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Free Lunch Numbers Jump to an All Time High

According to the U.S. Food and Nutrition Service, nationwide enrollment in the free lunch program is up 6.3% over the same time last year. Several states saw increases of over 10%. Where does your state fall in line?

The numbers are in, with California, New Jersey, Utah and Arizona topping the list. California's free lunch numbers rose a staggering 16.9% this year, jumping from 1.9 to nearly 2.1 million since February of last year. New Jersey schools saw a jump of 11.9%, with Utah and Arizona close behind at 11.6% and 11.3% respectively.

Where does your state rank?

Breakdown by Increase in Free Lunch Percentage

California	+ 16.9%	Virginia	+ 6.4%
New Jersey	+ 11.9%	Georgia	+ 6.0%
Utah	+ 11.6%	Nebraska	+ 5.9%
Arizona	+ 11.3%	Illinois	+ 5.8%
Vermont	+ 10.18%	Alabama	+ 5.3%
Delaware	+ 10.0%	New Mexico	+ 4.7%
Idaho	+ 9.8%	Texas	+ 4.5%
Washington	+ 9.6%	Maine	+ 4.4%
Kansas	+ 9.4%	Connecticut	+ 4.3%
Hawaii	+ 9.0%	Wisconsin	+ 4.0%
Michigan	+ 8.9%	S. Carolina	+ 3.7%
Indiana	+ 8.9%	Minnesota	+ 3.4%
Florida	+ 8.6%	Mississippi	+ 3.0%
Missouri	+ 8.3%	Montana	+ 2.6%
Maryland	+ 8.1%	Pennsylvania	+ 2.3%
Ohio	+ 7.9%	South Dakota	+ 2.0%
Oklahoma	+ 7.8%	North Dakota	+ 1.9%
Alaska	+ 7.0%	Iowa	+ 1.6%
New Hampshire	+ 6.9%	Louisiana	+ 1.1%
Nevada	+ 6.9%	New York	+ 0.4%
North Carolina	+ 6.7%	Arkansas	- 0.1%
Kentucky	+ 6.6%	Oregon	- 1.5%
Colorado	+ 6.6%	W. Virginia	- 5.3%
Wyoming	+ 6.6%	Tennessee	- 7.1%
Massachusetts	+ 6.5%	Rhode Island	- 7.8%

Nationwide, students receiving government-subsidized lunches now total nearly 20 million, an all time high. What could this drastic influx mean to your state? Those states that have seen an increase over 6% can expect to feel a significant level of strain on their already tight budgets, as more money will need to be diverted to cover the lunch costs.

The federal government is currently subsidizing \$2.57 for each free lunch served. In contrast, numbers collected by the School Nutrition Association put the average food and labor cost for each meal at about \$2.92. That difference of approximately \$.35 is really putting a toll on cash strapped states.

Case in point, California, whose free lunch enrollment increased by over 145,000 students last year. The state is paying an additional \$50,000 every time a meal is served. Conservatively, that's an additional 1 million being spent every month on lunch alone.

Without an increase in federal subsidies,

many states will simply be unable to weather the storm. School officials across the nation are hoping that congress will get to work boosting the federal subsidy amount when the Child Nutrition Act goes up for reauthorization this fall.

When help will come and in what form, no one knows. Despite recent government

efforts to stimulate the economy, it is showing no signs of a quick rebound. One thing is certain - those schools that are suffering from the current boom in free lunch enrollment are likely to see the storm get worse before it gets better.

The President and First Lady Address Healthy School Lunches

Both President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama separately renewed the Administration's call for a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act in Congress this year and a renewed emphasis on healthy school meals. SNA continues to work with the Administration and members of Congress on key policy priorities that would result in better access to nutritious school breakfasts, lunches and snacks through the federal child nutrition programs.

