



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# UPDATE: Status for School Food Service Programs

2015

**Authorizing legislation:** 3ESSB 6052, Section 506

(2015-17 Operating Budget)

(<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=6052&year=2015>)

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## **Executive Summary**

Low-income families and school districts rely on state funds to help feed school-age children. In fiscal year 2015, the Legislature provided \$7.11 million to help students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals. State funding is required as a match to secure an additional \$300 million in federal money.

This money reduces the amount that eligible public school students co-pay for breakfast and lunch. It supports summer food service programs in low-income areas. It reimburses school districts for breakfasts they serve to eligible students. And it helps school districts start and expand school breakfast programs.

## Background

The Washington state Legislature provides funding to Child Nutrition Services at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to help feed low-income students in the following ways:

- **Elimination of reduced-price copays:** The United States Department of Agriculture requires a standard co-pay for reduced-price meals — 30 cents for breakfast, 40 cents for lunch. Normally, school districts would collect this fee from households that participate in the child nutrition programs.

However, in Washington, the state pays the reduced-price co-pay for breakfasts served to all eligible students. State funds also pay the lunch co-pay for students in kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

- **Summer food service program:** Each summer, our state offers a \$100,000 incentive to sponsors that participated in the child nutrition program the previous summer. The amount is prorated based on how much they received as reimbursement compared to the total reimbursement paid to all sponsors.
- **Breakfast meals for kids grants:** Sponsors may apply for grants to buy equipment and supplies that help them to start or expand a breakfast or summer food program, and for community outreach.
- **Breakfast assistance:** The state provides additional funding to help support the cost of free and reduced-price breakfast for public schools.

## Update Status

For fiscal year 2015, the state Legislature provided \$7.11 million to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for child nutrition programs:

2015 State Funds Spent by Category	
Elimination of reduced-price copays	\$2,105,840.10
Summer food service programs	\$167,169.95
Breakfast meals for kids grants	\$142,350.43
Breakfast assistance	\$4,666,741.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,082,102.27</b>

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Child nutrition program sponsors continue to use state funds to help as many families as they can. USDA requires OSPI to annually provide and distribute approximately \$3,000,000 in state funds to participating public schools in order to fully use federal funds related to the child nutrition programs. OSPI uses these state funds to secure approximately \$300 million in funding from the federal government. These funds are essential in helping public schools provide healthy and nutritious meals each school day to the children in our state.

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