

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM



The **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)** makes it possible for all school children in the United States to receive a nutritious lunch every school day. It offers parents an affordable, convenient way to ensure their children get the nutrition they need to learn and thrive.

Who administers the NSLP?

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the program at the Federal level. In Indiana, the NSLP is administered by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and operates through agreements with school food authorities.

How does the program work?

The NSLP is generally operated by public or non-profit private schools of high school grade or below. Public or non-profit private residential child care institutions may also participate in the NSLP, and charter schools may participate in the NSLP as public schools. Participating school districts and independent schools receive cash subsidies and USDA Foods for each reimbursable meal they serve. In exchange, NSLP institutions must serve lunches that meet Federal nutrition standards and offer lunches at a free or reduced price to eligible children.

What are the nutrition requirements for NSLP lunches?

All NSLP meals must meet federal requirements for federal requirements for nutrient standards specifically by limiting sodium, calories, saturated fat and trans fat. Additionally, each meal must meet required portion sizes for fruit, vegetables, whole grains, meat/meat alternates and milk.

How can children qualify for free or reduced price lunch?

Children may be determined "categorically eligible" for free meals through participation in certain Federal Assistance Programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or based on their status as homeless, migrant, runaway or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally-funded Head Start Program or a comparable State-funded pre-kindergarten program are also categorically eligible for free meals. Children can also qualify for free or reduced price school meals based on household income and family size.

What are the requirements for free, reduced and paid meals?

Children from families with income at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for free school meals. Children from families with income between 130 to 185 percent FPL qualify for reduced price meals and can be charged no more than 40 cents per lunch. Children from families with income above 185 percent FPL pay charges which are set by the schools.

What are the current reimbursement rates for participating schools?

School food authorities are reimbursed for meals based on children's free, reduced price, or paid eligibility status. The 2017-2018 reimbursement rates are:

Paid: \$0.37
Reduced-price: \$2.89
Free: \$3.29

What types of foods do participating schools receive?

In addition to cash reimbursements, schools receive USDA Foods. Schools can also receive bonus USDA Foods as they are available from surplus agricultural stocks. The variety of USDA Foods schools receive depends on available quantities and market prices.

Food Distribution Program Information:
<https://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/food-distribution-program>

For More Information About National School Lunch Program

Visit:
<https://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/national-school-lunch-program>
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