On June 15, 2009, President Obama spoke to a gathering of the American Medical Association in Chicago, Ill. on the Administration's healthcare proposals. As part of his speech, the President stated:

"The second step that we can all agree on is to invest more in preventive care so we can avoid illness and disease in the first place. (Applause.) That starts with each of us taking more responsibility for our health and for the health of our children. (Applause.) It means quitting smoking. It means going in for that mammogram or colon cancer screening. It means going for a run or hitting the gym, and raising our children to step away from the video games and spend more time playing outside. (Applause.)

It also means cutting down on all the junk food that's fueling an epidemic of obesity — (applause) — which puts far too many Americans, young and old, at greater risk of costly, chronic conditions. That's a lesson Michelle and I have tried to instill in our daughters. As some of you know, we started a White House vegetable garden. I say "we" generously, because Michelle has done most of the work. (Laughter.) That's a lesson that we should work with local school districts to incorporate into their school lunch programs."

The following day First Lady Michelle Obama worked with students from Bancroft Elementary School in Washington, DC and Assistant White House Chef Sam Kass to harvest lettuce and snap peas from the White House Garden planted earlier this year. The students then helped prepare lunch using the harvest. The First Lady spoke to the students and members of the press, again emphasizing the need for healthy school meals. An abbreviated

version of her comments are below:

"Obesity, diabetes, heart disease, high-blood pressure are all diet-related health issues that cost this country more than \$120 billion each year. That's a lot of money. While the dollar figure is shocking in and of itself, the effect on our children's health is even more profound. Nearly a third of the children in this country are either overweight or obese, and a third will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lifetime. In Hispanic and African American communities, those numbers climb even higher so that nearly half of the children in those communities will suffer the same fate. Those numbers are unacceptable.

"The USDA's National School Lunch Program serves approximately 30 million meals each year to low-income children. And because these meals are the main source of consistent nourishment for these kids, we need to make sure we offer them the healthiest meals possible."

- Michelle Obama

"And for the first time in the history of our nation, a nation that is one of the wealthiest on the planet, medical experts have warned that our younger generation may be on track to have a shorter life span than their parents as a direct result of the obesity epidemic. Again, that is just unacceptable.

So how did we get here? How did we get in this position where we have become such an unhealthy nation, and our children

are at risk? And the fact is there are a lot of factors, but some of the more simple ones are that too many kids are consuming high-calorie food with low nutritional value, and they're not getting enough exercise. It's plain and simple: They're not eating right and they're not moving their bodies at all.

But unfortunately, for too many families, limited access to healthy fruits and vegetables is often a barrier to a healthier diet. In so many of our communities, particularly in poorer and more isolated communities, fresh, healthy food is simply out of reach. With few grocery stores in their neighborhoods, residents are forced to rely on convenience stores, fast food restaurants, liquor stores, drug stores and even gas stations for their groceries.

But government also has a role to play in this, as well. For so many kids, subsidized breakfasts and lunches are their primary meals of the day. It's what they count on. It's where they get most of their nutrition.

And the USDA's National School Lunch Program serves approximately 30 million meals each year to low-income children. And because these meals are the main source of consistent nourishment for these kids, we need to make sure we offer them the healthiest meals possible.

So to make sure that we give all our kids a good start to their day and to their future, we need to improve the quality and nutrition of the food served in schools. We're approaching the first big opportunity to move this to the top of the agenda with the upcoming reauthorization of the child nutrition programs. In doing so, we can go a long way towards creating a healthier generation for our kids."

The School Nutrition Association enthusiastically echoes the President and First Lady's call for a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act and is actively advocating for the following improvements which will result in healthier school meals for more children:

* Increase the per meal reimbursement by 35 cents for all meals in order to keep pace with rising costs and implementing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The



www.schoolnutrition.org

The School Nutrition Association is a national, non-profit professional organization representing more than 55,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. The Association and its members are dedicated to feeding children safe and nutritious meals. Founded in 1946, SNA is the only association devoted exclusively to protecting and enhancing children's health and well being through school meals and sound nutrition education.

current Federal reimbursement of \$2.57 for a "free" school lunch is not adequate as the average cost to produce a school lunch is \$2.92. Reimbursements for meals in other categories should also be adjusted upward to better reflect the true costs of preparing a meal.

