

## [Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: FY 2022 Annual Report Webinar - YouTube](#)

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar: *The Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report*. My name is Liz Hills, and I will be your host today. On behalf of USDA's Economic Research Service welcome and thank you for joining us. Before we begin, I'd like to remind you that this webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the ERS website next week. If you have any questions, please enter them into the chat feature at the bottom left-hand corner of the screen and our economists will answer them during the Q&A session after the presentation. Our presenter today is Saied Toossi, one of the co-authors of the report. Saied is a Research Economist with the Food Assistance Branch of the Food Economics Division. His research examines the determinants of participation in child nutrition programs and their impact on children's well-being. Saied's recent work involves evaluating the effect of universal free school meals on children's food security, examining the relationship between the cost of school meals to households, and households' financial well-being, and assessing the recent impact of summer meal programs.

Thanks for joining us, Saied, and thank you to fellow ERS Economists, Jordan Jones and Leslie Hodges, who will be joining us as panelists for the Q&A portion of today's webinar. With that, I'll hand over the presentation to Saied. And, Saied, the floor is yours.

Thanks for this introduction, Liz. Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for tuning in today. I will be presenting an overview of the fiscal year 2022 edition of the *Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape* report series, which was released this morning. Here's an outline of what we'll be going over today. First, I'll provide a bit of information about the report itself and some brief highlights. Then, I'll provide an overview of USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs and talk about total program spending and the makeup of that spending. After that, I'll discuss the sections of the report focusing on the individual nutrition assistance program. In each section, I'll provide an overview of the program itself, how it's changed during the pandemic with the focus on changes in fiscal year 2022, and information about program trends and other relevant information. Then we'll conclude the presentation.

The *Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape* report series provides information on USDA's domestic food and nutrition assistance programs focusing on developments in the most recent fiscal year. There are overview sections for each of the largest of these programs which include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC, and the major Child Nutrition program. All of these programs covered in this year's report are administered by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. The report provides information about historical trends and program participation and spending and how the most recent years developments relate to these trends. It also discusses policy developments affecting how programs operate and how these changes are reflected in participation in spending. U.S. fiscal years run from October through September. So, fiscal year 2022 includes the period from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, through September 30th, 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic began in the United States midway through fiscal year 2020 and affected public health and the economy. The pandemic's impact of the normal operation of schools, businesses, and various facilities involved in the provision of food and nutrition assistance through USDA's programs. In response to these challenges, the federal government passed legislation and otherwise authorized changes altering how the programs covered in this

year's report, operating throughout fiscal years 2020, 2021, 2022. This includes the operation of an additional temporary program, the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program, or P-EBT.

Here's some highlights from the report before we get into some of the finer points. Total spending on USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs was 183 billion dollars in fiscal year 2022. This was six percent lower than the inflation-adjusted high of about 195 billion in fiscal year 2021. This decrease was primarily driven by lower spending on the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program. SNAP spending total 119.5 billion dollars in 2022 and P-EBT benefits were reported to total about 18 billion dollars. Additionally, the total number of meals served through the major Child Nutrition programs amounted to 9.4 billion, about the same as in pre-pandemic years.

So, here I'm showing you total program spending for each fiscal year from 1970 to 2022 for some historical content. Spending shown here is adjusted for inflation in past years which allows us to make easier comparisons to the present. Spending on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is broken out from all other programs and, as you can see- so you can see how much SNAP spending contributes to total spending, both historically and in the present. In most years SNAP accounts for about two-thirds of total program spending with all other programs accounting for the other third. You can see a clear upward spike in total program spending during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. This was due to both increased usage of nutrition assistance during the economic downturn, as well as expansions and changes in how assistance was provided in response to the various challenges and needs related to the pandemic. Spending declined slightly in fiscal year 2022 but remained high at 183 billion dollars. This was 38 percent higher than the inflation-adjusted pre-pandemic high of about 132 billion dollars set in fiscal year 2013, which was the peak of program spending following the Great Recession.

Here, I'm showing you a more detailed breakdown of USDA spending on food and nutrition assistance in 2022. SNAP made up the largest share at about 65 percent of spending. Combined spending on the four largest child nutrition programs made up the second largest share at 19.4 percent. And that was followed closely by P-EBT at around 10 percent. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children accounted for about three percent of spending and all other programs combined accounted for the remaining 2.4 percent. The share attributable to SNAP was about the same as in fiscal year 2019, before the pandemic. However, the shares attributable to WIC and the child nutrition programs for smaller and fiscal year 2022 than they were before the pandemic. But this was not because spending on these programs fell. Rather total spending itself grew so much, especially with the added expense of P-EBT, that the overall shares of these programs were reduced.

