



## **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.

Outlays for the federal child nutrition programs are mostly classified as mandatory spending, with small discretionary components. Funding for both the mandatory and the discretionary components of the programs is provided by annual appropriations, which generally cover the cost of providing benefits to all eligible applicants. However, CBO's baseline for the mandatory spending components of those programs 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      |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>                         |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Millions of dollars, by fiscal year               |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| <b>Estimated Budget Authority</b>                 | 31,245 | 33,137 | 34,888 | 36,502 | 37,522 | 38,554 | 39,559 | 40,583 | 41,747 | 42,834 | 43,953 | <b>180,603</b> | <b>389,279</b> |
| <b>Estimated Outlays</b>                          | 31,145 | 32,861 | 34,596 | 36,249 | 37,353 | 38,389 | 39,394 | 40,414 | 41,574 | 42,656 | 43,770 | <b>179,448</b> | <b>387,256</b> |
| <b>Components of the Child Nutrition Programs</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| National School Lunch Program                     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Estimated Budget Authority                        | 15,954 | 17,081 | 18,101 | 18,941 | 19,411 | 19,863 | 20,310 | 20,759 | 21,214 | 21,678 | 22,151 | <b>93,397</b>  | <b>199,509</b> |
| Estimated Outlays                                 | 15,897 | 16,924 | 17,936 | 18,798 | 19,317 | 19,771 | 20,218 | 20,664 | 21,119 | 21,581 | 22,051 | <b>92,746</b>  | <b>198,379</b> |
| School Breakfast Program                          |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Estimated Budget Authority                        | 5,784  | 6,113  | 6,406  | 6,632  | 6,785  | 6,930  | 7,077  | 7,223  | 7,372  | 7,523  | 7,677  | <b>32,866</b>  | <b>69,738</b>  |
| Estimated Outlays                                 | 5,764  | 6,057  | 6,348  | 6,582  | 6,752  | 6,898  | 7,045  | 7,190  | 7,339  | 7,489  | 7,642  | <b>32,637</b>  | <b>69,342</b>  |
| Child and Adult Care Food Program                 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Estimated Budget Authority                        | 3,920  | 4,144  | 4,378  | 4,617  | 4,863  | 5,118  | 5,386  | 5,667  | 5,965  | 6,279  | 6,612  | <b>23,120</b>  | <b>53,029</b>  |
| Estimated Outlays                                 | 3,906  | 4,106  | 4,338  | 4,582  | 4,839  | 5,094  | 5,362  | 5,641  | 5,938  | 6,251  | 6,582  | <b>22,959</b>  | <b>52,733</b>  |
| Commodity Procurement                             |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Estimated Budget Authority                        | 1,827  | 1,990  | 2,139  | 2,265  | 2,342  | 2,414  | 2,486  | 2,558  | 2,632  | 2,707  | 2,785  | <b>11,150</b>  | <b>24,318</b>  |
| Estimated Outlays                                 | 1,821  | 1,972  | 2,120  | 2,248  | 2,331  | 2,403  | 2,475  | 2,546  | 2,620  | 2,695  | 2,772  | <b>11,074</b>  | <b>24,182</b>  |
| Summer Food Service Program                       |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Estimated Budget Authority                        | 3,102  | 3,199  | 3,236  | 3,388  | 3,434  | 3,518  | 3,571  | 3,628  | 3,794  | 3,856  | 3,919  | <b>16,775</b>  | <b>35,543</b>  |
| Estimated Outlays                                 | 3,101  | 3,195  | 3,229  | 3,383  | 3,429  | 3,514  | 3,567  | 3,627  | 3,790  | 3,851  | 3,916  | <b>16,750</b>  | <b>35,501</b>  |
| State Administrative Expenses                     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Estimated Budget Authority                        | 426    | 374    | 385    | 410    | 433    | 453    | 466    | 479    | 492    | 505    | 518    | <b>2,055</b>   | <b>4,515</b>   |
| Estimated Outlays                                 | 425    | 371    | 382    | 407    | 431    | 451    | 464    | 477    | 490    | 503    | 516    | <b>2,042</b>   | <b>4,492</b>   |
| Other Spending <sup>a</sup>                       |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |                |                |
| Estimated Budget Authority                        | 231    | 236    | 243    | 249    | 254    | 258    | 263    | 269    | 278    | 286    | 291    | <b>1,240</b>   | <b>2,627</b>   |
| Estimated Outlays                                 | 231    | 236    | 243    | 249    | 254    | 258    | 263    | 269    | 278    | 286    | 291    | <b>1,240</b>   | <b>2,627</b>   |

**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) | 104.2 | 104.1 | 103.7 | 103.4 | 103.3 | 103.2 | 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.