* Expand the "free" meal category from 130% of poverty to 185%, consistent with the WIC income eligibility guidelines (eliminating the reduced price meal category).

* Provide 10 cents in USDA commodities for each school breakfast served.

* Grant the Secretary of Agriculture the statutory authority to regulate the sale of all foods and beverages on the school campus, consistent with the most recent edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (ending the "time and place rule").

* Require the Department to implement a

consistent, science-based national interpretation of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for all school meals reimbursed by USDA.

The Obama Administration has proposed \$1 billion per year over ten years for the Child Nutrition Reauthorization process, however Congress has yet to identify the source of the funding. SNA, as well as the hundreds of additional local, state and national organizations that are part of the Child Nutrition Forum, is calling for \$4 billion per year for key priorities that would enhance the quality and nutrition of all food served in schools as well significantly improve access to the child nutrition programs for families in need, both during the school day and during hours when school is out. Take action below by sending a message to Members of Congress about the importance of increased funding child nutrition programs.

ABC News Covers School Meal Charge Policies

TABC's Good Morning America show aired a segment on the Albuquerque, New Mexico, district school meal charge policy and the struggles that parents and schools are having with unpaid school lunch bills. SNA estimates that about half of all school district nutrition programs have seen an increase in the number of parents who do not qualify for free meals but who can no longer afford the price of a reduced price or paid meal. School districts handle this situation differently, some allowing meals to be charged, others providing an alternate meal. The School Nutrition Association has long held the position that nutritious, balanced school meals should be available to all school children at no cost.

Due to the increase in food, milk and energy costs, combined with high labor and benefit costs, the federal school meal reimbursement no longer covers the cost to prepare a balanced meal.

SNA talked extensively with ABC producers providing background for today's segment. Many school nutrition programs and school districts around the country have implemented creative policies to ensure school lunch debt is collected and meal charges are addressed without stigmatizing students. The Association has

compiled resources and sample policies to help school districts address this situation in a manner that protects children and results in balanced meals for all. There are also legislative and regulatory changes that can be made at the federal level to address this issue. SNA supports the legislation being drafted by Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) that would provide meals at no cost to all children in school. Additionally, SNA supports the following policy proposals that could be included in the 2009 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act expected to be passed by Congress later this year:

* Expand the "free" meal category from 130% of poverty to 185%, consistent with the WIC income eligibility guidelines (eliminating the reduced price meal category). In many districts the majority of the students that are charging school meals fall into the reduced price category. Eliminating the reduced price category and allowing those students a free meal would significantly reduced the number of students charging meals.

* Regional Cost of Living Variances Should be Considered in Determining Eligibility. Regional cost of living variances make the utilization of a national income eligibility standard a hardship on many communities. We urge consideration of the development of an income eligibility standard that takes these differences into account. In many parts of the country the Income Eligibility Guidelines for school meals do not

accurately reflect the cost of living in those areas.

* Reimbursement Rates Should Reflect Meal Costs. SNA strongly supports an increase in the federal reimbursements as part of any legislation to improve school meals and nutrition standards anywhere in schools. Over the past several years, school nutrition programs have made tremendous strides in offering more whole grains, more fresh fruits and vegetables, and more low-fat dairy products. All of these healthy food items cost more in today's marketplace. Due to the increase in food, milk and energy costs, combined with high labor and benefits costs, the federal school meal reimbursement no longer covers the cost to prepare a balanced, nutritious school meal. Adequate meal reimbursements would help financially strapped school nutrition programs to one again break even.

Article provided by:



www.schoolnutrition.org

Bagged Lunch Vs. School Lunch

Created by: Katie Riley, Case Western Reserve University Graduate Student/Intern

Parents: Ever wonder the value of the school lunch? Are you tired of packing your child's lunch?

Here are some examples to answer your questions and ease your mind when trying to think of a new lunch to pack. Look no further than school lunch!

(Prices used in examples are based on the average retail cost of lunch ingredients. Parents, you may be buying higher or lower priced items.) Below are two packed lunch examples with boxes on the side using combinations from both lunches to form further examples of packed lunches.