Now, I'll talk about developments with a special- with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program specifically. SNAP is the largest individual program of all of USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs. It is an entitlement program available to all households meeting its eligibility requirements which are based on gross income, net income, assets, and certain work and immigration status criteria. Participating households receive monthly benefits that can be used to purchase groceries and authorized retailers via an electronic benefit transfer card, or EBT. Benefits increase with household size and decrease with household net income. Benefits cannot be spent on tobacco, alcohol, or items other than food. Additionally, benefits may not be spent on hot or prepared foods except under special circumstances. Beginning in fiscal year 2020 and continuing through fiscal year 2022, the program changed in several ways. First, the

maximum SNAP benefit was temporarily increased by 15 percent from January to September 2020. After this increase expired, the maximum baseline SNAP benefit was increased by roughly 21 percent beginning in fiscal year 2022, due to the re-evaluation of USDA's Thrifty food plan, which is what the SNAP benefit amount is based on. Second supplemental emergency allotments continue to be issued. Beginning in 2020, USDA allowed states to issue emergency allotments to SNAP households. This brought up households' total monthly benefit to the maximum allowance for their household size if they weren't already receiving the maximum. In April 2021, USDA updated guidance to providing minimum monthly emergency allotment of 95 dollars to all recipients, increasing the benefits going to households previously not receiving one or receiving less than 95 dollars. Some states stopped issuing emergency allotments in fiscal year 2021 and 2020. By the end of the last fiscal year, 17 states no longer provided emergency allotment. Third, the SNAP online purchase and pilot continued to expand. The pilot allows household and participating states to purchase groceries online from authorized retailers with SNAP benefits. The pilot was rapidly expanded beyond its initial scope at 2020 to most states and was further expanded in fiscal year 2021 to two additional states and more grocery retailers. By the end of fiscal year 2022, online purchasing at select retailers was available in all but one state. Fourth, time limits on benefit receipt for able-bodied adults, without dependents, were temporarily suspended fiscal year 2020. This suspension continued in all states throughout fiscal year 2020. Lastly, USDA continued to grant state agencies several temporary administrative flexibilities, such as adjustments to interview and recertification required.

Here, you can see a figure showing annual inflation-adjusted SNAP spending and average monthly SNAP participation in each year from 2000 to 2022. The bars represent spending, which is shown on the right axis, and the line represents participation, which is shown on the left axis. Federal spending on SNAP totaled 119.5 billion dollars in 2022. This was one percent lower than the record high inflation adjusted spending of about 121 billion in fiscal year 2021. Emergency allotments are responsible for a lot of the spending. They accounted for about a third of the total dollar amount fiscal year 2022. An average of 41.2 million people participated in SNAP per month in the last fiscal year, or about 12.4 percent of the U.S. resident population. This was about one percent lower than the average participation of about 41.6 million in fiscal year 2021, but still below the record high participation of 47.6 million in fiscal year 2013. The average monthly benefit was \$230.88 per person per month which was inclusive of emergency allotments and other non-standards.

Next, I'll talk about developments with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC is targeted towards low income, pregnant, and postpartum women, as well as infants and children up to five years of age at nutritional risk. Eligibility is based on categorical residential income and nutrition risk criteria. The program provides supplemental food packages and other services to participants. These food packages are tailored to each participant group and are redeemed via EBT card or paid for vouchers at authorized retailers for the corresponding foods. Beginning in fiscal year 2020 and continuing through fiscal year 2022, several program changes occurred. First, USDA waivers allowed State agencies to temporarily alter various aspects of the program's administration and operation. This included changes to certification procedures, documentation requirements, and rules about picking up food benefits in person. These waivers continued into fiscal year 2022. Second, the American Rescue Plan Act passed in March 2021 gave WIC state agencies the option to increase the cash value voucher recipients used for fruit and vegetable purchases. This amount increased from nine dollars for

adults, or eleven dollars for children, to 35 dollars per participant through September 2021. In fiscal year 2022, these benefits amounts were changed to 24 dollars for children, 43 dollars for pregnant and postpartum women, and 47 for breastfeeding women for the duration of that. Another set of changes were implemented in fiscal year 2022 in response to infant formula supply chain disruptions. Beginning on February 17, 2022, when Abbott, a major U.S manufacturer formula, announced a voluntary recall of powder formulas produced at one of its facilities and the facilities temporary closed. The recall and closure were prompted by evidence of a bacteria at the facility that could be harmful to infants if present in formula. USDA responded by allowing quick participants to exchange recalled formula as well as to receive different brands, forms, and sizes of infant formula than they typically would.

