



FY17 Summer EBT Proposal Fact Sheet

Ensuring adequate food for children through Summer EBT

The President's FY 2017 Budget seeks to ensure all children have consistent and adequate access to nutritious food year round by proposing a permanent, nationwide expansion of the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (Summer EBT) program. This program will provide families with children eligible for free and reduced price school meals access to additional food benefits during the summer.

Background

Combating Food Insecurity

Children need consistent access to nutritious meals to support their physical health, and their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Child nutrition programs can improve the lives of children at risk of food insecurity by meeting their immediate nutrition needs and providing them the nourishment they need to learn and grow over the long term. Unfortunately, food insecurity remains a persistent problem during the summer months when school is out of session and many children are not receiving school meals. The Summer EBT program helps bridge the gap between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next.

Summer Food Gap and Summer EBT Pilots

Since its inception, the National School Lunch Program has been a consistent source of nutritious food for America's school children, giving them the energy they need to focus on their studies and alleviating the stress of worrying about getting enough to eat during the school day. During the academic year, free and reduced price school meals help ensure nearly 22 million low-income children have consistent access to nutritious food. However, only a fraction of those children receive meals during the summer months, leaving a wide gap between the number of children at risk of food insecurity and the number of children who receive meals. As a result, low-income children are at higher risk of food insecurity and poor nutrition during the months when school is out of session.

Since summer 2011, USDA has supported a demonstration project to test the impact of providing low-income households with children with additional resources to buy food during the summer months when their children do not have access to school-based meal programs. Rigorous evaluations of these USDA pilots have found that providing additional food benefits on debit cards to low-income families with school-aged children during the summer months can significantly reduce food insecurity and improve nutrition. Specifically, the pilots prevented very low food security among children, the most severe form of food insecurity, by one third. This means that one-third of the children who would have otherwise experienced food insecurity did not. Studies also showed that these additional resources enabled families to eat significantly more fruits and vegetables and whole grains – key building blocks to better health. For more information about the demonstration projects please see:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/summer-electronic-benefit-transfer-children-sebtc>

Nationwide Summer EBT

The President's FY 2017 Budget builds on these efforts and strong evidence, investing \$12 billion over 10 years to stand up a permanent, universal Summer EBT program.

Under the President's proposal:

- School-aged children eligible for free and reduced price meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) would be eligible to receive Summer EBT benefits. Households with eligible children would receive a \$45 monthly benefit per child during the summer months, which could be redeemed for food purchases at grocery stores. The monthly benefit would be annually adjusted for inflation going forward.
- Almost one million low-income children would receive Summer EBT benefits in the summer of 2017, increasing to nearly 20 million children when all States begin offering the program by 2026. Summer EBT would be phased in over ten years with approximately 10 percent of States participating in 2017, a quarter of States participating by 2021, and all States participating by 2026. Summer EBT would supplement continued efforts to expand access to traditional summer meal programs through intensive technical assistance to targeted States.

Program impact

Nationwide expansion of Summer EBT would result in hundreds of thousands of children being spared from food insecurity over the next decade. It is expected to most benefit low-income children in populations that have difficulty accessing existing summer meal programs and that have historically shown low participation in summer meals. This includes children who are particularly at risk of hunger in the summer months due to living in rural and tribal areas, communities in which transportation options are limited, and communities that face barriers to access due to parental concern about crime or adverse weather during the summer months.

Nutritious meals provide children with the fuel they need to learn and grow today, which can increase their academic achievement and improve their lives over the course of a lifetime. Summer EBT is an investment in our future that will support children in reaching their full potential.