Uncrustable + baby carrots + banana + pretzels + milk
= \$2.71

Ham/cheese sandwich + baby carrots + applesauce cup + pudding + juice box
= \$3.39

Ham/cheese sandwich + baby carrots + banana + pretzels + milk
= \$3.18

Uncrustable + baby carrots + banana + pudding + juice box
= \$2.74

Packed Lunch Example 1

Sandwich: Smuckers Uncrustable PB & J
(4 pack for \$3.00)=\$0.75

Vegetable: Chiquita Baby Carrot Bites with Ranch Dip
(4 pack for \$4.29)=\$1.08

Fruit: Motts Original Applesauce Cup
(6 pack for \$2.19)=\$0.37

Dessert: Snackpack Chocolate Pudding Cup
(4.25 oz cup at 9.0 cents/oz)=\$0.38

Drink: School Milk=\$0.50

Grand Total: \$3.08

Packed Lunch Example 2

Sandwich: 2 slices Home Pride wheat bread
(20 slices for \$2.89)=\$0.30
2 oz Deli Ham
(At \$5.99)=\$0.76
½ oz American cheese
(At \$4.99)=\$0.16

Vegetable: Chiquita Baby Carrot Bites with Ranch Dip
(4 pack for \$4.29)=\$1.08
Fruit: 1 banana
(49 cents/lb)=\$0.19

Dessert: Synder Pretzel Sticks
(1 serving from \$2.99 bag)=\$0.19

Drink: Juicy Juice Apple Juice Box
(6.75 oz juice box at 5.1 cents/oz)=\$0.34

Grand Total: \$3.02

Average cost of bagged lunch: \$3.02
Using all combinations listed

Ham/cheese sandwich + baby carrots + applesauce cup + pudding + juice box
= \$3.55

Uncrustable + baby carrots + banana + pudding + milk
= \$2.90

Ham/cheese sandwich + baby carrots + banana + pretzels + juice box
= \$3.02

Uncrustable + baby carrots + banana + pretzels + juice box
= \$2.55

The Savings of Buying School Lunch

Average cost of bagged lunch: \$3.02 compared to \$2.20 lunch price

Savings: \$0.82 a day
\$0.82 a day x 5 days a week = \$4.10 a week
\$4.10 a week x 4.2 weeks a month = \$17.22 a month
\$17.22 a month x 9 months a school year = \$154.98 a school year

Total Savings a School Year : \$154.98

Average cost of bagged lunch: \$3.02 compared to \$2.45 lunch price

Savings: \$0.57 a day
\$0.82 a day x 5 days a week = \$2.85 a week
\$4.10 a week x 4.2 weeks a month = \$11.97 a month
\$17.22 a month x 9 months a school year = \$107.73 a school year

Total Savings a School Year : \$107.73

These savings of \$154.98 and \$107.73 are strictly the cost of food! Extra money is spent for brown bags or a lunch box; ice packs or thermoses; plastic bags, silverware, and napkins.

Time saved when not preparing a bagged lunch: 10 minutes a day
Money saved when buying a school lunch: \$107.73--\$154.98 a year
Consuming a healthy school lunch with friends: **Priceless!**

BUY SCHOOL LUNCH!

FSS Unveils the All-New BiometricSolution.com

New site focuses on company's proven access control and time & attendance solutions

In 1999, FSS made national headlines by being the first to successfully introduce biometric identification technology into our nation's school lunch lines. Since then, we've been hard at work expanding the capabilities and capacities of our finger scan identification systems. These efforts eventually lead to the creation of a division of FSS dedicated solely to the development of biometric identification systems, called Biometric Solution.

BiometricSolution.com, was initially designed to service a wide variety of markets. For the first few years, our research and development staff handled a steady stream of requests ranging from simple plug-in to complex multimodal solutions. Modified versions of our BioWedge™ identification system were put

to use in hospitals, banks, business offices, check cashing locations and even scrap yards.

