

HJR 8 Study: Childhood Hunger State-Run Food Assistance Programs

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Background

Over the past several decades, Congress has created a number of programs designed to help low-income families meet their needs for food by providing:

- cash-equivalent benefits that individuals may use to buy food;
- commodities distributed through a variety of means; and
- free or low-cost meals, snacks, and milk in schools and school-related settings.

People generally qualify for the programs based on income. The U.S. Department of Agriculture pays for the programs, which in turn are run by state agencies.

In Montana, the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) operates programs that provide benefits for food purchases or that provide food directly to individuals or to programs that serve low-income people. Meanwhile, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) administers programs that serve meals, snacks, or milk to children in schools or other eligible settings, provide commodity foods to participating schools, and offer nutrition education to school teachers and students throughout the state.

This briefing paper summarizes the programs that serve children and includes an at-a-glance chart showing the eligibility requirements and average benefits for each program.

DPHHS-Administered Programs

SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Formerly known as Food Stamps, this program provides a monthly benefit that participants may use for food purchases. SNAP is designed to supplement a household's food budget, rather than cover the full cost of the month's food. The benefit varies by household and is determined by monthly income guidelines, allowable deductions, and household size. SNAP benefits may not be used for alcohol, tobacco products, hot foods, foods that will be eaten in a store or non-food products such as pet food or soap.

To qualify, most households must first meet a gross monthly income standard of 200% of the federal poverty level and then, after allowable deductions, meet a net monthly income standard of 100% of poverty.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): DPHHS contracts with local public health departments or other approved agencies to operate this program for pregnant, nursing, and post-partum women and for children who are 4 years of age or younger. Participants must be at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. They receive a benefit that looks much like a check and contains a specific list of the food items that may be purchased with the WIC benefits. The items are designed to meet the special nutritional needs of the women and children served by the program.

WIC participants also receive a health/nutritional assessment, referral to other health care and community programs, breastfeeding support, and nutrition education.

Child and Adult Care Food Assistance Program (CACFP): This program provides cash reimbursements to day care centers and other authorized programs that serve meals to eligible children, if the meals meet federal nutritional guidelines. Participating programs may claim up to two reimbursable meals and one snack or two snacks and one meal each day for each child who receives a meal through the program. Meal reimbursements vary based on a child's family income, with the highest reimbursement reserved for meals served to children at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. Minimal payment is provided for meals served to children above 185% of poverty.

Day care centers or programs may take part in the program if they serve children 12 years of age or younger, migrant children who are 15 years of age or younger, or youths through age 18 in an afterschool program that is offered in a school district where at least 50 percent of the children have family incomes at or below 185% of poverty. Non-profit programs are reimbursed for meals served to all children. For-profit programs qualify if at least 25% of the children they serve are at or below 185% of poverty.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR): This program distributes certain commodity foods to qualified individuals living on Indian reservations and to Indian households in approved areas near reservations. Participants may select a monthly food package from over 70 USDA-approved food products. The program provides an alternative to SNAP for people who do not have access to SNAP offices or authorized grocery stores. A person served by this program may not also receive SNAP benefits.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP): This program provides certain commodity foods purchased by the federal government to pregnant women, infants, children 5 years of age or younger, and senior citizens. The USDA makes the food available to DPHHS, which distributes it to local or regional groups that then provide food packages to participants. Most children served in this program are 5 years old, because WIC doesn't cover that age group.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): This program supplies commodity foods in two different ways: through local food banks or pantries that distribute food to individuals for home consumption and through local non-profit organizations that serve

meals in a group setting, such as a homeless shelter. People may receive food packages if their incomes are at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. Soup kitchens and shelters use the food for meals provided to anyone using their services.

OPI-Administered Programs

National School Lunch Program and **School Breakfast Program**: These programs provide meals meeting specific nutritional requirements to students, some of whom are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Sponsors receive monthly reimbursements for the meals they provide, with the reimbursements based on the number of paid, reduced-price, or free meals served. Public schools, nonprofit private schools, and child care institutions may participate in the programs. In the 2009-2010 school year, 259 sponsors took part in the lunch program and 213 in the breakfast program.

