


Elimination of Reduced-Price School Breakfast and Lunch Expanding School Meals Access for Montana's Children



1 in 6 kids in Montana struggles with hunger

Free School Breakfast and Lunch can help children get the nutrition they need to succeed in the classroom.

\$615k State Funds  ~\$800k Federal Reimbursements

About the Free & Reduced-Price Meal Program

- Free breakfast and lunch is available to students with family income below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Students with family income between 130% to 185% of FPL are eligible to receive reduced-price breakfast and lunch - with a co-pay of \$.30 and \$.40, respectively.

8,600 → Approximate number of low-income kids in Montana who are eligible for reduced-price meals

1.4 million → Amount of reduced-price breakfasts and lunches being served annually to Montana kids

How Eliminating the Reduced-Price Meal Copay Works

- Children from families with incomes between 130% - 185% of the federal poverty level would receive no-cost school meals reducing the financial burden for poor, working families.
 - Example: a family of four with incomes between \$33,475 - \$47,637.
- The proposed **\$615,000 in state funding** will go to local school nutrition programs to cover the difference between the federal reimbursement and the cost of the meal for all eligible Montana students.
- Many low-income students who pay for reduced-price meals will eat breakfast & lunch for free, removing a significant barrier to participation.
- Eliminates administrative and financial burden of collecting unpaid meal debt from reduced-price-eligible students.

Montana Can Do Better

6,500 → Number of **current** reduced-price school meal participants who will now receive free meals

970 → Projected number of **new** reduced-price eligible students who will participate and receive no cost school meals

\$803,000 → Projected **increase** in federal reimbursements due to increased participation benefitting school nutrition programs

Impact

- Research shows that when students eat school meals test scores increase, chronic absences drop¹, and behavior improves².
- School administrators can worry about the functioning of school meals and education programming – not debt collection – saving district resources.

How School Meal Funding Works Now

Reduced-price lunch served

Federal government pays



Student pays



School District Meal Program

How School Meal Funding Will Work Under Elimination of Reduced-Price Meals

Reduced-price lunch served

Federal government pays



State of Montana pays



School District Meal Program

Transferring the copay responsibility from the student to the state is projected to add **970 kids** eating school meals meaning an additional **\$803,000 in federal reimbursements** going to school district meal programs



For More Information:

- Bernadette Downey, Associate Director, Government Relations & Advocacy
bdowney@strength.org
- Adam Wozniak, Senior Manager, Measurement, Planning and Analysis
awozniak@strength.org

About No Kid Hungry

No child should go hungry in America, but in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 4 kids could face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger through effective programs that provide kids with the food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization working to end hunger and poverty. Join us at NoKidHungry.org