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# **UPDATE: Status for School Food Service Programs**

**October 2014**

Authorizing legislation:

[3ESSB 5034, Section 506 \(1\)\(d\) \(2014 Operating Budget\)](#)

**K-12 Financial Resources**

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## Executive Summary

Low-income families and school districts rely on state funds to help feed school-age children. In fiscal years 2014-15, the Legislature provided \$7.11 million annually to help students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals. State funding is required as a match to secure an additional \$300 million annually 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:

- **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 program.

However, in Washington, the state pays for reduced-price 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:** 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.
- **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

In fiscal year 2013, the following child nutrition programs were funded:

2013 State Funds Spent by Category	
Elimination of reduced-price copays	\$2,171,720.50
Summer food service programs	\$151,509.21
Breakfast assistance	\$4,727,553.84
Breakfast meals for kids grants	\$49,745.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,100,529.09</b>

For fiscal years 2014-15, the state Legislature will provide \$7.11 million annually to OSPI.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Child nutrition program sponsors continue to use state funds to help as many families as they can. The state funds – and their distribution to participating school districts – also secure federal matching funds. Both the state and federal money are essential in helping school districts provide healthy and nutritious meals each school day to the children in Washington.

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