

Five Ways Governors can Support Summer EBT

As a nation, we have the opportunity to dramatically reduce childhood hunger during the summer months, which are the hungriest time of year for students who miss the meals offered during the school year. A new, permanent program, Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), was authorized on a bipartisan basis by Congress to address summer hunger among children beginning in the summer of 2024. The following checklist may be helpful for Governors to keep their planning and program development efforts on track for successful Summer EBT implementation.

1. **Set Summer EBT as a Priority**

Summer EBT provides a unique opportunity to fill the Summer meal gap for over 29 million children across the country. Governors can lift up feeding kids as a priority by highlighting Summer EBT in their state of the state and budget addresses.

2. **Secure Administrative Funding**

States are required by statute to provide fifty percent of the administrative costs of administering Summer EBT (the food benefits are 100 percent federal funds). Governors can help identify and secure the sources of funding needed to meet this requirement.

3. **Promote Cross-Agency Collaboration**

Providing eligible children a \$40/month benefit on an EBT card during the summer requires collaboration from different agencies including those responsible for school nutrition, EBT, and technology applications. To assist with collaboration, each state must designate a coordinating state agency to work with USDA on behalf of the state. Governors can promote sharing of ideas, resources, and strategies across agencies by convening a cross-agency Summer EBT committee led by the Governor's Office or by the coordinating state agency.

4. **Develop a Legislative Agenda**

New operational authorities and associated budgets may be needed to implement the new Summer EBT program. Governors can champion a legislative agenda that includes considerations such as: authority to collect and share student-level free and reduced-price eligibility data at the state level, and state general fund appropriations to support the state's fifty percent share of administrative costs.

5. **Educate Constituents**

Being a new program, state agencies will need to conduct extensive outreach efforts to ensure families are aware of Summer EBT. Governors can get the word out by leveraging their communication platforms to help educate constituents about the program.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) can provide additional information, technical assistance, and planning support for each of these checklist items. You may contact your [FNS Regional Office](#) for additional assistance.