

# School Breakfast Scorecard

School Year 2015–2016

February 2017 ■ [www.FRAC.org](http://www.FRAC.org)



# School Breakfast Scorecard

School Year 2015–2016

## Acknowledgments

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) gratefully acknowledges major dedicated support of its work to expand and improve the School Breakfast Program from the following:

- Eos Foundation
- General Mills Foundation
- Hunger Is, a joint program of The Albertsons Companies Foundation and the Entertainment Industry Foundation
- Kellogg Company Fund
- National Dairy Council/Dairy Management, Inc.
- Walmart Foundation.

Additional support for FRAC's breakfast and child nutrition work has been provided by the following:

- Anonymous
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- JPB Foundation
- MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- New Directions Foundation
- Tyson Foods, Inc.

This report was written by FRAC's Senior Policy Analyst, Jessie Hewins, and Senior Research and Policy Analyst, Randy Rosso. The findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of FRAC alone.

## About FRAC

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national organization working for more effective public and private policies to eradicate domestic hunger and undernutrition. For more information about FRAC, or to sign up for FRAC's *Weekly News Digest* and monthly *Meals Matter: School Breakfast Newsletter*, go to: [frac.org](http://frac.org).



# I. Introduction

---

**S**chool Breakfast Program participation continued to grow in the 2015–2016 school year, providing a healthy morning meal to an average of more than 12.1 million low-income children each school day. This represents a 3.7 percent increase, or an additional 433,000 low-income children participating over the prior school year.

This is good news for schools and families. The school nutrition programs are a vital component of the federal safety net for low-income families, helping to stretch limited budgets and provide assurance for parents that their children can receive healthy meals at school each day. The School Breakfast Program is also an important tool for educators to ensure that students have adequate nutrition to learn and thrive and not be distracted by hunger or lack of proper nutrition in the classroom.

This year's progress builds upon significant growth over the past decade. Since the 2006–2007 school year, just before the start of the Great Recession, daily school breakfast participation has increased by nearly 50 percent among low-income children. The proliferation of schools offering breakfast after the start of the school day (rather than in the cafeteria before school starts), improvements to how low-income children are identified as eligible for free school meals, and broad implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision (allowing free breakfast and lunch to be offered to all students in high-poverty schools and districts) have contributed to the dramatic increase.

Compared to the National School Lunch Program, which served 21.6 million low-income children in the 2015–2016 school year, the School Breakfast Program has historically lagged in participation. However, in recent years, the gap between breakfast and lunch participation has narrowed. In the 1990–1991 school year, the first year of the Food Research & Action Center's (FRAC) *School Breakfast Scorecard*, just 31.5 low-income children ate school breakfast for every 100 who participated in school lunch. By 10 years ago, that ratio had improved to 44.6 to 100. In the 2015–2016 school year, 56 low-income children ate school breakfast for every 100 who ate school lunch.

There is still much room for improvement, but we know what strategies have proven to work. Increasing participation in the School Breakfast Program presents a tremendous opportunity to support better health and academic outcomes for low-income children. Advocates, state child nutrition agency staff, policy makers, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture must continue to work in partnership with school districts to ensure that all low-income children across the country can start the day ready to learn with a healthy breakfast.

---

## About the Scorecard

This report measures the reach of the School Breakfast Program in the 2015–2016 school year — nationally and in each state — based on a variety of metrics, and examines the impact of select trends and policies on program participation. First, we look at free and reduced-price school breakfast participation to determine how many low-income students school breakfast is reaching nationally and in each state, using the ratio to free and reduced-price lunch participation as a benchmark. Because there is broad participation in the lunch program by low-income students across the states, it is a useful

comparison by which to measure how many students could and should be benefiting from school breakfast each day. Second, we compare the number of schools offering the School Breakfast Program to the number of schools operating the National School Lunch Program, as this is an important indicator of access to the program for low-income children in the states. Finally, we set an ambitious, but achievable, goal of reaching 70 free and reduced-price eligible students with breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch, and we calculate the number of children not being served and the federal dollars lost in each state as a result of not meeting this goal.

---

## How the School Breakfast Program Works

### Who Operates the School Breakfast Program?

Any public school, nonprofit private school, or residential child care institution can participate in the national School Breakfast Program and receive federal funds for each breakfast served. The program is administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and in each state typically through the state department of education or agriculture.

### Who can Participate in the School Breakfast Program?

Any student attending a school that offers the program can eat breakfast. What the federal government covers, and what a student pays, depends on family income:

- Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for free school meals.
- Children from families with incomes between 130 to 185 percent of the FPL qualify for reduced-price meals and can be charged no more than 30 cents per breakfast.

- Children from families with incomes above 185 percent of the FPL pay charges (referred to as “paid meals”), which are set by the school.

Other federal and, in some cases, state rules make it possible to offer free meals to all children, or to all children in households with incomes under 185 percent of the FPL, especially in high-poverty schools.

### How are Children Certified for Free or Reduced-Price Meals?

Most children are certified for free or reduced-price meals via applications collected by the school district at the beginning of the school year or during the year. However, children in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), as well as foster youth, migrant, homeless, or runaway youth, and Head Start participants are “categorically eligible” (automatically eligible) for free school meals and can be certified without submitting a school meal application.

## How the School Breakfast Program Works

CONTINUED

School districts are required to “directly certify” children in households participating in SNAP for free school meals through data matching of SNAP records with school enrollment lists. School districts have the option of directly certifying other categorically eligible children as well. Some states also utilize income information from Medicaid to directly certify students as eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

Schools should also use data from the state to certify categorically eligible students and they can coordinate with other personnel, such as the school district’s homeless and migrant education liaisons to obtain documentation to certify children for free school meals. Some categorically eligible children may be missed in this process, requiring the household to submit a school meals application. However, these households are not required to complete the income information section of the application.

### How are School Districts Reimbursed?

The federal reimbursement rate the school receives for each meal served depends on whether a student is certified to receive free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

For the 2015–2016 school year, schools received:

- \$1.66 per free breakfast;
- \$1.36 per reduced-price breakfast; and
- \$0.29 per “paid” breakfast.

“Severe need” schools received an additional 33 cents for each free or reduced-price breakfast served. Schools are considered severe need if at least 40 percent of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were free or reduced-price.