It soon became obvious that our resources would best be put to use by focusing our efforts on developing and perfecting solutions that resolved issues faced by all our customers. This change in strategy is evident in what is now the all-new BiometricSolution.com. The site focuses on our two most requested solutions – those of access control and time & attendance. A brief overview of these solutions can be found below.

Access Control Solutions

Controlling and monitoring both employee and visitor traffic in becoming increasingly

more important. By improving access control, schools, businesses and other organizations can effectively mitigate risk on a number of fronts.

Our BioMatch™ access control software works seamlessly with Sagem™ biometric terminals to create an advanced access control solution. BioMatch™ offers administrators complete control – giving them the ability to group users and apply security settings, access rights and time masks to determine who goes where and when. With an extensive range of reporting options included, administrators will always know what's going on.

Time & Attendance Solutions

Every year, U.S. businesses lose billions of

dollars due to improper time clock management. According to the latest estimates, average payroll loss averages meet or exceed 4%. Despite modern advancements, many companies continue to use outdated punch-card systems – tempting even the most responsible employees to “buddy punch” for friends who leave work early or come in late. Other companies take an on-your-honor approach, only to end up getting burned.

The losses are staggering, and traditional time and attendance systems offer no fail-safes to keep employees honest. By implementing tamper-proof biometric finger scanning devices, our complete time and attendance solutions eliminate all forms of time clock theft. In addition, modern advancements in biometric technology allow for access terminals to systems to be placed nearly anywhere - indoors or out. These systems also have the added ability to be powered-over-ethernet (POE), allowing for even more versatility.

We invite you to visit the new BiometricSolution.com to learn more about our state-of-the-art biometric products.

**VISIT US
ONLINE TODAY!!**

www.biometricsolution.com

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Why BIOMETRICS?
Biometric technologies are a thing of the future - and the future is now! Over the past 10 years, a growing number of innovative **real world** biometric technologies have begun to take the place of our most commonly used identification systems, ushering in a new era of security, convenience and user friendliness. Modern biometrics are more flexible than their predecessors, capable of being integrated into systems unimagined just a few years ago.

Real life biometric solutions to...

ACCESS CONTROL
...your Access Control troubles
In order to guarantee workplace security, business owners and managers must continually identify areas of risk and then make the necessary changes to mitigate those risks. For many organizations, risk comes in the form of unrestricted access. Organizations that fail to implement measures to control employee and visitor traffic are actively putting their resources at risk.
FSS recognizes the importance of access control to your everyday security needs and understands the management implications. Our access control solutions are designed to resolve your compliance obligations. [Learn more >>](#)

TIME & ATTENDANCE
...your Time and Attendance problems
Every year, U.S. businesses lose billions of dollars due to improper time clock management. According to the latest surveys by the American Payroll Association, payroll loss estimates average 4%. Despite modern advancements, many companies continue to use outdated punch-card systems – tempting even the most responsible employees to “buddy punch” for friends who leave work early or come in late. Other companies take an on-your-honor approach, only to end up getting burned. The losses are staggering, and traditional time and attendance systems offer no fail-safes to keep employees honest.
FSS biometric time and attendance systems eliminate all forms of time clock theft. [Learn more >>](#)

Call to speak with a live representative for more information on our complete line of biometric solutions **1-800-425-1425**

FSS, Inc. - 3101 Pleasant Valley Boulevard - Altoona, PA 16602

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Live Demo
[See it online!](#)

What Biometric Solutions are Right for Your Market?

BioWedge
The BioWedge Finger Scan ID System is simply the world's best identification system.

Handheld ID Readers
The FSS Secure-ID Group Handheld ID Reader is ideal for all card reading, age verification, & visitor management needs.

[Vea este sitio en español!](#)

...WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?



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SIMPLE, RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE

Food Service Solution's ability to develop creative solutions to make our customer's job easier, more profitable, and better managed has made us a leader in our industry. With over 85 years of combined experience in institutional food services, our staff is dedicated to providing our customers with state-of-the-art software & hardware systems that are fully integrated to meet the unique needs of food service professionals.