

State Funding for Reduced-Price and Paid Meals



The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) School Nutrition Unit reimburses participating School Food Authorities (SFAs) for meals that are in compliance with state and federal regulations served to eligible students. Federal funding for free, reduced-price, and paid meal reimbursements is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Through state-level programs, SFAs can receive additional funding for reduced-price and paid meals served.

Start Smart Nutrition Program *(Does not apply to Community Eligibility Provision sponsors/sites)*

Reimbursement for reduced-price breakfast for grades PK-12

- Established in 2007 by [Colorado Senate Bill 07-059](#)
- Eliminates the \$0.30 co-payment for reduced-price breakfast paid by families for students in all grades
- Eligible sites are public schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs)/facility schools
- SFAs may not charge reduced-price students for breakfast
- Participating students still have a reduced-price status, and the SFA must claim their meals as reduced-price
- The CDE School Nutrition claim system automatically reimburses eligible sites an additional \$0.30 in state funds for every reduced-price breakfast claimed

Child Nutrition Lunch Protection Act *(Does not apply to CEP sponsors/sites)*

Reimbursement for reduced-price lunch for grades PK-12

- Established in 2008 by [Colorado Senate Bill 08-123](#)
- Eliminates the \$0.40 co-payment for reduced-price lunch paid by families for students in all grades
- Eligible sites are public schools and RCCIs/facility schools
- SFAs may not charge reduced-price students for lunch
- Participating students still have a reduced-price status, and the SFA must claim their meals as reduced-price
- The CDE School Nutrition claim system automatically reimburses eligible sites an additional \$0.40 in state funds for every reduced-price lunch claimed

Healthy School Meals for All Program

Reimbursement for paid breakfast and lunch for grades PK-12

- Established in 2022 by [Colorado House Bill 22-1414](#)
- SFAs must opt-in annually, eligible SFAs are public school districts and charter SFAs
- SFAs may not charge any student for breakfast or lunch
- Breakfasts and lunches continue to be counted and claimed based on student eligibility (free, reduced, or paid)
 - Sites participating in the Community Eligibility Provision do not need to count and claim meals by eligibility, and can tally total breakfast and lunches served
- The CDE School Nutrition claim system automatically reimburses participating eligible sites the difference between the federal free and federal paid reimbursement rate. The base federal rate will be used for this calculation across all sponsors, regardless of severe need qualification.

Updated August 2023