### Offering Breakfast Free to All

Many high-poverty schools are able to offer free meals for all students, with federal reimbursements based on the

proportions of low-income children in the school. Providing breakfast at no charge to all students helps remove the stigma often associated with means-tested school breakfast (that breakfast in school is for “the poor kids”), opens the program to children from families that would struggle to pay the reduced-price copayment or the paid breakfast charges, and streamlines the implementation of breakfast in the classroom and other alternative service models. Schools can offer free breakfast to all students through the following options:

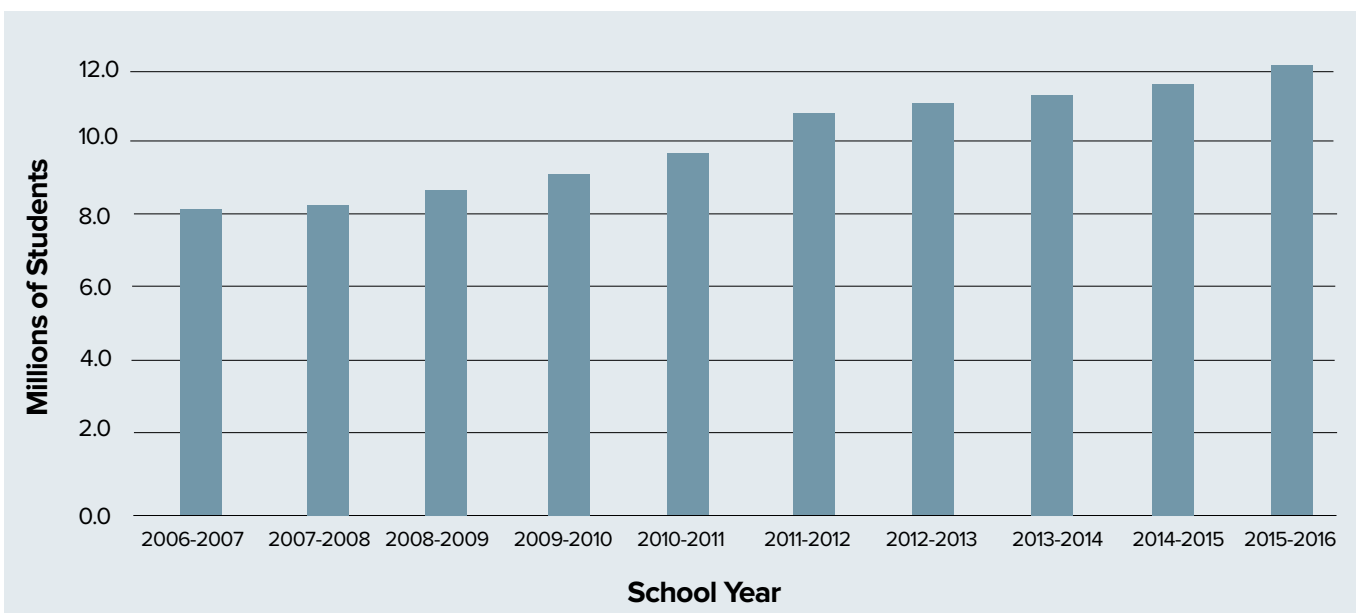
- **Community Eligibility Provision:** Community eligibility schools are high-poverty schools that offer free breakfast and lunch to all students and do not collect, process, or verify school meal applications, or keep track of meals by fee category, resulting in significant administrative savings and increased participation. For more information on community eligibility, see page 12.
- **Provision 2:** Schools using Provision 2 (referring to a provision of the National School Lunch Act) do not need to collect, process, or verify school meal applications or keep track of meals by fee category for at least three out of every four years. Schools collect school meal applications and count and claim meals by fee category during year one of the multi-year cycle, called the “base year.” Those data then are used for future years in the cycle. Provision 2 schools have the option to serve only breakfast or lunch, or both breakfast and lunch, to all students at no charge, and use economies of scale from increased participation and significant administrative savings to offset the cost of offering free meals to all students.
- **Nonpricing:** No fees are collected from students, while schools continue to receive federal reimbursements for the meals served under the three-tier federal fee categories (free, reduced-price, and paid).

## II. National Findings

In the 2015–2016 school year, school breakfast participation continued to grow at a steady pace:

- On an average school day, 14.2 million children participated in the School Breakfast Program; 12.1 million of them were low-income children who received a free or reduced-price school breakfast.
- Breakfast participation among low-income (free or reduced-price eligible) children increased by just over 433,000 students, or 3.7 percent, over the previous school year. This year's growth was consistent with recent progress. Participation grew by 475,000 students, or 4.2 percent, in the 2014–2015 school year; 343,000 students, or 3.2 percent, in the 2013–2014 school year; and 311,000 children, or 3 percent, in the 2012–2013 school year.
- The ratio of low-income children participating in school breakfast per 100 that participated in school lunch inched up to 56 out of 100 in 2015–2016, up from 54.3 per 100 in the previous school year.
- If all states met FRAC's goal of reaching 70 low-income children with school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch, an additional 3 million children would start the day with a healthy breakfast at school. States and school districts would tap into an additional \$836 million in federal funding to support their school food service and their local economies.

**Figure 1: Free and Reduced-Price Participation in the School Breakfast Program**



- The number of schools offering school meal programs remained relatively steady, with 90,355 schools offering breakfast and 98,004 offering school lunch. The share of schools offering school breakfast compared to those that offer school lunch improved slightly to 92.2 percent, an increase from 91.2 percent in the previous school year.

Over the past 10 years, school breakfast participation has increased significantly among low-income children. Since the 2006–2007 school year, the number of low-income children eating breakfast at school on an average day has increased by nearly half, growing from 8.1 million to 12.1 million in the 2015–2016 school year. During this time period, the Great Recession sparked unprecedented growth in the program for several years due to increased need, and several program improvements were implemented that streamlined access to the program, including direct certification and the Community Eligibility Provision.



*Since the 2006–2007 school year, the number of low-income children eating breakfast at school on an average day has increased by nearly half.*

## III. State Findings

**W**est Virginia held onto the top ranking among the states for the third year in a row, reaching 83.9 low-income children with school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch, and growing participation by 4.6 percent over the previous year.

New Mexico was the only other state to meet FRAC's goal of 70 low-income children participating in school breakfast for every 100 in school lunch, with an impressive ratio of 72.9 to 100, and 6.6 percent growth since the 2014–2015 school year. An additional nine states — Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont — plus the District of Columbia — reached at least 60 low-income children with school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch.

