



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 the participant's household income. Schools that participate 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. The Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer program provides benefits to help school-age children in low-income households purchase food.

Federal child nutrition programs are funded mostly by 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

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2027- 2031	2027- 2036
BUDGET INFORMATION													
Millions of dollars, by fiscal year													
Estimated Budget Authority	35,435	37,435	39,419	41,212	42,989	44,696	46,461	48,135	49,769	51,482	53,235	205,751	454,833
Estimated Outlays	35,143	37,067	39,028	40,829	42,600	44,325	46,010	47,688	49,319	51,024	52,960	203,849	450,850
Components of the Child Nutrition Programs													
National School Lunch Program													
Estimated Budget Authority	18,101	19,018	19,927	20,816	21,746	22,617	23,487	24,325	25,146	25,971	26,774	104,124	229,827
Estimated Outlays	17,949	18,828	19,726	20,621	21,547	22,426	23,256	24,096	24,916	25,737	26,634	103,148	227,787
School Breakfast Program													
Estimated Budget Authority	6,444	6,841	7,241	7,591	7,919	8,188	8,451	8,698	8,953	9,216	9,487	37,780	82,585
Estimated Outlays	6,391	6,774	7,169	7,520	7,847	8,120	8,369	8,617	8,872	9,134	9,438	37,430	81,860
Child and Adult Care Food Program													
Estimated Budget Authority	4,305	4,547	4,788	5,037	5,298	5,573	5,863	6,169	6,493	6,836	7,199	25,243	57,803
Estimated Outlays	4,270	4,502	4,741	4,990	5,250	5,527	5,806	6,112	6,434	6,775	7,162	25,010	57,299
Commodity Procurement													
Estimated Budget Authority	2,138	2,273	2,406	2,537	2,674	2,805	2,934	3,061	3,186	3,312	3,436	12,695	28,624
Estimated Outlays	2,120	2,251	2,382	2,513	2,650	2,782	2,906	3,033	3,157	3,283	3,418	12,578	28,375
Summer Food Programs ^a													
Estimated Budget Authority	3,819	4,102	4,375	4,520	4,613	4,745	4,930	5,060	5,141	5,271	5,450	22,355	48,207
Estimated Outlays	3,788	4,062	4,332	4,478	4,571	4,706	4,882	5,013	5,095	5,224	5,422	22,149	47,785
State Administrative Expenses													
Estimated Budget Authority	389	410	433	456	479	502	525	546	567	588	609	2,280	5,115
Estimated Outlays	386	406	429	452	475	498	520	541	562	583	606	2,260	5,072
Other Spending ^b													
Estimated Budget Authority	239	244	249	255	260	266	271	276	283	288	280	1,274	2,672
Estimated Outlays	239	244	249	255	260	266	271	276	283	288	280	1,274	2,672

Memorandum:

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

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Change, Second Quarter to Second Quarter (Percent)	103.5	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

a. Includes the Summer Food Service and Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer Programs

b. "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.