

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Description

The NSLP is a federally assisted meal program operating in over 101,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions.

Participating school districts receive cash subsidies and donated foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve.

The lunches must meet Federal requirements, including offering free or reduced-price lunches to low-income children. Schools are also reimbursed for snacks served in afterschool educational or enrichment programs.

Participation

Any child at a participating school may purchase lunches. However, children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. Local schools set their own prices for full-price meals but must operate a nonprofit lunch program.

Budget

In FY 2012 \$10.2 billion was appropriated to the NSLP.