**Top 10 States: Ratio of Free and Reduced-Price School Breakfast to Lunch Participation**

State	Ratio of Low-Income Student Participation in Breakfast per 100 Participating in Lunch
West Virginia	83.9
New Mexico	72.9
District of Columbia	67.4
Tennessee	64.5
Maryland	64.2
Kentucky	64.2
Arkansas	63.5
Texas	63.1
Vermont	62.7
South Carolina	62.3

The top two states and the third-ranked District of Columbia all have maintained strong school breakfast participation among low-income children as a result of innovative state legislation requiring all or some schools to offer breakfast after the bell by delivering the meal to the classroom or serving it from “grab and go” carts.

Nevada had the largest percentage increase from 2014–2015 to 2015–2016, growing school breakfast participation among low-income children by 26.5 percent. Similar to the top-performing states, Nevada's striking growth was the result of the successful rollout of a new statewide requirement for high-poverty schools to offer breakfast after the bell.

Three other states saw significant, double-digit growth in low-income student participation. Massachusetts increased participation by 15 percent, building on last year's gains through the continued efforts of a statewide school breakfast campaign. Also driving participation in the state was a successful multi-year push by the state child nutrition agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and advocates to expand the Community Eligibility Provision, which allows high-poverty schools to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students. Kentucky and Connecticut both saw extensive community eligibility expansion as well, and their school breakfast participation increased by 10.7 percent and 10.1 percent, respectively.

**Top 10 States Based on Percentage Growth in Free and Reduced-Price Breakfast Participation, School Year 2014–2015 to School Year 2015–2016**

State	Additional Free and Reduced-Price Students	Percent Increase in Free and Reduced-Price Students
Nevada	21,628	26.5
Massachusetts	21,755	15.0
Kentucky	26,052	10.7
Connecticut	7,995	10.1
Montana	2,276	9.5
Pennsylvania	27,830	9.3
Virginia	19,483	8.5
Utah	4,641	7.7
New York	40,234	7.0
North Dakota	1,015	6.8

Growth in the program was nearly universal across the states. All states increased school breakfast participation among low-income children, except Hawaii, which saw a decrease of 3.1 percent. Only two states — Hawaii and Oregon — saw any decreases in the ratio of low-income children participating in school breakfast compared to school lunch.

Still, millions of low-income children are missing out on school breakfast, and the disparity between high- and low-performing states indicates that the need is not yet being met in some states. Despite having the 8th-highest percent growth in low-income student participation, Utah remained at the bottom of the rankings again this year, serving fewer than 40 low-income children school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch. This was less than half the proportion

## Breakfast After the Bell

Implementing an alternative service model that moves breakfast out the cafeteria and makes it a part of the school day has proven to be the most successful strategy for schools to increase breakfast participation. These models overcome timing, convenience, and stigma barriers that get in the way of children participating in school breakfast. Options include:

- **Breakfast in the Classroom:** Meals can either be delivered to the classroom or be served from the cafeteria or carts in the hallway, to be eaten in the classroom at the start of the school day.
- **“Grab and Go”:** Children (particularly older students) can easily grab the components of their breakfast quickly from carts or kiosks in the hallway or the cafeteria line, to eat in their classroom.
- **Second Chance Breakfast:** Students are offered a second chance to eat breakfast after homeroom or first period. Many middle and high school students are not hungry first thing in the morning. Serving them breakfast after first period allows them ample time to arrive to class on time or socialize before school, while still providing them with a nutritious start early in the day.

of low-income children reached by top-performing West Virginia. Thirteen additional states continued to struggle to reach even half of the low-income students who participate in lunch with school breakfast.

**Bottom 10 States: Ratio of Free and Reduced-Price School Breakfast to Lunch Participation**

State	Ratio of Free and Reduced-Price Student Participation in Breakfast per 100 Participating in Lunch
New York	49.0
Illinois	47.7
South Dakota	46.1
Washington	45.1
Iowa	44.0
Hawaii	43.0
Nebraska	43.0
Wyoming	42.7
New Hampshire	40.9
Utah	38.1

**The Cost of Low Participation**

Just two states met FRAC's challenging, but attainable, goal of reaching 70 low-income students with school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch, proving there is ample opportunity for growth in many states.

Larger states have the most to gain by meeting FRAC's goal. California, Florida, and New York alone account for more than 900,000 of the 3 million low-income children nationwide who would receive breakfast at school if all states met FRAC's goal.

Because almost all states are doing a better job of reaching low-income children with breakfast, states were forgoing about \$61 million less in 2015–2016 than in the previous year. But they are still leaving \$836 million on the table. Indeed, all but the smallest states would stand to draw down more than \$1 million in additional federal funding to their state if they met FRAC's goal. California, Florida, and New York would gain \$252 million in the aggregate. States that are not maximizing school breakfast participation not only miss out on the anti-hunger, academic, and health benefits of the program for students, but also on the significant potential economic impact to local economies from the influx of additional federal resources.



### School Participation

School participation in the School Breakfast Program is an important indicator of access to the program and the first step in ensuring all children start the day with a healthy morning meal. Seven states operated school breakfast programs in 99 percent or more of schools that offered school lunch. A couple of states — Iowa and Texas — offered school breakfast in slightly more schools than offered school lunch resulting in ratios over 100. Another 33 states offered breakfast in 90 percent or more.

While many states serve breakfast in nearly all schools that offer lunch, in some states, as many as 1 in 5 schools that offer lunch does not offer breakfast to students. The two lowest-performing states in terms of schools participating in the School Breakfast Program — New Jersey and Wisconsin — offered breakfast in 80 percent and 79.9 percent, respectively, of schools operating the National School Lunch Program.

