasilpa. Alexandria VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Elinson, L., Bethel, J., Deak, M. A., Li, S., Koenig, T., Caperna, K., Palan, M. (Forthcoming, 2013). *Evaluation of the Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations. 2012 Demonstration Evaluation Report*. Prepared by Westat under GSA Contract No. GS-23F-8144H. Project Officer: Chan Chanhatasilpa. Alexandria VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Baldi, S., Suchman, A., Thorn, B., Tadler, C. (Forthcoming, 2014). *Evaluation of the Impact of Enhancement Demonstrations on Participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): FY 2012*. Prepared by Insight Policy Research under Contract No. AG-3198-K-12-0019. Project Officer: Chan Chanhatasilpa. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Phase 3:

Briefel, R., Collins, A., Bellotti, J., Klerman, J., Logan, C. W., Cabili, C., Rowe, G., Greece, J., Owens, C., Weiss, A. (2011). *2011 Status Report: Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children*. Prepared by Abt Associates, Mathematica Policy Research, and Maximus under Contract No. AG-3198-C-11-0002. Project Officer: Hoke Wilson. Alexandria, VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/DemoProjects/SummerFood/Default.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/DemoProjects/SummerFood/Default.htm)

Briefel, R., Collins, A., Rowe, G. Wolf, A. Klerman, J., Logan, C. Enver, A., Smither Wulsin, C., Owens, C., Jacobson, J., Bell, S., Bein, E., Juras, R., Weiss, A. (2012). *Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Demonstration: 2012 Congressional Status Report*. Prepared by Abt Associates, Mathematica Policy Research, and Maximus under Contract No. AG-3198-C-11-0002. Project Officer: Hoke Wilson. Alexandria, VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Collins, A., Briefel, A., Klerman, J., Bell, S., Bellotti, J., Logan, C., Gordon, A., Wolf, A., Rowe, G., McLaughlin, S. M., Enver, A., Fernandes, M., Wolfson, C., Komarovskiy, M., Cabilli, C., Owens, C. (2012) *Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Demonstration: Evaluation Findings for the Proof-of-Concept Year*. Prepared by Abt Associates, Mathematica Policy Research, and Maximus under Contract No. AG-3198-C-11-0002. Project Officer: Hoke Wilson. Alexandria, VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/ora/MENU/Published/CNP/FILES/eSFSP\\_FY2011.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/MENU/Published/CNP/FILES/eSFSP_FY2011.pdf)

Briefel, R., Collins, A., Rowe, G. Wolf, A. Lyskawa, J., Logan, C., Klerman, J., Fatima, S., (2013). *Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Demonstration: 2012 Congressional Status Report*. Prepared by Abt Associates, Mathematica Policy Research under Contract No. AG-3198-C-11-0002. Project Officer: Dr. Joseph F. Robare. Alexandria, VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

**Contents**

Introduction.....1  
Background.....1  
Summary of Results.....2  
Phase 2: Meal Delivery and Food Backpacks (Summer 2011 and 2012).....5  
    Meal Delivery Demonstration .....6  
    Backpack Demonstrations.....6  
Phase 3: Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (Summers 2011-2013).....7  
Future Demonstration and Evaluation Activities.....11

## Introduction

This report fulfills the directive contained in section 749(g) of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 (P.L. 111-80) for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to submit an annual report to Congress detailing progress in using \$85 million to develop and test alternative methods of providing access to food for low-income children in urban and rural areas during the summer months when schools are not in regular session. Specifically, the annual report must include information on the status of each demonstration project carried out under this authority, and the results of the evaluations of the demonstration projects conducted for the previous fiscal year.

This is the fourth annual report to Congress. It provides an overview of USDA's progress in conducting and evaluating these multi-year, multi-phased summer demonstration projects, and the status of each demonstration project in 2013.

## Background

Children's development, health, and well-being depend on access to a safe and secure source of food. In 2011, about 3.9 million households included food-insecure children (Coleman-Jensen et al. 2012). Some research indicates that households with children are more likely to be food insecure during the summer months when children do not have access to free or reduced price (FRP) meals provided by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) (Nord and Romig, 2006).<sup>1, 2</sup>

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was created to provide nutrition benefits during the summer to children living in low-income areas. Though the SFSP enriches the lives of millions of low-income children during the summer, both by making nutritious food available and by providing resources that support summer education and recreation programs, it has not achieved the same level of program participation as school meal programs achieve during the school year. While approximately 21.5 million children received free or reduced price NSLP lunches each day in 2012, only about 3.3 million children received meals during the peak summer month of July<sup>3</sup>.