Children with family incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty level are eligible for free meals, while children at 131% to 185% of poverty are eligible for reduced-price meals. Children with a family income above 185% of poverty pay full price. The average cost of full-price meals during the 2010-2011 school year was \$1.21 for breakfast and \$1.95 for lunch. The reduced price is 30 cents for a school breakfast and 40 cents for a school lunch.

Afterschool Snack Program: This program provides snacks for children who participate in structured, supervised educational or enrichment activities. Schools where 50% of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals are reimbursed for all snacks at the free rate. Other schools receive reimbursement based on the number of the number of free, reduced-price, and paid snacks provided to children. During the 2009-2010 school year, 106 schools or eligible groups sponsored afterschool snack programs.

Special Milk Program: This program is available to schools that don't offer other meal programs, as well as to schools where students are in split-session pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes and don't have access to lunch or breakfast at school. Schools are reimbursed at differing levels for serving milk to children who are at or below 130% of poverty and those above that level. Reimbursement amounts depend on whether a school charges for the milk and if so, whether it provides milk for free to eligible students.

Summer Food Service Program: This program provides meals at no cost to children in low-income areas when school is out. School districts, local government agencies, public or private non-profit organizations, and camps may sponsor summer food service sites in low-income areas where at least half the children live in families at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Program sponsors are reimbursed for the meals they provide; camps receive payment only for meals served to children at or below 185% of poverty. In the summer of 2010, a total of 87 sponsors provided meals at 183 sites in Montana.

Food Distribution Program: This program allows sponsors participating in the School Lunch and Summer Food Service programs to obtain commodity foods using federal funds, which are allocated to each sponsor based on the number of lunches served in the previous year.

The program provides about 20% of the food used for meals each year. In the 2009-2010 school year, Montana received slightly more than \$3 million for this program.

Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program: Administered by the Department of Defense, this program helps schools that participate in the School Lunch Program buy fresh fruits and vegetables. A portion of the state's Food Distribution Program funds are allocated to the Department of Defense, which contracts to deliver fruits and vegetables to schools for their meal programs. About 10% of the Food Distribution Program funds are set aside for this program.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program: This program provides fresh fruits and vegetables as snacks between meals to elementary schools in which 50% or more of the students have family incomes at or below 185% of poverty. Participating schools receive \$50 to \$75 in federal funds per student during the school year; if they choose, they can buy the products locally. In the 2009-2010 school year, 68 Montana schools participated in the program.

Montana Team Nutrition Program: OPI contracts with Montana State University to provide this program, which serves as the nutrition education component of the school nutrition programs. The program is funded through competitive USDA grants, which are awarded for efforts to improve the lifelong eating and physical activity habits of students. The program provides training and technical assistance to school staff through a variety of activities.

Sources

"Montana School Nutrition Programs: July 2010 Annual Report," *Office of Public Instruction Division of Health Enhancement and Safety*, May 2011.

"State of the States: 2008," *Food Research and Action Center*, November 2008.

"The State of Food and Nutrition in Montana: 2005-2006," Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition, March 14, 2006.

Food and Nutrition Service/ U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site, www.fns.usda.gov/fns.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Web site, www.dphhs.mt.gov.

Interviews with and information from:

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AT-A-GLANCE: STATE-RUN FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The following tables provide information about eligibility requirements, average monthly benefit amounts, and budgets for the state-run food assistance programs. The table on P. 7 shows the annual and monthly incomes allowed at the various eligibility levels.