### Top 10 States for School Participation

State	Ratio of Schools Offering Breakfast to Schools Offering Lunch
Texas	100.2
Iowa	100.1
Arkansas	100.0
Kentucky	100.0
Hawaii	99.7
South Carolina	99.5
District of Columbia	99.1
West Virginia	98.9
Virginia	98.8
North Carolina	98.7

*Seven states operated school breakfast programs in 99 percent or more of schools that offered school lunch. Another 33 states offered breakfast in 90 percent or more.*

# IV. Best Practices in the 2015–2016 School Year

## Community Eligibility: More Schools are Participating, Driving School Breakfast Expansion

In the 2015–2016 school year, many states with high rates of school breakfast participation benefitted from wide expansion of the Community Eligibility Provision, which provides free meals to all students in high-poverty schools. In the 2014–2015 school year, the first year the option was available to schools nationwide, more than 14,000 schools participated. An additional 4,000 schools participated in the 2015–2016 school year, and with 2,700 more schools signed up for the program in the 2016–2017 school year, community

eligibility is expected to produce further gains in both breakfast and lunch participation.

Several states with large increases in the number of schools participating in community eligibility saw growth in school breakfast participation far above the national average, both in free and reduced-price participation and overall participation. In addition, many of the top-performing school breakfast states were also among the states with the highest proportion

### How Community Eligibility Works

Authorized by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the Community Eligibility Provision allows high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch free of charge to all students and to realize significant administrative savings by eliminating school meal applications. Any district, group of schools in a district, or school with 40 percent or more “identified students” — children eligible for free school meals who already are identified by other means than an individual household application — can choose to participate.

Identified students include:

- Children directly certified for free school meals through data matching because their households receive SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR, and in some states, Medicaid benefits.
- Children who are certified for free meals without an application because they are homeless, migrant, enrolled in Head Start, or in foster care.

Community eligibility schools are reimbursed for meals served based on a formula. Because of evidence that the ratio of all eligible children to children in these identified categories would be 1.6 to 1, Congress built that into the formula. Reimbursements to the school are calculated by multiplying the percentage of identified students by 1.6 to determine the percentage of meals reimbursed at the federal free rate. For example, a school with 50 percent identified students would be reimbursed for 80 percent of the meals eaten at the free reimbursement rate ( $50 \times 1.6 = 80$ ), and 20 percent at the paid rate.

School districts may also choose to participate districtwide or group schools however they choose if the district or group has an overall identified student percentage of 40 percent or higher.

Find out which schools in your state or community are participating or eligible for the Community Eligibility Provision with [FRAC's database](#).

of eligible schools participating in community eligibility. In fact, the four states with the highest school breakfast participation were among the top 10 for the percentage of eligible schools participating in community eligibility in the 2015–2016 school year.

When states robustly implement community eligibility by conducting comprehensive outreach to districts and schools and providing opportunities for education and technical

assistance on finances and implementation, they support strong school breakfast participation. In turn, advocates and state agencies that have been able to link community eligibility with the implementation of breakfast after the bell models, such as breakfast in the classroom, have been especially successful in growing both community eligibility and school breakfast participation.

To learn more about community eligibility implementation in your state, check out FRAC

**Growth in Community Eligibility Drives Both Overall Participation and Free and Reduced-Price Participation in School Breakfast in School Year 2015–2016**

State	Number of Participating Schools	Number of Eligible Schools	Percent Eligible Schools Participating	Additional Participating Schools Compared to SY 2014–2015	Ratio of Free & Reduced-Price Student Participation in Breakfast per 100 Participating in Lunch	Rank	Additional Free & Reduced-Price Students	Percent Increase in Free & Reduced-Price Students	Total Additional Students	Percent Increase in Total Students
West Virginia	428	495	86%	59	83.9	1	4,937	4.6%	4,415	3.0%
New Mexico	429	576	74%	86	72.9	2	8,357	6.6%	6,941	4.7%
District of Columbia	155	178	87%	30	67.4	3	1,636	5.4%	1,237	3.6%
Tennessee	924	1,204	77%	62	64.5	4	13,604	4.2%	18,193	4.9%
Kentucky	804	998	81%	193	64.2	6	26,052	10.7%	20,756	7.5%
Delaware	107	132	81%	11	61.5	11	2,177	5.6%	3,330	7.1%
Alaska	137	180	76%	14	54.9	28	994	4.8%	951	3.9%
Montana	127	155	82%	34	53.0	32	2,276	9.5%	3,209	10.5%
Connecticut	212	280	76%	79	51.4	33	7,995	10.1%	10,081	10.8%
North Dakota	24	24	100%	1	49.1	41	1,015	6.8%	1,193	4.9%

\*Sources: Table 1 of this report; FRAC's [School Breakfast Scorecard 2014–2015 School Year](#); and [Community Eligibility Adoption Rises for the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals](#).

and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' report [\*Community Eligibility Adoption Rises for the 2015–2016 School Year, Increasing Access to School Meals\*](#).

## State Legislation Fuels — and Maintains — Progress in School Breakfast Participation

In the 2015–2016 school year, state legislation to expand the use of breakfast after the bell strategies helped top-performing states to maintain high participation — and produced large gains in states where legislation was recently enacted. State and local advocacy to pass laws requiring all or some schools to offer breakfast after the bell can have a profound impact on increasing access to school breakfast for low-income students. Currently four states — Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and West Virginia — and the District of Columbia have implemented such requirements. Illinois also recently passed state breakfast after the bell legislation that will go into effect in the 2017–2018 school year.

### Nevada Implements Breakfast After the Bell Legislation

In 2015, Nevada passed legislation requiring all schools with 70 percent or more free and reduced-price eligible students to serve breakfast after the start of the school day. The impact of the new law was immediate. In the first year of implementation, the 2015–2016 school year, participation among low-income children in the state increased by 26.5 percent, or 21,000

children. Boosted by the largest percent increase by far of any state in this year's report, Nevada moved up to 25th in this year's rankings from 41st in last year's report.

In addition to requiring schools to implement innovative service models, such as serving breakfast in the classroom or using “grab and go” carts, the Breakfast After the Bell bill provided \$2 million in grant funding to help offset any startup costs for Nevada schools. The bill was the primary focus of the state's Food Security Council, created by the governor, and was championed by first lady Kathleen Sandoval and the Three Squares Food Bank. Packaged along with other education reform bills passed during the 2015 legislative session, the Breakfast After the Bell bill passed by a sizeable margin, as a support for struggling schools in the state.

For the 2015–2016 school year, 200 Nevada schools fell under the mandate statewide. Of those schools, about half were already offering breakfast after the bell programs. As a result of the legislation, another 111 schools implemented a breakfast after the bell program in the 2015–2016 school year. Seventy-four of these schools were in the Clark County School District, which encompasses Las Vegas, the state's largest city and the 5th largest school district in the nation. In the 2016–2017 school year, about 35 additional schools became eligible for the program, increasing Nevada's projections for participation this year.