Through the 2010 Agriculture Appropriations Act (PL 111-80), Congress appropriated \$85 million to USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to develop and test alternative methods of providing access to food for low-income children in urban and rural areas during the summer months, when schools are not in regular session. FNS developed a multi-phased demonstration approach to test different strategies to improve program participation—both enhancements to the existing SFSP and new ways of providing nutrition assistance to hungry

---

<sup>1</sup> The NSLP and SBP provide subsidized meals to children in school. Children from low-income families obtain these meals free or at a reduced price (FRP). Children living in households with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible to receive meals for free; those with incomes between 130 and 185% of poverty level are eligible for reduced-price.

<sup>2</sup> See Nord M., Romig K. *Hunger in the Summer: Seasonal food insecurity and the National School Lunch and Summer Food Service Programs*. Journal of Children & Poverty, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> 2,347,518 children attending Summer Food Service Program sites and 976,172 children participating in the NSLP Seamless Summer option on an average day. Source: 2012 USDA/FNS administrative data.

children in the summer. The basic structure and operational timeframes of these demonstration projects included the following:

- **Phase 1:** *SFSP Activity and Length of Operation Incentives* (Summer of 2010 and 2011) These modifications to the traditional SFSP were designed to address funding limitations that restrict enrichment activities that draw and sustain attendance at SFSP sites and financial constraints that prevent some sponsors from extending operations throughout the summer.
- **Phase 2:** *SFSP Meal Delivery and Food Backpacks* (Summer of 2011, 2012 and 2013) FNS added rural meal delivery and take-home backpacks to SFSP offerings to address the challenge of serving enough children in rural areas to receive the minimally needed reimbursement to operate the SFSP and the risk of hunger that comes when sites are not open 7 days a week.
- **Phase 3:** *Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC)* (Summers 2011, 2012, 2013)  
In 2011 and 2012, households received \$60 per child per month on an EBT card, piggybacking on existing SNAP or WIC infrastructure in the demonstration areas. The evaluation compared the impact on food security of \$60 to no benefit. In 2013, some households received \$60 per child per month; others received \$30 per child per month, and the evaluation compared the relative impact on food security of the two benefit amounts.

Each phase of the demonstration has an independent evaluation component.

### **Summary of Results**

While final results on the 2013 Phase 3 (SEBTC) demonstrations and 2012 Phase 2 (Meal Delivery and Backpacks) will not be available until next year, evidence from 2011 and 2012 demonstrations and preliminary results from 2013 suggest that:

- **SEBTC substantially reduced food insecurity among children.** Evaluation results in 2011 and 2012 showed that a \$60 per month per child benefit reduced very low food security among children (VLFS-C)—the most severe form of food insecurity—by substantial amounts, as well as food insecurity among children (a broader measure of food insecurity that also includes households with children experiencing low food security). For example, in 2012, VLFS-C decreased by 33 percent for children in households receiving SEBTC in the 14 sites that implemented the demonstration.

In 2013, FNS decided to examine whether a smaller benefit could have similarly positive results. In summer 2013, the demonstrations compared the relative impact of a \$60 benefit compared to a \$30 benefit in six sites. Although the full analysis is not yet complete, preliminary analysis suggests that, in these sites, the \$30 benefit had an impact on the most severe form of food insecurity (VLFS-C) that was similar to that of the \$60 benefit. However, the impact of the \$30 benefit on other household members is less clear. Final analysis will be completed in mid-2014.

- **SEBTC can reach a significant proportion of children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.** In 2012, between 22 and 94 percent of eligible children consented to

participate and used their benefits, with an average of 54 percent among the 14 sites. In 2013, sites only used “active consent<sup>4</sup>,” and had consent rates between 21 and 42 percent. Even with this variation, the percentage of eligible children reached at all SEBTC sites exceeded the percentage of eligible children served through traditional summer feeding programs, which had a participation rate in 2012 of 15.5 percent of the children who participated in NSLP during the school year. In 2012, SEBTC served 65,000 children, and in 2013, SEBTC served almost 100,000 children.

