

ERS Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: Cost of School Meals and Households' Difficulty Paying for Expenses: Evidence from the Household Pulse Survey

Type of Report (ERR, EIB, EB) EB

Agency: Economic Research Service [X] Influential Scientific Information
USDA [] Highly Influential Scientific Assessment

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Subject of Review: This economic brief focuses on whether charging children for school meals makes it difficult for households to pay for their other expenses using recently released data from the Household Pulse Survey on the experiences of households with children ages 5-17 to provide descriptive statistics. Typically, children can get school meals for free, at a reduced-price, or at full price depending on their household's income. During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a waiver that allowed schools to provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of their household's income, in the 2020- 7 2021 and 2021-2022 school years. These waivers expired on September 30, 2022, however, and many schools reverted to charging children for meals in the 2022-2023 school year. In response, some advocates and policymakers expressed concern that charging for school meals places a financial burden on families as they continue to struggle with the pandemic and its economic consequences.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: [] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers
[] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 2/15/2023 Completed: 04/12/2023

Number of Reviewers: [X] 3 or fewer [] 4 to 10 [] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency [] Designated Outside Organization

Opportunities for Public Comment? [] Yes [X] No
If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:
How:
When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments? [] Yes [X] No
Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel? [] Yes [X] No