For more information on state legislation and policy that supports school breakfast participation, check out [\*FRAC's School Meals Legislation and Funding Chart\*](#).

## V. Conclusion

---

More low-income children than ever started the school day with a healthy breakfast in the 2015–2016 school year, providing much-needed support for struggling families across the country. The results of this year’s report demonstrate that best practice strategies — to serve breakfast after the bell and offer free breakfast to all children in high-poverty schools — are working as they continue to expand into more schools across the country.

With many states making impressive gains and implementing legislation and policies that increase access to school breakfast for low-income children, there is much progress to look forward to in the 2016–2017 school year and beyond.

---

Closing the gap in school breakfast participation going forward necessitates continued collaboration among the U.S. Department of Agriculture, state child nutrition agencies, advocates, education stakeholders, and schools to continue to expand these proven strategies so that children can start each day nourished and ready to learn.

*The results of this year’s report  
demonstrate that best practice strategies — to serve  
breakfast after the bell and offer free breakfast to all  
children in high-poverty schools — are working  
as they continue to expand into more schools  
across the country.*

# Technical Notes

---

The data in this report are collected from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and an annual survey of state child nutrition officials conducted by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC). This report does not include students or schools that participate in school meal programs in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Department of Defense schools. Due to rounding, totals in the tables may not add up to 100 percent.

Student participation data for the 2015–2016 school year and prior years are based on daily averages of the number of breakfasts and lunches served during the nine months from September through May of each year, as provided by USDA. States report to USDA the number of meals they serve each month. These numbers may undergo later revisions by states as accounting procedures find errors or other estimates become confirmed.

For consistency, all USDA data used in this report are from the states' 90-day revisions of the monthly reports. The 90-day revisions are the final required reports from the states, but states have the option to change numbers at any time after that point.

FRAC applies a formula (divide by 0.938 for 2015–2016 and 2014–2015) to adjust numbers upwards as an attendance factor to account for children who were absent from school on a particular day.

The number of participating schools is reported by states to USDA in October of the relevant school year. The number

includes not only public schools but also private schools, residential child care institutions, and other institutions that operate school meal programs. FRAC's *School Breakfast Scorecard* uses the October number, which is verified by FRAC with state officials, and FRAC provides an opportunity for state officials to update or correct the school numbers.

For each state, FRAC calculates the average daily number of children receiving free or reduced-price breakfasts for every 100 children who were receiving free or reduced-price lunches during the same school year. Based on the top states' performance, FRAC has set an attainable benchmark of every state reaching a ratio of 70 children receiving free or reduced-price breakfast for every 100 receiving free or reduced-price lunch. FRAC then calculates the number of additional children who would be reached if each state reached this 70 to 100 ratio. FRAC multiplies this unserved population by the reimbursement rate for breakfast for each state's average number of school days of breakfast during the 2015–2016 school year. FRAC assumes each state's mix of free and reduced-price students would apply to any new participants, and conservatively assumes that no additional student's meal is reimbursed at the somewhat higher rate that severe need schools receive for breakfast. Severe need schools are those where more than 40 percent of lunches served in the second preceding school year were free or reduced-price.

Table 1

# Low-Income Student Participation in School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast (SBP) School Years 2014–2015 and 2015–2016

State	School Year 2014–2015				School Year 2015–2016				Change in Ratio of SBP to NSLP Participation	Percent Change in Number of F&RP Students in SBP
	Free & Reduced-Price (F&RP) SBP Students	F&RP NSLP Students	F&RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP	Rank	Free & Reduced-Price (F&RP) SBP Students	F&RP NSLP Students	F&RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP	Rank		
Alabama	219,735	396,684	55.4	22	229,658	396,936	57.9	21	2.5	4.5%
Alaska	20,684	39,968	51.8	29	21,678	39,519	54.9	28	3.1	4.8%
Arizona	260,098	499,312	52.1	28	267,331	496,205	53.9	29	1.8	2.8%
Arkansas	150,887	244,281	61.8	7	155,102	244,295	63.5	7	1.7	2.8%
California	1,442,886	2,648,028	54.5	24	1,457,976	2,620,828	55.6	27	1.1	1.0%
Colorado	144,932	244,534	59.3	11	147,469	245,238	60.1	12	0.9	1.8%
Connecticut	79,410	166,050	47.8	37	87,405	170,023	51.4	33	3.6	10.1%
Delaware	38,861	65,883	59.0	12	41,038	66,712	61.5	11	2.5	5.6%
District of Columbia	30,320	45,553	66.6	3	31,956	47,396	67.4	3	0.9	5.4%
Florida	678,109	1,369,679	49.5	33	713,159	1,412,090	50.5	37	1.0	5.2%
Georgia	536,600	937,840	57.2	18	552,290	937,730	58.9	16	1.7	2.9%
Hawaii	29,638	68,379	43.3	46	28,733	66,811	43.0	47	-0.3	-3.1%
Idaho	58,674	102,440	57.3	17	60,406	101,748	59.4	13	2.1	3.0%
Illinois	391,350	850,922	46.0	42	397,513	834,033	47.7	43	1.7	1.6%
Indiana	223,614	457,840	48.8	34	230,666	454,579	50.7	36	1.9	3.2%
Iowa	76,959	182,874	42.1	47	80,783	183,782	44.0	46	1.9	5.0%
Kansas	97,102	202,750	47.9	36	98,672	199,981	49.3	40	1.4	1.6%
Kentucky	242,449	389,919	62.2	6	268,501	418,362	64.2	6	2.0	10.7%
Louisiana	235,403	412,217	57.1	19	244,944	424,196	57.7	22	0.6	4.1%
Maine	35,881	62,473	57.4	16	37,205	62,780	59.3	15	1.8	3.7%
Maryland	194,577	303,112	64.2	4	204,388	318,138	64.2	5	0.1	5.0%
Massachusetts	145,451	316,583	45.9	43	167,206	338,138	49.4	39	3.5	15.0%
Michigan	334,677	591,459	56.6	20	335,506	577,101	58.1	20	1.6	0.2%
Minnesota	147,200	287,113	51.3	30	154,415	290,611	53.1	31	1.9	4.9%
Mississippi	187,674	320,622	58.5	13	188,976	321,730	58.7	17	0.2	0.7%
Missouri	223,000	386,816	57.7	15	228,397	385,156	59.3	14	1.6	2.4%
Montana	23,885	47,790	50.0	32	26,161	49,357	53.0	32	3.0	9.5%
Nebraska	49,642	121,592	40.8	49	52,914	123,113	43.0	48	2.2	6.6%
Nevada	81,569	175,683	46.4	41	103,197	184,083	56.1	25	9.6	26.5%
New Hampshire	15,615	40,367	38.7	50	15,977	39,069	40.9	50	2.2	2.3%
New Jersey	252,420	456,121	55.3	23	267,756	456,695	58.6	19	3.3	6.1%
New Mexico	126,283	178,975	70.6	2	134,640	184,771	72.9	2	2.3	6.6%
New York	575,455	1,234,112	46.6	39	615,689	1,256,466	49.0	42	2.4	7.0%
North Carolina	388,168	693,450	56.0	21	398,591	694,359	57.4	23	1.4	2.7%
North Dakota	14,976	31,672	47.3	38	15,991	32,538	49.1	41	1.9	6.8%
Ohio	370,094	689,655	53.7	25	374,043	671,836	55.7	26	2.0	1.1%
Oklahoma	183,701	314,243	58.5	14	191,994	326,981	58.7	18	0.3	4.5%
Oregon	118,752	222,004	53.5	26	121,386	227,160	53.4	30	-0.1	2.2%
Pennsylvania	298,565	642,529	46.5	40	326,395	659,969	49.5	38	3.0	9.3%
Rhode Island	26,811	53,064	50.5	31	27,829	54,262	51.3	34	0.8	3.8%
South Carolina	225,008	365,558	61.6	9	231,343	371,443	62.3	10	0.7	2.8%
South Dakota	23,063	52,152	44.2	44	24,286	52,663	46.1	44	1.9	5.3%
Tennessee	326,765	530,735	61.6	8	340,369	527,726	64.5	4	2.9	4.2%
Texas	1,596,202	2,556,356	62.4	5	1,619,173	2,564,138	63.1	8	0.7	1.4%
Utah	60,605	174,160	34.8	51	65,246	171,095	38.1	51	3.3	7.7%
Vermont	17,157	28,068	61.1	10	17,331	27,642	62.7	9	1.6	1.0%
Virginia	228,562	435,572	52.5	27	248,045	441,165	56.2	24	3.8	8.5%
Washington	163,257	371,831	43.9	45	163,362	362,299	45.1	45	1.2	0.1%
West Virginia	106,787	129,817	82.3	1	111,724	133,241	83.9	1	1.6	4.6%
Wisconsin	144,908	300,502	48.2	35	153,208	300,006	51.1	35	2.8	5.7%
Wyoming	10,672	26,019	41.0	48	11,264	26,353	42.7	49	1.7	5.5%
TOTAL	11,655,094	21,465,354	54.3		12,089,284	21,592,546	56.0		1.7	3.7%