- **Enhancements to the SFSP appeared to reach the targeted low-income children, although the reach remains limited.** In 2012, the Backpack demonstrations served about 4,900 children while, on an average day in July, approximately 112,000 children participated in traditional SFSP in the three Backpack demonstration States. The Meal Delivery program served 1,100 children, while about 432,000 children participated in traditional SFSP in the three Meal Delivery demonstration States on an average day in July 2012. Furthermore, while many parents expressed support for these demonstrations, their impact on food security is unclear.

### **Phase 1: SFSP Activity and Extended Length of Operation Incentives (Summer of 2010 and 2011)**

On May 10, 2010, FNS selected Mississippi to demonstrate the effectiveness of providing additional incentives for enrichment activities and Arkansas to demonstrate the effectiveness of providing incentives to extend the length of program operations. The basic features of each of these demonstrations, as well as evaluation results, were presented in the 2012 Report to Congress (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2012SFCReporttoCongress.pdf>).

### **Phase 2: Meal Delivery and Food Backpacks (Summer of 2011 - 2013)**

The food backpack demonstration in Arizona, Kansas, and Ohio in the summers of 2011, 2012, and 2013 provided sponsors with funds to supplement the traditional SFSP with food to take home to cover the days that SFSP meals are not available, typically on the weekends. Approved sponsors were required to operate a congregate meal site under the SFSP for a majority of the week and use the backpacks to supplement the traditional meal service. Backpacks were not intended to replace a congregate meal program nor reduce the number of days a congregate meal program operated. The goal was to determine whether providing a supply of nutritionally balanced foods on the days that children did not receive meals through the congregate SFSP would help maintain the nutritional status children gained from participating in the NSLP during the school year.

The meal delivery demonstration in Delaware, Massachusetts, and New York provided funding for approved sponsors to develop ways to deliver summer meals to eligible children in rural areas at a sustainable cost. This included identification of children eligible for free and reduced-

---

<sup>4</sup> In sites using active consent, households returned a signed form agreeing to “opt in” for an opportunity to receive the benefit.

price meals in rural areas, and drop-off of meals to their homes or nearby drop-off points. Parents had been informed that they or their eligible children could collect the meals for off-site consumption. This demonstration project was not intended to fund mobile feeding sites or transport children to a congregate meal site, as these efforts are already allowable costs in the SFSP. Rather, the intent of this demonstration was to determine whether non-congregate meal service would increase SFSP participation and ensure a more consistent level of food security among rural, low-income children at a sustainable cost.

The basic features of each demonstration are summarized below:

	<b>RURAL MEAL DELIVERY DEMONSTRATIONS: DELAWARE, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW YORK</b>	<b>FOOD BACKPACK DEMONSTRATIONS: ARIZONA, KANSAS, OHIO</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide meals to children in rural areas where low population density, long distances, and transportation issues make it difficult for children to get to SFSP sites, making site and sponsor operation financially unsustainable.	To provide meals to children on non-SFSP operating days (weekends and holidays) during the summer.
<b>Incentive</b>	Grant funding for sponsors to develop ways of delivering meals to children in rural areas at a sustainable cost.	Grant funding for sponsors to provide children with backpacks of food to take home for meals on non-SFSP operating days.
<b>Sponsor Eligibility</b>	Any sponsor in the State could apply.	Only existing SFSP sponsors (those with previous SFSP experience) could apply.
<b>Sponsor Requirements</b>	Up to 4 days of meals could be delivered at a given time. Additionally, no more than 2 meals per day could be delivered to a particular child. Children who were eligible for free and reduced-price lunches during the preceding school year were eligible to receive meals.	Backpacks could only be provided during weeks when the sponsor was open for normal SFSP operations, and for meals not otherwise provided by the site. SFSP sites must remain open during the majority of the week. All children age 18 years and younger who were eligible for SFSP meals could receive backpacks.
<b>Selection</b>	Sponsors selected by States with FNS review and approval.	Sponsors selected by States with FNS review and approval.
<b>Target Areas</b>	Rural areas.	No specific target areas.

	<b>RURAL MEAL DELIVERY DEMONSTRATIONS: DELAWARE, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW YORK</b>	<b>FOOD BACKPACK DEMONSTRATIONS: ARIZONA, KANSAS, OHIO</b>
<b>Data Requirements</b>	Demonstration sponsors were required to submit to the State data on each delivery route, including number and location of stops on the route; parent or guardian name, address, and phone number for households consenting to participate in meal delivery; frequency; content of meals delivered; daily number of meals delivered; and number of days for which meals are intended to provide food.	Demonstration sponsors were required to submit data on number of backpacks and meals provided, including total participation on distribution days by site each month; number of children given backpacks by site each month; and content of food backpacks.