Here you can see a figure showing average monthly WIC participation in each year from 1974 to 2022. Participation is shown separately for women, infants, children, and for all participants combined. Total WIC participation reached a peak of 9.2 million people per month fiscal in year 2010 and then declined every following year. In recent years the rate of decline slowed, and the fiscal year 2021 total participation was 6.2 million people per month, which was virtually the same as the prior year. In fiscal year 2022, total participation increased slightly to 6.3 million people per month. Children ages one to four made up close to 55 percent of participants in fiscal year 2022 and women and infants made up about 22 percent and 23 percent respectively. Participation among women increased by 1.5 percent in fiscal year 2022 after declining the previous 12 fiscal years. Fiscal year 2022 also marked the 13th consecutive fiscal year that participation fell among infants and the second consecutive fiscal year that participation increased among children. The number of infants participating in WIC decreased by two and a half percent from the previous fiscal year, while the number of children increased by one percent. Food costs averaged \$47.72 per person per month fiscal year 2022. These costs were up 34 percent from 2021. After adjusting for inflation, this was also the first increase in average per person food cost since 2011. Federal spending on WIC also increased and total 5.7 billion dollars. This was up slightly from the inflation adjusted 5.4 billion in the previous fiscal year but below the historic inflation-adjusted high of 9 billion dollars set in fiscal year 2011.

Now, I'll talk about the developments with USDA's major child nutrition programs. The National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program are the major federal school meal programs. These programs provide nutritious meals to children, for free, at a reduced price or full price, depending on their household's income. And schools receive reimbursements from USDA for serving meals that meet program requirements, such as the nutrition requirement. Additionally, some schools provide free meals for all students regardless of their household income through one of several provisions in school meals legislation, such as the community eligibility program. The National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program also have a Seamless Summer Option. This option allows schools and other organizations like community centers, churches, or camps to provide free meals to children when school is not in session, typically during the summer months or during unanticipated school closures. Schools and sponsored organizations may serve meals through the SSO in areas or sites where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced price meals. The Summer Food Service Program or SFSP, a distinct program from SSO, also provides free meals to children when school is not in session in areas or sites where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced price school meals. However, differences exist between these two programs. Most notably, in a typical year, SFSP meals are reimbursed at a higher rate than SSO meals, which are reimbursed at the

lower National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program rates. Lastly, the child and adult care food program subsidizes healthy meals and snacks and participating childcare centers, daycares, and adult day care facilities. The program primarily serves children and youth but also serve some disabled or elderly adults. Their providers must be licensed or approved, and they are reimbursed for serving qualified meals. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the normal operation of these programs through obstacles such as school and facility closures and moves to at home or hybrid learning. Disruptions were more severe earlier on in the pandemic, but they continued into fiscal year 2020. Later, supply chain disruptions and staff shortages further complicated meal provision through these programs. USDA responded in several ways. First, beginning in fiscal year 2020 schools and organizations were allowed to provide free meals through the SFSP or SSO. Meals were provided to students in all areas throughout the year regardless of income. Schools were allowed to continue this practice into fiscal year 2022 and the waiver allowed schools to temporarily offer free meals through the SSO at the higher SFSP reimbursement rate beginning in July 2021. As a result of the increase in the reimbursement rate for SSO meals, most schools transitioned from serving meals through the SFSP to serving meals through the SSO in the 2021-2022 school year. Second, USDA temporarily waived Federal requirements relating to meal patterns. Mealtimes, non-congregate feeding, parent or guardian meal pickup, wellness programs, after school activities, and guidelines allowing students to decline food items they did not intend to eat these. These waivers started in 2020 and continued into fiscal year 2022. Third, USDA provided additional funding to schools to support food procurement for meals. Most of the child nutrition program waivers expired by the end of- end of September 2022. However, the Keep Kids Fed Act, which was passed in June 2022, temporarily increased Federal reimbursements or meals served through the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program for the 2022 and 2023 school year.