**Table 2**  
**School Participation in School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast (SBP)**  
**School Years 2014–2015 and 2015–2016**

State	School Year 2014–2015				School Year 2015–2016				Percent Change in Number of SBP Schools
	SBP Schools	NSLP Schools	SBP Schools as Percent of NSLP Schools	Rank	SBP Schools	NSLP Schools	SBP Schools as Percent of NSLP Schools	Rank	
Alabama	1,436	1,483	96.8	15	1,439	1,473	97.7	15	0.2%
Alaska	368	434	84.8	45	382	437	87.4	40	3.8%
Arizona	1,650	1,775	93.0	29	1,686	1,792	94.1	26	2.2%
Arkansas	1,071	1,072	99.9	1	1,054	1,054	100.0	3	-1.6%
California	8,829	10,101	87.4	37	8,987	9,998	89.9	36	1.8%
Colorado	1,401	1,673	83.7	46	1,441	1,724	83.6	45	2.9%
Connecticut	866	1,075	80.6	47	871	1,065	81.8	49	0.6%
Delaware	252	257	98.1	11	259	263	98.5	11	2.8%
District of Columbia	226	229	98.7	7	230	232	99.1	7	1.8%
Florida	3,747	3,823	98.0	12	3,729	3,810	97.9	14	-0.5%
Georgia	2,341	2,416	96.9	14	2,316	2,384	97.1	19	-1.1%
Hawaii	287	290	99.0	5	294	295	99.7	5	2.4%
Idaho	655	691	94.8	23	657	688	95.5	23	0.3%
Illinois	3,400	4,225	80.5	48	3,395	4,129	82.2	48	-0.1%
Indiana	1,894	2,110	89.8	33	1,930	2,127	90.7	34	1.9%
Iowa	1,346	1,455	92.5	31	1,375	1,374	100.1	2	2.2%
Kansas	1,433	1,510	94.9	22	1,440	1,534	93.9	27	0.5%
Kentucky	1,298	1,365	95.1	17	1,391	1,391	100.0	3	7.2%
Louisiana	1,563	1,644	95.1	18	1,590	1,648	96.5	20	1.7%
Maine	609	641	95.0	20	589	614	95.9	21	-3.3%
Maryland	1,487	1,512	98.3	9	1,482	1,505	98.5	12	-0.3%
Massachusetts	1,752	2,190	80.0	49	1,804	2,189	82.4	47	3.0%
Michigan	3,031	3,501	86.6	41	3,041	3,372	90.2	35	0.3%
Minnesota	1,727	2,021	85.5	44	1,837	2,114	86.9	43	6.4%
Mississippi	858	912	94.1	25	862	914	94.3	25	0.5%
Missouri	2,306	2,492	92.5	30	2,306	2,488	92.7	31	0.0%
Montana	714	821	87.0	40	728	822	88.6	39	2.0%
Nebraska	836	960	87.1	39	788	944	83.5	46	-5.7%
Nevada	567	606	93.6	27	582	608	95.7	22	2.6%
New Hampshire	410	456	89.9	32	403	441	91.4	32	-1.7%
New Jersey	2,077	2,659	78.1	50	2,104	2,629	80.0	50	1.3%
New Mexico	833	883	94.3	24	832	894	93.1	29	-0.1%
New York	5,858	6,248	93.8	26	5,714	6,131	93.2	28	-2.5%
North Carolina	2,476	2,517	98.4	8	2,495	2,528	98.7	10	0.8%
North Dakota	361	410	88.0	35	363	407	89.2	37	0.6%
Ohio	3,203	3,741	85.6	42	3,197	3,670	87.1	41	-0.2%
Oklahoma	1,793	1,844	97.2	13	1,828	1,874	97.5	17	2.0%
Oregon	1,267	1,335	94.9	21	1,284	1,353	94.9	24	1.3%
Pennsylvania	3,116	3,518	88.6	34	3,213	3,690	87.1	42	3.1%
Rhode Island	362	377	96.0	16	349	358	97.5	18	-3.6%
South Carolina	1,207	1,211	99.7	3	1,183	1,189	99.5	6	-2.0%
South Dakota	808	944	85.6	43	703	820	85.7	44	-13.0%
Tennessee	1,752	1,784	98.2	10	1,770	1,800	98.3	13	1.0%
Texas	8,245	8,265	99.8	2	8,457	8,443	100.2	1	2.6%
Utah	818	939	87.1	38	848	957	88.6	38	3.7%
Vermont	325	342	95.0	19	329	337	97.6	16	1.2%
Virginia	2,003	2,010	99.7	4	1,885	1,907	98.8	9	-5.9%
Washington	1,970	2,110	93.4	28	1,958	2,105	93.0	30	-0.6%
West Virginia	743	751	98.9	6	712	720	98.9	8	-4.2%
Wisconsin	1,918	2,470	77.7	51	1,955	2,447	79.9	51	1.9%
Wyoming	276	315	87.6	36	288	316	91.1	33	4.3%
TOTAL	89,771	98,413	91.2		90,355	98,004	92.2		0.7%