Data from 2012 operations are summarized below:

### **Meal Delivery Demonstrations**

- The meal delivery demonstration provided meals to approximately 1,055 children. Specifically, 620 children in Delaware, 186 children in Massachusetts, and 249 children in New York received meal deliveries in summer 2012.
- The meal delivery demonstration provided about 131,406 meals in 2012 to children in rural areas who otherwise would not have been able to take advantage of the SFSP at congregate sites. This represents an increase of over 100 percent from the 61,554 meals delivered in 2011. The largest increase was experienced in Delaware, where 89,544 meals were delivered in 2012 compared to 32,418 meals in 2011.
- Rural deliveries accounted for 11.5 percent of the 778,891 summer meals served in Delaware in 2012, less than 1 percent of the 2,592,456 meals served in Massachusetts, and one tenth of a percent of the 16,742,866 meals served in New York. Because the meal delivery project was designed to reach isolated children in areas where populations are sparse, rural meal deliveries should not be expected to have an appreciable impact on State-level participation.

### **Backpack Demonstrations**

- In 2012, Arizona provided 42,619 meals (compared to 79,795 meals in 2011; this decrease was due to larger sites leaving the demonstration in 2012 while being replaced by sites that served smaller numbers of children) in take-home backpacks at 26 sites in the summer of 2012; Kansas provided 32,111 backpack meals at 16 sites (24,290 meals in 2011); and Ohio distributed 59,279 meals at 55 sites (58,702 meals in 2011). In general, given the scale of

SFSP operations in each State, these represent relatively small proportions of the total meals served (1.6 percent of total meals served in Arizona, 1.5 percent of total meals in Ohio, and 3.5 percent of total meals in Kansas).

- The backpack demonstration provided meals to approximately 4,907 children. Specifically, 1,774 children in Arizona, 1,239 children in Kansas, and 1,894 children in Ohio received backpacks in summer 2012.
- Results comparing demonstration sites in the three States with comparison sites are not available at the time of this report. In 2011, the demonstration sites in all three States showed higher increases in the number of meals served and average attendance from 2010 to 2011 than did comparison sites.
  - In Arizona, total meals served increased 79.7 percent at demonstration sites versus only 1.8 percent at comparison sites. July average daily attendance (ADA) increased 147.9 percent at demonstration sites compared to just 8.9 percent at comparison sites.
  - In Kansas, total meals served increased 62.8 percent at demonstration sites compared to a decline of 7.5 percent at comparison sites. July ADA increased 67.7 percent at demonstration sites compared to a decrease of 3 percent at comparison sites.
  - In Ohio, total meals served increased 35.8 percent at demonstration sites compared to a decline of 12.3 percent at comparison sites. July ADA increased 33.5 percent at demonstration sites compared to a decrease of 9.3 percent at comparison sites.
- Results from analysis of the relationship between the meal delivery and backpack demonstrations and levels of adult, child, and household of food security suggest that the 2012 demonstrations may have helped decrease the prevalence of food insecurity in the summer. This conclusion is tempered, however, by the small samples available for analysis and lack of a comparison group.

### **Phase 3: Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (Summer 2011 - 2013)**

The Summer EBT for Children (SEBTC) benefit was provided to households with children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade who were certified for free or reduced-price school meals. In 2011 and 2012, the benefit amount was \$60 per month per eligible child during the summer months, when children were out of school. This amount was chosen because it is comparable to the combined cost of free lunches (NSLP) and breakfasts (SBP). Evaluation results in 2011 and 2012 showed that the \$60 benefit reduced very low food security among children (VLFS-C)—the most severe form of food insecurity—by substantial amounts, as well as food insecurity among children (a broader measure of food insecurity that also includes households with children experiencing low food security). For example, in 2012, VLFS-C decreased by 33 percent for children in households receiving SEBTC in the 14 sites that implemented the demonstration.

In 2013, FNS decided to examine whether a smaller benefit could have similarly positive results. In summer 2013, the demonstrations compared the relative impact of a \$60 benefit compared to a \$30 benefit in six sites. Although the full analysis is not yet complete, preliminary analysis suggests that, in these sites, the \$30 benefit had a similar impact on the most severe form of food insecurity, VLFS-C, as the \$60 benefit. However, the impact of the \$30 benefit on other household members is less clear. Final analysis will be completed in mid-2014.