Here, you can see a figure showing the number of meals served annually across the four largest child nutrition programs as well as inflation-adjusted combined spending on these programs from fiscal year 2001 to 2022. The stack bars represent meals served under each program, which is shown on the left axis, while the dotted line represents total spending on all of these programs, shown on the right axis. As you can see, the total number of meals served in fiscal year 2020 amounted to just under 8 billion meals, a level similar to that in 2001. Meals served rebounded somewhat in 2021 to 8.4 billion. The composition of meals also shifted during the pandemic, due to a transition toward free meal provision through the Summer Food Service Program and the Seamless Summer Option. Prior to the pandemic, the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program serve the most meals. But in fiscal year 2021, more meals were served through the Summer Food Service Program, shown in dark blue, than any other single Child Nutrition program. This changed again in fiscal year 2022 as schools transitioned to serving meals to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program seamless summer options. In that year, most meals were once again served through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program and total meals served across all four programs amounted to 9.4 billion, about the same as in pre-pandemic years. As meals served fell in fiscal year 2020, so too did combined spending on these programs. However, spending rebounded and even surpassed pre-pandemic spending in subsequent years, reaching 33.6 billion in fiscal year 2022. These increases are attributable to the greater provision of free meals through the SFSP and the- and then the SSO and high reimbursement rates for meals served. To provide some more specific information about the individual programs, the school meal programs together

including the Seamless Summer Option served 7.4 billion meals at a cost of 29 billion dollars. The child and adult care food program served close to 2 billion meals at a cost of nearly 4 billion dollars. Finally, the Summer Food Service Program served about 151 million meals at a cost of 688 million dollars.

Next, I'll talk about the temporary program operated by USDA as part of the pandemic response, the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program. P-EBT was authorized in March 2020 and allowed states to reimburse households with children for the value of free or reduced price school meals they missed out on due to COVID-19 related disruptions to in-person learning and school meal provision. P-EBT benefits are provided via EBT card and were administered through State's existing EBT systems. They can be spent much like SNAP benefits and are subject to the same restrictions. Since then, the program has been expanded to cover more children. In fiscal year 2021, eligibility for P-EBT was extended to cover younger children, under age six, that were not yet enrolled in school if their households received SNAP benefits and if they lived in an area where schools were closed or operating on reduced hours. At the same time P-EBT was expanded to additional U.S. territories Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. Later that fiscal year, the American Rescue Plan passed further-past further expanded P-EBT to cover the summer months when schools are typically closed for instruction. In fiscal year 2022, eligibility for the program was expanded again to include children who entered virtual academies or homeschooling due to the pandemic but had not attended an NFLP participating school and were eligible for free or reduced pricing. States have to submit plans or request USDA for approval to issue benefits for school years and a summer period in which in-person meals were missed. Because these plans deferred administration also deferred state by state. In some states, benefits were provided lump sum after the school year, or period, in which meals were missed. And in other states benefits were provided in multiple payments.

Here, you can see a figure showing the total reported value of P-EBT benefits issued nationwide in each quarter. From quarter three of fiscal year 2020, including March, through quarter four of fiscal year 2022. I want to urge some caution in the interpretation of these numbers as they- have as there have been some documented inconsistencies in how States reported benefits due to the need for the rapid rollout of the program, especially in the timing of benefit reporting early on in the pandemic. Still, we can see some variation in the timing of when benefits were issued. In fiscal year 2020, States reported issuing 10.8 billion dollars in P-EBT benefits, most of which would have been for the 2019-2020 school year. In fiscal year 2021, this amount increased to 28.4 billion in benefits, with most of these benefits being issued in the last half of- half of the fiscal year. Fiscal year 2022 the amount issued declined to 17.9 billion. Most of these benefits were issued at the beginning and end of the fiscal year.

So, in closing, I've covered the major developments in the Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape in Fiscal Year 2022. These assistance programs have undergone many changes since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 including in 2021 and 2022. These program changes, along with changes in economic conditions affecting the rate at which the U.S. population is eligible for these programs and led to overall higher spending and program usage. With total USDA program spending reaching 183 billion dollars in fiscal year 2022. I also want to say that the full report I'm discussing today contains additional information that I'm sure you'd be interested in given that you've decided to tune in today. Today, I covered most of the major

developments in these programs, but the full report also includes information on a detailed timeline of relevant policy changes over fiscal year 2022, month by month program trends over the course of the pandemic, economic and social indicators related to program participation, and an overview of recent ERS research relevant to food and nutrition assistance. So, I would encourage you to take a look at the full report for further information. This report is up on ERS's website now. Thanks so much for joining and tuning in today and, with that, I will turn it over to Liz for questions from myself my co-author Jordan Jones as well as our colleague Leslie Hodges.

