

How H.R.1 Impacts Child Nutrition Programs

Nearly 16 million children participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and more than 37 million children participated in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2024. Due to [changes Congress made through H.R.1](#) in July 2025, [many are at risk of losing not only SNAP benefits](#) and insurance coverage but also other nutrition supports. This is because of the way that SNAP and Medicaid can be used to establish eligibility for programs like school meals.

School, summer and afterschool meals as well as grocery benefits like WIC and SUN Bucks (also known as Summer EBT) are invaluable sources of support for kids, fueling their learning and growth year-round. While H.R.1 did not cut these programs directly, reduced participation in SNAP and Medicaid will impact these programs, compounding the difficulties that families face because of H.R.1 cuts.

Ripple Effects of H.R.1 on Child Nutrition Programs

- **Reduced direct certification for free or reduced-price school meals**
 - Direct certification -- data matching with SNAP and, in some states, Medicaid -- allows schools to automatically identify students who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals without requiring an application.
 - Lower SNAP and Medicaid participation may result in more families needing to submit school meals applications, which puts more administrative burden on families and schools and puts eligible kids at risk of losing access to free and reduced-price meals.
- **Reduced eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals**
 - If families no longer participating in SNAP or Medicaid do **not** submit school meals applications, fewer students will qualify for free or reduced-price meals.
 - Additionally, students who were eligible for SNAP through Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) may no longer be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, even via application, if they lose access to SNAP due to slightly different eligibility rules.
 - This puts more financial strain on families and may increase unpaid meal debt owed to schools, affecting their bottom line.

- **Reduced adoption of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) by schools**
 - CEP eligibility is based on the percentage of enrolled students identified as eligible for free or reduced-price meals, primarily through direct certification with SNAP and increasingly through Medicaid in states that use Medicaid for direct certification.
 - Reductions in SNAP and Medicaid participation reduce schools' CEP eligibility.
 - Even schools that remain eligible will receive less funding for meals because CEP reimbursement is based on the number of identified students, discouraging continued CEP participation.
- **Reduced streamlined certification for SUN Bucks (Summer EBT)**
 - Streamlined certification allows children in households that participate in SNAP (and in some states, also Medicaid) to be automatically enrolled in SUN Bucks. This is especially critical for students enrolled in CEP schools or schools that do not participate in school meal programs where automatic enrollment through school meals eligibility data cannot occur.
 - Reductions in streamlined certification may result in increased SUN Bucks applications, which puts more administrative burden on families and the state.
 - This may also result in reduced participation, both from families not submitting applications and from kids who do not attend a school participating in school meals programs and thus only eligible via streamlined certification.
 - Reduced participation decreases the fully federally funded benefits flowing into the state.
- **Reduced access to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) through adjunctive eligibility**
 - Households enrolled in SNAP or Medicaid are automatically considered income-eligible for WIC, which can streamline enrollment for applicants who meet WIC's other eligibility criteria.
 - Reductions in SNAP and Medicaid participation may increase administrative burden on agencies and families by requiring more income verification, potentially reducing enrollment.
 - Targeted outreach to SNAP and Medicaid households can increase WIC enrollment, so reduced participation in those programs weakens an effective method of reaching WIC-eligible families.
- **Reduced area eligibility for open summer meals sites and afterschool meals**
 - Area eligibility for open summer meals sites – sites that serve meals to all children without requiring individual eligibility determinations -- is based on the free or reduced-price eligibility levels of nearby schools or census data.
 - Eligibility to operate an afterschool meals program depends entirely on school free or reduced-price eligibility levels.
 - Declines in school poverty measures will impact afterschool meals access and likely also summer meals access.