The SEBTC benefit was delivered using the existing EBT system for either the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) or for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In WIC-model sites, participants could purchase a group of specific foods in specific quantities based on the existing WIC food packages and could only purchase them at WIC-authorized retailers. The WIC EBT cards could only be used in the State where they were issued. In contrast, participants in demonstration areas using the SNAP EBT systems could use their benefits to purchase a much wider array of foods from any SNAP-authorized retailer in the country.

Grantees using their SNAP systems for SEBTC implemented either a “SNAP” model or a “SNAP-hybrid” model. In the “SNAP-hybrid” model, SEBTC benefits were automatically loaded onto the cards of current SNAP recipients and non-SNAP recipients received a standard SNAP card that only included SEBTC benefits. For the “SNAP” model, SEBTC households received SEBTC on a separate EBT card, even if they already had a SNAP card. Similarly, all of the grantees using WIC distributed a separate SEBTC card, even if households received WIC.

SEBTC was initially implemented in five sites in Connecticut, Michigan, Missouri, Oregon, and Texas in the summer of 2011 as a proof-of-concept (POC). In 2012, the demonstration was expanded to include an additional site in all but one of the POC grantees (Texas) and to sites in five new grantees (Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Delaware, Nevada, and Washington). (See Figure 1).

In 2013, the same sites operated as in 2012, along with two new sites in Missouri and Michigan, and an expansion nearly statewide in Delaware. In addition to evaluating a new model comparing \$30 to \$60, FNS also determined that children who had participated in 2012 should continue to receive the \$60 benefit. They were excluded from the evaluation for methodological reasons. As a result, SEBTC served about 100,000 children; half were in the evaluation testing the relative impact of \$30 to \$60.

**Figure 1: SEBTC Demonstration Sites in 2012 and 2013**



The first year of the demonstration provided a successful POC test of SEBTC operations and evaluation methods. Building on the lessons learned from that experience, all 10 States and Indian Tribal Organizations were able to implement successfully the expanded SEBTC demonstration in 2012.

In 2013, the demonstrations successfully implemented an additional model (\$30 benefit level) in some sites. Although grantees encountered difficulties—including identifying eligible households, obtaining consents, delivering SEBTC benefits to selected households, improving participation rates of households selected to receive SEBTC, working in short timeframes with limited resources, and collaborating with new partners—they successfully devised strategies to move past all of these issues.

One of the key design choices encountered by each site was the means of acquiring household consent to participate in the demonstration. Sites used two consent models—passive and active. In passive consent sites, parents were required to submit a consent form only if they wanted to *opt out of* participation. In the active consent model, parents had to submit a consent form indicating their willingness to *opt in* to participation. Household consent rates ranged from 93 percent to 97 percent in sites using passive consent, and 23 percent to 57 percent in sites using

active consent. In 2013, the sites in the evaluation used only active consent. Following the pattern from previous years, the consent rates were between 21 and 42 percent.

As in previous years, the 2013 findings on household income indicate that the benefit is well-targeted to households most in need. Average monthly household income was low, at 74.8 percent of the Federal poverty line (FPL), and about 4 percent reported no income at all in the month prior to the survey. A large majority—nearly three-fourths of the survey population (74.4 percent) had monthly incomes below the FPL, ranging from 67.4 percent of households in Chickasaw Nation to 90.1 percent of households in Detroit. The proportion of the participating households below the poverty line in this study population is substantially greater than the 56 percent reported nationally among children certified for free and reduced-price school meals in the 2005-06 school year (Census Bureau, 2013; Ponza et al., 2007).

Another indicator of the benefits' effective targeting is the food security status of the target group. SEBTC households were interviewed at the end of the school year, prior to the start of SEBTC benefits. The food security status in 2013 for the period just before the implementation started was similar to prior years' findings. The prevalence of household food insecurity among the SEBTC evaluation sample is considerably higher than recently reported national estimates for households with children and incomes below 185 percent poverty (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2012). More than half the households in the sample (55.0 percent) reported food insecurity among adults, children, or both. The majority of food insecure households experienced food insecurity among children, and 7.2 percent of all SEBTC households experienced VLFS-C, which ranged from 2.9 percent in Chickasaw Nation to 10.2 percent in Detroit. Food insecurity among children ranged from 36.4 percent of households in mid-Michigan to 46.7 percent of households in Portland.