Thanks for that presentation, Saied. I would now like to introduce our two panelists Jordan Jones and Leslie Hodges who will be joining us for the Q&A portion of today's webinar. Jordan is a research economist in the Food Assistance Branch of the Food Economics Division. His research focuses on the workings and various impacts of federal food assistance programs, especially the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP. Jordan's recent work involves measuring the extent of State SNAP eligibility expansions, estimating the impacts of pandemic era changes to SNAP, and understanding the determinants of senior SNAPs participation. Leslie is a research agricultural economist also in the Food Assistance Branch of our Food Economics Division. She conducts research to inform evidence-based policy making on the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC. Her recent report for- excuse me, her recent work has focused on key issues facing the WIC program, including program participation and retention, online ordering, and the infant formula market. Leslie is a member of the national WIC Association Evaluation Committee and a co-chair of the WIC research learning collaborative. Thanks to all three of you for joining us today. We'll go ahead and open the floor up for questions now. As a reminder, questions can be submitted through the chat feature located in the bottom left-hand corner of your screen.

For our first question: why didn't SNAP spending go up with the 2022 benefit increase?

Thank you for that question. I'm going to hand this one over to Jordan.

Thanks Saied. So, I think the questions referring to the fact that SNAP spending went down in 2022 when adjusted for inflation. So, I want to point out first that 2022 SNAP spending actually did increase slightly in nominal terms, but relatively high inflation from '21 to '22 means that it didn't increase over the last year when we adjust for inflation. So, there were a few major developments happening with SNAP in fiscal year 2022 that could impact spending. I think the questions referring to the maximum benefit increase, which began this fiscal year. So, that was the 2021 Thrifty Food Plan reevaluation which began in October 2021 and led to about a 21 percent increase in the maximum SNAP allotment. So, this was relative to the maximum allotment based on the 2020 Thrifty Food Plan, but we do have to keep in mind that this permanent increase actually replaced the temporary 15 percent increase that expired the month before, in September '21. So, the actual increase in people's allotments from September '21 to October '21 did not amount to a 21 percent jump. Additionally, participation fell slightly in fiscal year 2022 and SNAP emergency allotments expired in nine states in fiscal year 2022. So, there were some countervailing factors that would contribute to lower spending.

Thanks, Jordan. For our next question: Why doesn't the report provide more information about the infant formula supply chain crisis and its impact on WIC participants?

Thank you for that question. I'm gonna hand this one over to Leslie.

Sure, I'm happy to answer this question. So, this report is broadly focused on trends and historical trends and participation and spending across USDA's food and nutrition assistance program and not with detailed focus on any one particular program.

Yeah, I'd like to add to that to say that. Yeah, the infant formula supply chain disruptions were certainly an issue in fiscal year 2022 and our report does discuss it however the purpose of the report is to provide a general overview of USDA's largest domestic food and nutrition assistance programs and the trends in participation and spending. So, we don't conduct any specific analysis linking any single issue to trends that we observe in the data.

Thank you both for that response. For our next question: what share of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program meals were served through the Seamless Summer Option in 2022.

That's a great question and I can take that one. So, in fiscal year 2022 about 84 percent of lunches and 85 percent of breakfast were served for free through the Seamless Summer Option. Overall, including non-SSO school lunches and breakfasts. 95 percent of lunches and 97 percent of breakfast were served for free. Compared to a typical year, such as fiscal year 2019, 68 percent of lunches are served for free through the National School Lunch Program. About 80 percent of breakfast are served for free to the School Breakfast Program. So, we saw quite a bit of an increase in the share of free meals served.

Thank you. For our next question: Did the federal government allow for any flexibilities for operating child nutrition programs after the waivers expired?

I can take that one as well. So, the answer is yes. To Keep Kids Fed- to Keep Kids Fed Act, which I mentioned in my presentation, did raise reimbursement rates for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. For the 2022-2023 school year and these reimbursement rates were raised by 40 cents for the NSLP, 50 cents for the SBP, and 10 cents for the CACFT, respectively. So, the legislation also allowed USDA to continue issuing some no-cost waivers. For example, USDA waived fiscal actions in response to violations of nutrition standards in the events that these violations were caused by supply chain disruptions, or difficulties. So, some no cost- so in short, some no cost waivers were continuing to be issued and, of course, you had the increase in the reimbursement rates with meals.

