

Data Collection: Child Nutrition Area Eligibility

Action Required for Data Collection

In accordance with federal statutes, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to gather enrollment data, representative of the last operating day in October, documenting the number of children eligible for free, reduced-price and paid meals. For the purposes of this report, Enrollment means children enrolled in a Local Education Agency (LEA) with access to meals in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This must be submitted by **December 30, 2026**.

Instructions

On the October claim for reimbursement, LEAs with sites operating the NSLP must submit their October enrollment in Washington Integrated Nutrition System (WINS) no later than **December 30**. Data is reported by site (or school).

Key Dates

- **Collection opens:** October 1, 2026
- **Submission deadline:** December 30, 2026

How OSPI Uses the Data

The data is published as the Area Eligibility Report and is available to the public annually, in February. The Area Eligibility Report is used to establish the following: eligibility for participation in other Child Nutrition Programs, access to needs-based Child Nutrition Program grants, and implementation of state laws that require schools to serve meals to students during the school year and in the summer months.

Other Child Nutrition Programs:

The Area Eligibility Report is used to determine whether schools and sites qualify to participate in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Afterschool Snack Program, summer nutrition programs, and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk programs, such as the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program.

Needs-Based Grants:

OSPI Child Nutrition Services uses the data to establish eligibility criteria for federal and state grant programs, including the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant and the Breakfast Meals for Kids Grant.

State Laws:

The Area Eligibility Report is used in implementation of Washington state laws designed to ensure students have access to healthy meals at school:

- RCW 28A.235.160 establishes requirements for participation in School Lunch, Breakfast and Summer Programs
- RCW 2A.235.21 establishes requirements for participation in Breakfast After the Bell programs
- RCW 28A.235 and RCW 28A.235.300 establishes requirements for programs that provide meals at no cost to students

Community-based organizations and childcare centers use the Area Eligibility Report to identify attendance area sites that may operate summer meal and At-Risk meal programs.

Other agencies or organizations may also use the Area Eligibility Report to establish eligibility criteria for community-based assistance programs that serve low-income communities and children.

Additional Information

Area Eligibility may be used to support participating in a federal Child Nutrition Program for 5 years or it may be updated annually.

Resources

- For data and information about Child Nutrition Area Eligibility, please see drop-down:
 - [Area Eligibility Data/Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Meals](#)
- More about OSPI Data Collections:
 - [Data Collections at OSPI](#)

Contacts

- Child Nutrition Services: child.nutrition@k12.wa.us