Results from 2011 and 2012, and preliminary results from 2013, indicate that SEBTC is a powerful tool against the summer hunger gap:

- In 2011, a \$60 benefit through SEBTC reduced VLFS-C during the summer by 20 percent: SEBTC eliminated VLFS-C for about one-fifth of the children who would otherwise have experienced it. Analyses of related measures of food security—general food insecurity among children plus measures of both severe and general food insecurity among adults and households as a whole—indicated similar proportional reductions in these broader measures.
- In 2012, with the demonstrations fully implemented at 14 sites, the results were even stronger: A \$60 SEBTC benefit reduced very low food security by one-third for both children and households in the demonstration.
- In summer 2013, the demonstrations compared the relative impact of a \$60 benefit compared to a \$30 benefit in six sites. Although the full analysis is not yet complete, preliminary analysis suggests that, in these sites, the \$30 benefit had a similar impact on the most severe form of food insecurity, VLFS-C, as the \$60 benefit. However, the impact of the \$30 benefit on other household members is less clear. Final analysis will be completed in mid-2014.

In addition to food security, the evaluation examined other impacts on consumption and benefit usage. The evaluation showed that SEBTC children ate more healthfully in 2012. SEBTC children ate 12.6 percent more fruits and vegetables than their non-participating peers. They ate 29.6 percent more whole grains, and 9.7 percent more dairy. These impacts were consistent in both the SNAP and WIC models, although the WIC model had larger impacts on nutrition.

Analyses for the 2013 demonstration data are still underway. At this time, data are available for only the first benefit issuance cycle. Full results will be available later this winter. Findings for the first benefit issuance cycle in 2013 indicate that:

- Participating families will likely use all of the benefit offered to them. Among all households issued benefits, 84 percent of households redeemed them at least once during the first benefit cycle. In all sites, more than 40 percent of households in both the \$30 and the \$60 benefit groups redeemed at least 75 percent of the benefits in the first issuance cycle.
- Concurrent SNAP participation has an effect on benefit usage. Households receiving SNAP redeemed benefits at higher rates overall than non-SNAP households. On average in Portland, SNAP households with the \$30 benefit redeemed 90 percent of their benefits while non-SNAP households redeemed an average of 75 percent. Among households with the \$60 benefit, redemption rates were 92 percent for SNAP households and 85 percent for non-SNAP households. Because these data are only for the first issuance cycle, they may represent a learning curve for families less familiar with the SNAP EBT process.
- In the WIC sites, households in the \$30 benefit group redeemed 62 percent of total benefits, and households in the \$60 benefit group redeemed 76 percent of total benefits. The redemption rates varied substantially across the categories of foods. Across all the WIC sites, the top foods, in terms of percentages redeemed, were milk, fruits and vegetables, eggs (for \$30 benefit households only), and juice (for \$60 benefit households only). Foods with the lowest redemption rates generally included dry/canned beans and peanut butter, bread/tortillas/rice/oatmeal, and tuna/salmon (for the \$60 benefit households only).

**Costs:** Over the full summer of 2012, the cost per school-aged child (both administrative and benefit cost) in a household redeeming benefits was \$201 on average, and ranged from \$132 to \$253 across sites. Average cost per child was substantially lower than in the previous year, in part due to economies of scale as several grantees implemented SEBTC in two sites. In 2012, total costs per child issued benefits were higher in SNAP model sites than in WIC model sites, on average, but this largely reflected higher rates of benefit redemption in SNAP model sites. Administrative costs per child issued benefits were about 7 percent higher in WIC model sites than in SNAP model sites (Collins et al., 2013).

Cost data is not yet available for 2013.

## **SNAP Model Compared to WIC Model**

As noted above, the results of SEBTC on food insecurity are substantial. They are consistent in both the SNAP and WIC models—both are equally effective at eliminating food insecurity for one-third of children who otherwise would have experienced it. There are a few differences between the models. Households in the SNAP model sites tended to redeem more of their benefit dollars. Impacts on nutrition were strong in both models. Children in SEBTC ate more healthfully than their non-participating peers, although in the WIC model sites, household nutrition results were stronger than in SNAP model sites.

## **Future Demonstration and Evaluation Activities**

Data collection in the 2013 SEBTC sites has been completed. In addition, the evaluation team has collected a variety of information on EBT transactions and processes from all participating sites. FNS expects to deliver a full report on the results of the evaluation by summer 2014 and a combined report synthesizing results over all 3 years of SEBTC activities in winter 2014. This upcoming summer, we intend to increase focus on the rural areas.