



NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Giving New Jersey children an equal opportunity to start the day with breakfast

- ❖ The National School Breakfast Program (NSBP), like the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), **allocates federal funding to provide free or reduced price breakfasts** for low-income students.
- ❖ While New Jersey experienced a recent increase in participation in the NSBP, only 41% of eligible students currently participate in the NSBP, ranking New Jersey **46th in the nation**.
- ❖ The low participation rate of eligible students can be attributed to low rates of school participation, as **only 71% of schools** participate in the NSBP, ranking New Jersey **50th in the nation**.
- ❖ Healthy food at school can help reduce obesity among students; New Jersey has the **3rd highest rate of obesity** among low-income children ages 2 to 5, **16.6% of whom are obese**.

What is the National School Breakfast Program (NSBP)?

NSBP is a federal program that provides funding for free or reduced price (F/RP) breakfasts for low-income students. In 2003, New Jersey enacted a law requiring school breakfast programs in public schools where 20% or more of the students enrolled in the school are eligible for F/RP meals. Under this law, schools are required to submit a school breakfast plan or to adopt the model plan, which focuses on publicity, diminished stigma of low-income students, and nutrition requirements.

Check out NSBP in the
New Jersey PATHS Report:
pp. 31–32, 35–36, 73–76

What are the benefits of school breakfast?

School meals have the potential to reduce the rate of obesity in New Jersey youth by providing healthy meals to students who otherwise might lack access to healthy food. In 2011, only 28% of New Jersey high school students ate vegetables two or more times per day, and 19% drank a can, bottle, or glass of soda at least once a day. These unhealthy trends often continue into adulthood, causing health problems. As of 2011, 61.5% of New Jersey adults were overweight or obese, and almost 50% of those overweight or obese adults had pre-diabetes. Approximately 25% of those with pre-diabetes are expected to develop diabetes within 3 to 5 years of diagnosis.

What should New Jersey do?

1. New Jersey can encourage the use of United States Department of Agriculture grant funding to **improve NSBP participation by directly certifying** children in households receiving SNAP benefits.
2. New Jersey could **promote models such as “grab and go,”** where children can easily grab school breakfasts from cafeteria lines or carts around the school, or **“breakfast in the classroom,”** where students are assured a meal without having to arrive at school early.
3. The Legislature can restore funding to the school breakfast program to **provide universal free breakfast** and **improve the quality of breakfasts**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation | Email: chlpi@law.harvard.edu