Thanks, Saied. For our next question: do you have any data related to the number of military service members enrolled in SNAP?

Another great question. I'm going to hand this one over to Jordan.

Yeah, thanks for that question. So, we don't specifically address population subgroup participation in this report, to maintain a high-level focus, sort of an overview focus. But I do suggest you look into our work uh by our colleague Matt Rabbitt on military and veteran food insecurity for some more information about that.

Thanks, Jordan. Our next question is: Does the *Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape* report touch on charitable food assistance programs, specifically TFAP or CSFP? If so, can you briefly discuss the data trends of these programs in fiscal year 2022?

That's a good question. So, as I mentioned in my presentation, USDA typically administers 15 food and nutrition assistance programs, including TFAP. Our report just focuses on the largest of these domestic food and nutrition assistance programs. TFAP is, and the other program that was mentioned, are considerably much smaller, so we do not discuss them in this report.

Thanks, Saied. Our next question is: can you say more about the increase in the number of women participating in WIC, especially given the decline in the number of infants participating?

I'm going to hand this one over to Leslie.

Sure, I'm happy to address this question. So, with the increase in the number of women participating, the data show an increase in the number of infants who are receiving the fully breastfeeding food packages. Caretakers of infants, who are fully breastfed, are eligible to participate in WIC for up to 12 months postpartum, and that's in comparison to six months for caretakers of infants who are fully formula fed. The prior ERS research has demonstrated that if there is an increase in the number of solely breastfed infants in WIC, then there is a corresponding increase in the number of postpartum women participating in WIC.

Thanks, Leslie. Our next question is: You mentioned that the P-EBT program was temporary. When will the program end?

Sure, the program is set to end in September of this year. However, there will be a new permanent Summer EBT program, which will begin issuing benefits in summer 2024. So, this new program was authorized by Congress in December of last year and will provide eligible children with about 40 dollars per month during the summer months when most schools are closed for instructions.

Thanks, Saied. Our next question is: how did participation in P-EBT in 2022 compare to previous years?

Liz, I'd be happy to address that question.

Sure, go ahead. Thank you.

Yeah. So, it's difficult to interpret information about the number of recipients because States issued P-EBT on varying schedules. So, some states issued benefits altogether in one lump sum or over one or two months, while others did so over a longer period. And so, this leads to lower reported counts of participation in States issuing benefits over one or two months and higher counts of participation in those States issuing benefits over a longer time span. So, because of this we don't specifically report on P-EBT participation, or average benefits, which requires accurate information about participation. But what I can tell you is that states reported issuing about 18 billion dollars in P-EBT benefits last fiscal year and that's compared to about 28 billion in fiscal year '21 and about 11 billion in the latter half of fiscal year '20.

Thanks, Jordan. Did the food assistance programs for school children in the summer separate students into rural versus urban areas? Where food had to be delivered to the children versus them obtaining the food in a centralized location.

That's a really interesting question. So, we use data released by USDA's food and nutrition assistance but new food and nutrition service, this data is called the program information reports, or the key data. And it just provides a very high-level overview of participation and spending in USDA's programs, it does not break out participation in spending by rural or urban. So, we do not have that information in the report.

Thanks for that answer and it looks like that's all that we have for today. So, Saied thank you for a great presentation on the food and nutrition landscape report and many thanks to Jordan and Leslie for your assistance during the Q&A session as well. And finally thank you to our listeners for taking time to join us today, we hope that this has been helpful.

If you enjoyed this webinar or are interested in other ERS research and data products we have another upcoming Data Training Webinar on our Dairy Data product. This webinar is scheduled for June 29th at 1 pm Eastern and you can register by going to <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-training-webinars>.

We'd also like to inform you all of a date change for our annual *Household Food Security in the United States* report. This year, the report and corresponding statistical supplement will be released on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This is due to updates in the survey instruments that were implemented for the very first time in 2022.

Before closing I'd like to share just a few ways to stay up to date on ERS research. In addition to our website, we also have our Chart of Note mobile app, which delivers digital snapshots of ERS research, delivered straight to your mobile device. ERS is also on social media, and you can follow our account on LinkedIn and Twitter. Thank you all for joining us today and this conclude for webinar.