

# SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM IN ILLINOIS

December 2011

[www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition)

## 1. What is the School Breakfast Program? Are schools mandated to participate in the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program is a Federal entitlement program that provides States with cash assistance for non-profit breakfast programs in schools and residential child care institutions. It began as a pilot project in 1966, and was made permanent in 1975. It is administered by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Nutrition Programs Division. Participation is open to all public schools or non-profit private schools of high school grade or under as well as residential child care institutions.

The Childhood Hunger Relief Act (Public Act 096-0158) mandates all public schools in which at least 40 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches to provide a breakfast meal. For additional information on this mandate, as well as the provision to opt-out, go to [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/hb\\_756.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/hb_756.htm).

## 2. What financial incentives are provided to assist schools in starting and maintaining the School Breakfast Program?

**FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT:** Participating schools and institutions receive federal cash assistance\* for each breakfast served that meets program requirements. A higher rate of reimbursement, also called Severe Need Reimbursement, is available to those schools in which 40% of the students were free or reduced-price in the second preceding school year. A new school that did not operate for the previous two years and would therefore not have claimed, may still be eligible and should contact ISBE Nutrition Programs Division for further guidance.

**STATE REIMBURSEMENT:** Through the Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Program, each free breakfast served is eligible for state reimbursement\*. Actual reimbursement rate depends on total allotted funds and amount of statewide participation.

**STUDENT PAYMENTS:** Schools may charge no more than \$0.30 for a reduced-price breakfast. Schools will set their own prices for breakfasts served to students who pay the full meal price (paid), though they must operate their meal services as non-profit programs.

School food authorities (SFA) submit a monthly claim for reimbursement to ISBE through IWAS/ACES for meals served. No application is required for the severe need reimbursement; the data will automatically be pulled from your claims. Reimbursement is paid on a monthly basis.

\* For a current listing of reimbursement rates, go to <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition> and click on *School Breakfast Program*.

## 4. Does the breakfast have to be served hot and in a traditional setting (cafeteria)?

No, there are alternative routes to serving breakfast, such as breakfast in the classroom, grab 'n go breakfast, and breakfast after first period. To determine which service style will work best for your school, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/theres.pdf>.

## 5. What are the meal nutrition requirements for breakfasts offered through the School Breakfast Program? What should I serve for school breakfast?

Federal regulations require all school meals meet nutrition requirements, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the requirements of the applicable meal planning option. (For additional information on meal planning options, visit <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition>, click on *Forms and Documents*.) However, decisions about what foods to serve and how they are prepared are made by local education agencies. In addition, breakfasts must provide one-fourth of the daily recommended levels for protein, calcium, iron, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and calories. The minimum requirements for Food-Based Menu Planning Approaches are: 1) a serving of milk as a beverage or on cereal or used in part for each purpose, 2) a serving of fruit or vegetable or both or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice, and 3) two servings of grains/breads *or* one serving of grains/breads and one serving of meat/meat alternate *or* two servings of meat/meat alternate. If you are planning hot meals, you can serve foods such as breakfast fruit pizza, sausage sandwich, egg burrito, choices of fruits or juice, and milk. Alternatively, if you are planning for cold breakfasts, you could include a menu such as granola bar, yogurt, banana, and milk.

## 6. What are the sponsor's responsibilities for administering the program?

Administrative responsibilities for the program include:

- Maintain financial records to ensure non-profit status
- Provide applications for meal benefits to each household
- Approve and/or deny applications for meal benefits
- Verify current income from a sample of households selected
- Ensure menus adhere to all applicable menu requirements
- Take meal counts at the point of service
- Submit claims for reimbursement
- Competitively bid for purchased food, supplies, equipment, and services as applicable

An annual application must be submitted each year in order to apply for funding. Applications are for the federal fiscal year, October 1 through September 30.

## 7. How can I apply to become a sponsor?

If you are currently a sponsor of any federal or state school-based nutrition program, simply access your site application in ACES and click on School Breakfast Program or IL Free Breakfast. If you are not currently a sponsor of any federal or state school-based child nutrition program, you must apply using the forms at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/program\\_participation.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/program_participation.htm). New applications may be submitted at any time. Applications are valid from the date of approval through September 30 each year.

## 8. Are there any additional application requirements?

FOR PRIVATE NON-PROFIT SCHOOLS—In addition to the above forms, private non-profit schools must be registered as a school by the Illinois State Board of Education and submit a copy of the tax exempt letter showing status under section 501(C)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code.

FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS—Private residential child care institutions must submit a license or a document indicating a license is not required. A copy of the tax exempt letter showing status under section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code can serve as documentation.

## 10. Who can I contact if I need assistance?

Contact the ISBE Nutrition Programs Division by phone at 800/545-7892 or email at [cnp@isbe.net](mailto:cnp@isbe.net).