**Table 3**  
**Average Daily Student Participation in School Breakfast Program (SBP) School Year 2015–2016**

State	Free (F) SBP Students		Reduced-Price (RP) SBP Students		Total F&RP SBP Students		Paid SBP Students		Total SBP Students
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Alabama	219,036	83.3%	10,623	4.0%	229,658	87.3%	33,428	12.7%	263,086
Alaska	20,548	80.7%	1,130	4.4%	21,678	85.1%	3,785	14.9%	25,463
Arizona	246,929	79.2%	20,403	6.5%	267,331	85.7%	44,469	14.3%	311,801
Arkansas	139,902	77.1%	15,200	8.4%	155,102	85.5%	26,345	14.5%	181,447
California	1,286,154	75.8%	171,823	10.1%	1,457,976	85.9%	239,642	14.1%	1,697,618
Colorado	128,713	69.6%	18,757	10.1%	147,469	79.7%	37,576	20.3%	185,045
Connecticut	83,285	80.2%	4,120	4.0%	87,405	84.2%	16,385	15.8%	103,790
Delaware	39,806	78.8%	1,232	2.4%	41,038	81.3%	9,464	18.7%	50,501
District of Columbia	31,460	89.1%	497	1.4%	31,956	90.5%	3,364	9.5%	35,321
Florida	679,775	83.0%	33,384	4.1%	713,159	87.0%	106,261	13.0%	819,419
Georgia	518,668	81.3%	33,622	5.3%	552,290	86.6%	85,500	13.4%	637,790
Hawaii	25,432	70.4%	3,301	9.1%	28,733	79.6%	7,370	20.4%	36,103
Idaho	53,421	67.3%	6,985	8.8%	60,406	76.1%	18,977	23.9%	79,383
Illinois	386,400	90.9%	11,113	2.6%	397,513	93.5%	27,786	6.5%	425,298
Indiana	212,643	76.9%	18,023	6.5%	230,666	83.4%	45,918	16.6%	276,584
Iowa	74,153	72.6%	6,630	6.5%	80,783	79.1%	21,305	20.9%	102,088
Kansas	87,454	74.5%	11,219	9.6%	98,672	84.1%	18,692	15.9%	117,364
Kentucky	263,558	88.3%	4,943	1.7%	268,501	89.9%	30,075	10.1%	298,575
Louisiana	235,862	87.0%	9,082	3.3%	244,944	90.3%	26,194	9.7%	271,138
Maine	33,229	67.3%	3,975	8.1%	37,205	75.4%	12,165	24.6%	49,370
Maryland	185,559	67.6%	18,829	6.9%	204,388	74.4%	70,250	25.6%	274,638
Massachusetts	161,372	85.7%	5,834	3.1%	167,206	88.8%	21,185	11.2%	188,391
Michigan	313,761	78.7%	21,745	5.5%	335,506	84.2%	63,032	15.8%	398,538
Minnesota	132,078	59.8%	22,337	10.1%	154,415	69.9%	66,337	30.1%	220,752
Mississippi	180,702	89.1%	8,274	4.1%	188,976	93.2%	13,795	6.8%	202,771
Missouri	208,314	73.2%	20,083	7.1%	228,397	80.2%	56,266	19.8%	284,663
Montana	24,171	71.4%	1,990	5.9%	26,161	77.2%	7,705	22.8%	33,866
Nebraska	44,874	60.4%	8,040	10.8%	52,914	71.2%	21,420	28.8%	74,333
Nevada	92,700	79.2%	10,497	9.0%	103,197	88.2%	13,825	11.8%	117,021
New Hampshire	14,509	68.2%	1,467	6.9%	15,977	75.1%	5,295	24.9%	21,271
New Jersey	250,472	78.9%	17,284	5.4%	267,756	84.3%	49,845	15.7%	317,601
New Mexico	129,590	84.0%	5,050	3.3%	134,640	87.3%	19,614	12.7%	154,254
New York	583,363	82.3%	32,327	4.6%	615,689	86.9%	93,029	13.1%	708,718
North Carolina	375,476	81.6%	23,115	5.0%	398,591	86.6%	61,689	13.4%	460,280
North Dakota	13,753	53.4%	2,238	8.7%	15,991	62.1%	9,746	37.9%	25,737
Ohio	353,916	80.3%	20,128	4.6%	374,043	84.9%	66,669	15.1%	440,712
Oklahoma	174,765	76.1%	17,229	7.5%	191,994	83.6%	37,650	16.4%	229,643
Oregon	112,489	77.9%	8,897	6.2%	121,386	84.1%	22,954	15.9%	144,340
Pennsylvania	315,073	83.5%	11,322	3.0%	326,395	86.5%	50,727	13.5%	377,123
Rhode Island	25,733	76.5%	2,096	6.2%	27,829	82.7%	5,822	17.3%	33,651
South Carolina	220,756	83.2%	10,587	4.0%	231,343	87.2%	34,013	12.8%	265,357
South Dakota	22,293	74.9%	1,992	6.7%	24,286	81.6%	5,490	18.4%	29,776
Tennessee	328,206	84.2%	12,163	3.1%	340,369	87.3%	49,299	12.7%	389,668
Texas	1,517,473	79.6%	101,700	5.3%	1,619,173	84.9%	287,339	15.1%	1,906,513
Utah	56,781	68.5%	8,465	10.2%	65,246	78.7%	17,683	21.3%	82,929
Vermont	15,268	66.6%	2,063	9.0%	17,331	75.6%	5,599	24.4%	22,930
Virginia	223,774	73.6%	24,271	8.0%	248,045	81.6%	55,993	18.4%	304,039
Washington	144,436	76.4%	18,926	10.0%	163,362	86.4%	25,782	13.6%	189,143
West Virginia	107,816	70.7%	3,908	2.6%	111,724	73.3%	40,748	26.7%	152,472
Wisconsin	143,275	75.7%	9,933	5.2%	153,208	81.0%	36,032	19.0%	189,240
Wyoming	9,349	61.9%	1,915	12.7%	11,264	74.5%	3,849	25.5%	15,113
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,248,521</b>	<b>79.1%</b>	<b>840,763</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>12,089,284</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>2,133,380</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>14,222,663</b>

EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017,  
12:01 A.M., EASTERN

**Table 4****Additional Participation and Funding if 70 Low-Income Students Were Served School Breakfast (SBP) per 100 Served School Lunch (NSLP) School Year 2015–2016**

State	Actual Total Free & Reduced-Price (F&RP) SBP Students	F&RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP	Total F&RP Students if 70 SBP per 100 NSLP	Additional F&RP Students if 70 SBP per 100 NSLP	Additional Annual Funding if 70 SBP per 100 NSLP F&RP Students
Alabama	229,658	57.9	277,855	48,197	\$12,967,476
Alaska	21,678	54.9	27,663	5,985	\$1,690,924
Arizona	267,331	53.9	347,343	80,012	\$21,097,672
Arkansas	155,102	63.5	171,007	15,905	\$4,352,432
California	1,457,976	55.6	1,834,579	376,603	\$101,100,512
Colorado	147,469	60.1	171,666	24,197	\$6,500,100
Connecticut	87,405	51.4	119,016	31,612	\$9,053,926
Delaware	41,038	61.5	46,698	5,660	\$1,540,715
District of Columbia	31,956	67.4	33,177	1,221	\$340,775
Florida	713,159	50.5	988,463	275,304	\$78,114,656
Georgia	552,290	58.9	656,411	104,121	\$27,518,128
Hawaii	28,733	43.0	46,768	18,035	\$4,635,769
Idaho	60,406	59.4	71,224	10,818	\$2,845,893
Illinois	397,513	47.7	583,823	186,310	\$53,262,696
Indiana	230,666	50.7	318,205	87,539	\$23,227,676
Iowa	80,783	44.0	128,647	47,864	\$13,605,420
Kansas	98,672	49.3	139,987	41,314	\$10,681,194
Kentucky	268,501	64.2	292,853	24,353	\$6,293,704
Louisiana	244,944	57.7	296,937	51,993	\$13,568,776
Maine	37,205	59.3	43,946	6,741	\$1,798,309
Maryland	204,388	64.2	22,696	18,309	\$4,857,040
Massachusetts	167,206	49.4	236,697	69,491	\$19,020,304
Michigan	335,506	58.1	403,970	68,465	\$18,283,016
Minnesota	154,415	53.1	203,427	49,013	\$13,329,824
Mississippi	188,976	58.7	225,211	36,236	\$9,728,820
Missouri	228,397	59.3	269,609	41,212	\$10,949,788
Montana	26,161	53.0	34,550	8,389	\$2,486,212
Nebraska	52,914	43.0	86,179	33,265	\$8,751,816
Nevada	103,197	56.1	128,858	25,662	\$7,156,780
New Hampshire	15,977	40.9	27,349	11,372	\$3,135,544
New Jersey	267,756	58.6	319,686	51,931	\$14,289,616
New Mexico	134,640	72.9	129,340	0	\$0
New York	615,689	49.0	879,526	263,837	\$72,614,800
North Carolina	398,591	57.4	486,051	87,460	\$24,139,976
North Dakota	15,991	49.1	22,777	6,786	\$1,906,493
Ohio	374,043	55.7	470,285	96,242	\$26,757,624
Oklahoma	191,994	58.7	228,887	36,893	\$9,473,568
Oregon	121,386	53.4	159,012	37,626	\$9,939,506
Pennsylvania	326,395	49.5	461,978	135,583	\$38,587,816
Rhode Island	27,829	51.3	37,983	10,155	\$2,881,345
South Carolina	231,343	62.3	260,010	28,666	\$7,960,116
South Dakota	24,286	46.1	36,864	12,579	\$3,604,301
Tennessee	340,369	64.5	369,409	29,039	\$7,574,376
Texas	1,619,173	63.1	1,794,897	175,724	\$49,979,712
Utah	65,246	38.1	119,766	54,520	\$14,941,904
Vermont	17,331	62.7	19,349	2,018	\$543,579
Virginia	248,045	56.2	308,815	60,770	\$16,051,968
Washington	163,362	45.1	253,609	90,248	\$24,654,672
West Virginia	111,724	83.9	93,269	0	\$0
Wisconsin	153,208	51.1	210,004	56,797	\$15,944,036
Wyoming	11,264	42.7	18,447	7,184	\$1,994,395
TOTAL	12,089,284	56.0	15,114,782	3,049,254	\$835,735,680

EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017,  
12:01 A.M., EASTERN



Food Research & Action Center  
1200 18th Street, NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20036

202.986.2200  
[www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

Copyright © 2017 Food Research & Action Center



[@fractweets](https://twitter.com/fractweets)



[@fracgram](https://www.instagram.com/fracgram)



[facebook.com/  
foodresearchandactioncenter](https://facebook.com/foodresearchandactioncenter)



[linkedin.com/company/  
food-research-and-action-center](https://linkedin.com/company/food-research-and-action-center)