



## Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Congress has an important opportunity in 2019 to improve the health of millions of our nation's children by passing a strong reauthorization that protects and strengthens the child nutrition programs. These successful, cost-effective federal nutrition programs play a critical role in helping children in low-income families achieve access to child care, educational, and enrichment activities while improving overall nutrition, health, development, and academic achievement.

Congress must enact a child nutrition reauthorization bill that strengthens program access and supports participation by underserved children; ensures nutrition quality; and simplifies program administration and operation. The reauthorization should also maintain the critical gains made in the last reauthorization, including expanding low-income children's access to programs and improvements in the school meals nutrition standards and the overall school nutrition environment.

### Out-of-School Time Programs

The afterschool and summer nutrition programs provide meals and snacks at schools, parks, recreation centers, nonprofit organizations, and other sites in low-income communities or that serve primarily low-income children, often combining meals with enrichment, recreational, and educational activities. Currently, only about 15 percent of children who rely on free or reduced-price school lunch access a summer meal. Increasing access to summer nutrition when children are out of school should be a top priority in the reauthorization. The bill should make investments to increase the reach of and the benefits provided through the summer meal programs; streamline program operations to reduce unnecessary red tape; expand the Summer EBT program; and provide the opportunity to reach children through alternative delivery models in areas with very limited access to summer meals.

### Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

CACFP provides healthy meals and snacks, supporting good nutrition and high-quality, affordable child care. It helps children to develop fully and enter school ready to learn, and supports parents' ability to work. Unfortunately, under the current system, CACFP meals and snacks are out of reach for millions of young children in child care. The reauthorization bill can expand access to CACFP by improving the area eligibility test, allowing the option of a third meal service (typically a snack or supper), allowing

annual eligibility for proprietary centers, increasing CACFP reimbursements to support the new healthier standards, streamlining program operations and paperwork, creating CACFP direct certification and community eligibility options, enhancing program reimbursements for CACFP sponsors, and continuing funding for USDA's CACFP nutrition and wellness education and program efforts.

### National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

The National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program provide nutritious meals to millions of children across the country and play an important role in reducing hunger, improving nutrition, and supporting learning. Still, many eligible children do not participate in the programs, especially school breakfast which serves just over half of the low-income children who participate in school lunch. The reauthorization should protect eligible children's access to school meals by leveraging additional opportunities to directly certify low-income children for free school meals. It should ensure that any changes to the process of verifying eligibility do not cause eligible children to lose school meal benefits and limit any increase in administrative work for schools. Congress also should protect community eligibility which provides an important, efficient, and accurate path to free meals for children in high-poverty schools. The reauthorization also should take steps both to ensure that the school cafeteria is a positive environment for all students, and to reduce the accumulation of unpaid school meal debt.

### The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

WIC provides low-income at-risk pregnant and postpartum mothers, infants, and young children nutritious foods and nutrition education. The bill could increase access to WIC by extending certification periods for infants and postpartum women to two years and enrollment for children until their sixth birthdays; supporting efforts to streamline and modernize WIC services through technology, including achieving the congressional mandate for all states to achieve WIC EBT by 2020; expanding WIC research on underserved communities; and maintaining the scientific integrity of the WIC food package process as USDA undertakes the congressionally mandated 10-year cycle revision.