DPHHS Program	Population Served	Average Monthly Benefit	Eligibility Requirements	Enrolled/Served June 2011	Food Benefits Budget 7/1/2011-6/30/2012
SNAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults and children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies by household size and income \$129.59 per person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 1: Gross monthly income up to 200% of FPL Step 2: Net monthly income up to 100% of FPL 	53,369 children 73,152 adults	\$219,639,033
WIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnant women Breastfeeding women Postpartum women Infants Children to age 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ 81.73 \$102.48 \$ 60.78 \$148.70 \$ 64.08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At or below 185% of FPL 	15,443 children 4,580 women	\$9,544,921
CACFP	Children in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> licensed child care centers Head Start programs registered day-care homes 	Reimbursement rates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free meals: \$2.77 Reduced price: \$1.22 Paid meals: 26¢ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free meals: at or below 150% of FPL Reduced price: 151%-185% of FPL 	16,583 children	\$9,934,239
FDPIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified individuals living on or near Indian reservations Not enrolled in SNAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of food package: \$156 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net income of slightly more than 100% of FPL 	994 children 2,170 adults	\$1,609,219*
CSFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnant women and children through age 5 Adults 60 years or older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of food package: \$62 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and pregnant women: up to 185% of FPL Seniors: up to 130% of FPL 	90 children	\$1,732,818*
TEFAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and adults, through food packages Children and adults at sites serving group meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food package value set by local agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food packages: 150% of FPL Group meals: Anyone present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Packages: 7,084 children/ 7,500 adults Group meals: 2,962 adults and children 	\$1,922,870*
				Total Benefits Value	\$244,383,100

* State Fiscal Year 2011 Figures

		Reimbursement Rates 2009-2010 School Year		Reimbursement Totals
OPI Programs	Population Served	Higher-need areas	Lower-need areas	Oct. 1, 2009-Sept. 30, 2010
School Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children eligible Free lunch: at or below 130% of FPL Reduced price: 131%-185% of FPL Full price: above 185% of FPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free meals: \$2.70 Reduced price: \$2.30 Full price: 27¢ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free meals: \$2.68 Reduced price: \$2.28 Paid meals: 25¢ 	\$22,369,356
School Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children eligible Free breakfast: at or below 130% of FPL Reduced price: 131%-185% of FPL Full price: above 185% of FPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free meals: \$1.74 Reduced price: \$1.44 Paid meals: 26¢ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free meals: \$1.46 Reduced price: \$1.16 Paid meals: 26¢ 	\$5,982,834
Afterschool Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children eligible Free snack: 130% of FPL Reduced price: 131%-185% of FPL Full price: above 185% of FPL Snacks free to all children if 50% of students are at or below 185% of FPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free snack: 74¢ Reduced price: 37¢ Full price: 6¢ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free snack: 74¢ Reduced price: 37¢ Full price: 6¢ 	\$297,996
Special Milk Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who don't have access to a school meal program Free milk: at or below 130% of FPL Paid milk: above 130% of FPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School charges, without free option: 16¢ per half-pint School charges, with free option: 16¢ per half pint for paid milk and the average cost per half pint for free milk School doesn't charge: 16¢ per half pint 		\$17,337
Summer Food Service Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to all children in service area Sites located in areas where at least half of children are at or below 185% of FPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakfast: \$1.85 Lunch and Supper: \$3.25 Snacks: 76¢ 		\$1,212,580
Food Distribution Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools participating in lunch program Sponsors of Summer Food sites 	N/A	N/A	\$3,021,238
DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools participating in lunch program 	N/A	N/A	\$335,795 (included in FDP total)
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools where 50% or more of students are at or below 185% of FPL 	N/A	N/A	\$677,397
			Reimbursement Totals	\$33,578,738

INCOME AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE 2011 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

Family Size	Gross Yearly Income				Gross Monthly Income			
	100%	130%	150%	185%	100%	130%	150%	185%
1	\$10,890	\$14,157	\$16,335	\$20,147	\$908	\$1,180	\$1,361	\$1,680
2	\$14,710	\$19,123	\$22,065	\$27,214	\$1,226	\$1,594	\$1,839	\$2,268
3	\$18,530	\$24,089	\$27,795	\$34,281	\$1,544	\$2,007	\$2,316	\$2,856
4	\$22,350	\$29,055	\$33,525	\$41,348	\$1,863	\$2,422	\$2,794	\$3,447
5	\$26,170	\$34,021	\$39,255	\$48,415	\$2,181	\$2,835	\$3,271	\$4,035
6	\$29,990	\$38,987	\$44,985	\$55,482	\$2,499	\$3,249	\$3,749	\$4,623
7	\$33,810	\$43,953	\$50,715	\$62,549	\$2,818	\$3,663	\$4,226	\$5,213
8	\$37,630	\$48,919	\$56,445	\$69,616	\$3,136	\$4,077	\$4,704	\$5,802

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