
THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

1. What is the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It began as a pilot project in 1966, and was made permanent in 1975. The School Breakfast Program is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service. At the State level, the program is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with local school food authorities in more than 89,000 schools and institutions.

2. How does the School Breakfast Program work?

The School Breakfast Program operates in the same manner as the National School Lunch Program. Generally, public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions may participate in the School Breakfast Program. School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the breakfast program receive cash subsidies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve breakfasts that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price breakfasts to eligible children.

3. What are the meal requirements for school breakfasts?

School breakfasts must meet the meal pattern and nutrition standards based on the latest *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Most changes to the SBP's meal pattern begin in SY 2013-14 with more whole grains offered zero grams of trans fat per portion and appropriate calories for grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. More fruit will be offered to students beginning SY 2014-15 and the first target for reduction of sodium.

All school breakfasts must meet Federal meal requirements, though decisions about which specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made by local school food authorities.

4. How do children qualify for free and reduced price breakfasts?

Any child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the School Breakfast Program. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal 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, for which students can be charged no more than 30 cents. (For the period July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$30,615 for a family of four; 185 percent is \$43,568)

