

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

FAQs for Florida Schools, Districts and Program Sponsors

Below are answers to frequently asked questions regarding the National School Lunch Program in Florida.



What is the National School Lunch Program?

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally funded meal program that operates in public schools, nonprofit private schools, some charter schools and residential childcare institutions across the U.S. and here in Florida. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost lunches to children each school day.

How many NSLP meals are served in Florida each year?

- 2023-2024: 137,513,851 Breakfasts; 294,909,228 Lunches; 16,334,212 Snacks
- 2022-2023: 126,620,325 Breakfasts; 273,633,834 Lunches; 15,962,982 Snacks
- 2021-2022: 137,609,067 Breakfasts; 295,941,303 Lunches; 13,982,743 Snacks

How many students participate in NSLP in Florida each year?

- 2023-2024 School Year: 2,833,821 students participated
- 2022-2023 School Year: 2,824,648 students participated
- 2021-2022 School Year: 2,746,300 students participated
- 2020-2021 School Year: 2,680,238 students participated

Local Facts & Figures

During the _____ - _____ school year at _____ :
(school/district's name)

1. _____ schools participated in NSLP
2. _____ students participated in NSLP
3. _____ meals were served through NSLP
4. _____ percent of schools provided meals at no cost to students (i.e. Community Eligibility Provision, Universal Free, Provision 2)

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How is NSLP funded?

NSLP uses **federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** to reimburse participating Florida schools for serving nutritious meals to students.

Participating school districts and independent schools receive cash subsidies and USDA Foods* for each reimbursable meal they serve. In exchange, these institutions must (1) serve lunches that meet federal meal pattern requirements and (2) offer the lunches to eligible students at a free or reduced price.

Funding for this program is administered separately from General Education funds issued by the State. **NSLP funding may only be used in support of Food Service Activities.**

School Food Authorities (SFAs) also can be reimbursed for snacks served to children in approved afterschool programs, including educational or enrichment activities.

Meals are reimbursed according to rates set by the USDA. These rates are adjusted annually based on the Food Away from Home series of the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers.

**USDA Foods: National School Lunch Program participants that opt to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods program may offset 15-20% of their food product in the form of USDA Foods that can be used in the preparation of student meals. The value received in USDA Foods is based on the number of meals served during the previous school year.*

USDA Foods are available to child nutrition programs in three ways: direct delivery, USDA Foods Processing and the USDA Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

What nutrition requirements must reimbursable meals meet in Florida?

All NSLP meals must meet federal requirements established by the USDA, based in part on the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This includes adhering to the required meal pattern, which ensures students are provided options for a balanced meal each day at school. The meal pattern includes:



Fruits



Vegetables



Grains



Meats/Meat Alternates



Fluid Milk

Decisions about specific foods served at Florida schools and methods of preparation are made by local School Food Authorities at the district level, and in some cases, at the school level.

DO ALL FLORIDA SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN NSLP?

No, not all schools in Florida participate in NSLP.

Public and nonprofit private schools, high school grade and below, as well as public or nonprofit private residential childcare institutions, can participate in NSLP. Charter schools also may participate if they are recognized as public schools. For-profit schools and institutions are not eligible.

To become an NSLP sponsor, eligible schools must complete the application process through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which administers NSLP at the state level.

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