



Child Nutrition Programs

Several programs and activities of the federal government provide nutrition assistance to school-age children. Under the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Special Milk Program, the government provides commodities and cash payments to reimburse participating schools and institutions for at least part of the cost of each meal served. Reimbursement rates vary by program, meal type, and participant's household income. Schools in the school breakfast and lunch programs—the two largest such programs—receive relatively small subsidies for meals served to students from households with income above 185 percent of the federal poverty level and larger subsidies for meals served to students from households with income below that level.

Federal child nutrition programs are funded mostly out of mandatory spending, with a small discretionary component. Annual appropriations for child nutrition programs generally cover the cost of providing benefits to all eligible applicants. However, CBO's baseline is constructed under the assumption that in the event of a shortfall, the Department of Agriculture would request an additional appropriation.

Child Nutrition Programs

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2025- 2029	2025- 2034
BUDGET INFORMATION													
Millions of dollars, by fiscal year													
Estimated Budget Authority	30,108	31,790	33,465	35,214	36,961	38,766	40,601	42,539	44,601	46,754	48,872	176,196	399,563
Estimated Outlays	29,712	31,478	33,156	34,912	36,664	38,459	40,287	42,210	44,254	46,378	48,491	174,669	396,289
Components of the Child Nutrition Programs													
National School Lunch Program													
Estimated Budget Authority	15,395	16,284	17,145	18,009	18,884	19,784	20,708	21,682	22,712	23,791	24,814	90,106	203,813
Estimated Outlays	15,173	16,109	16,973	17,842	18,721	19,615	20,535	21,501	22,522	23,587	24,607	89,260	202,012
School Breakfast Program													
Estimated Budget Authority	5,473	5,881	6,305	6,749	7,151	7,572	7,978	8,410	8,869	9,356	9,833	33,658	78,104
Estimated Outlays	5,394	5,818	6,242	6,686	7,089	7,507	7,912	8,340	8,795	9,275	9,751	33,342	77,415
Child and Adult Care Food Program													
Estimated Budget Authority	3,897	4,105	4,322	4,550	4,789	5,037	5,299	5,577	5,872	6,184	6,515	22,803	52,250
Estimated Outlays	3,841	4,061	4,279	4,508	4,747	4,994	5,255	5,531	5,823	6,131	6,461	22,589	51,790
Commodity Procurement													
Estimated Budget Authority	1,753	1,877	2,002	2,128	2,255	2,386	2,521	2,662	2,810	2,966	3,127	10,648	24,734
Estimated Outlays	1,728	1,857	1,982	2,108	2,235	2,366	2,500	2,640	2,787	2,940	3,101	10,548	24,516
Summer Food Service Program													
Estimated Budget Authority	2,935	2,966	3,007	3,064	3,132	3,206	3,286	3,370	3,457	3,548	3,642	15,375	32,678
Estimated Outlays	2,927	2,960	3,000	3,058	3,126	3,200	3,280	3,364	3,450	3,541	3,635	15,344	32,614
State Administrative Expenses													
Estimated Budget Authority	426	372	371	393	416	439	462	485	509	534	560	1,991	4,541
Estimated Outlays	420	368	367	389	412	435	458	481	505	529	555	1,971	4,499
Other Spending ^a													
Estimated Budget Authority	229	305	313	321	334	342	347	353	372	375	381	1,615	3,443
Estimated Outlays	229	305	313	321	334	342	347	353	372	375	381	1,615	3,443

Memorandum:

Most reimbursement rates are tied to the consumer price index for food away from home, which CBO projects to increase as follows:

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Second quarter to second quarter change (percent)	103.9	103.8	103.5	103.3	103.2	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

- a. "Other Spending" includes the Special Milk Program, the Food Service Management Institute, Team Nutrition, coordinated review, computer support and processing, child nutrition grants for the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa, and other activities. It also includes discretionary projects funded in annual appropriation acts.