

# Household Experiences with Federal Summer Nutrition Programs in 2025

Findings from National Caregiver Surveys of Summer EBT and Rural Non-Congregate Summer Meals Participants and Nonparticipants

**June 2026**

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of several individuals to this report. Marisa Kirk-Epstein, Mayra Crespo-Bellido, and Karen Wong at Share Our Strength conceptualized the study and provided guidance and leadership throughout the project. Liz Gearan and Alice Ann Gola provided thoughtful review and feedback that strengthened both the surveys and the report. Clare Wolfendale and Mia Monkovic provided critical support for the preparation of analytic files and tabulations used throughout the report. Stefan Subias and John Dombrowski at NORC led the survey data collection efforts, and we are grateful to the broader NORC team for their support in implementing the study. Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation to the hundreds of caregivers who participated in the surveys and shared the experiences reflected in these findings.

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## Abstract

This report presents findings from two national caregiver surveys examining household experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals and Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBT) during summer 2025. The surveys explored program participation, barriers to participation, household experiences, perceived benefits, and intentions to participate in the future among households with school-age children. The SEBT survey also examined perceptions of the program and unmet food need in states that did not offer SEBT.

Findings revealed that both programs provided important summer nutrition support for participating households. Rural non-congregate summer meals were widely viewed as convenient and helpful in meeting household food needs, and most participants reported high satisfaction with meal quality, convenience, and communications. SEBT participants said the program helped households stretch food budgets, obtain healthier foods, and avoid difficult financial trade-offs over the summer.

At the same time, findings highlight ongoing barriers related to program awareness, understanding of eligibility requirements, scheduling, and communication. Among households that did not participate in rural non-congregate summer meals or SEBT, limited awareness of available programs and uncertainty about eligibility were common barriers to participation. In states that did not offer SEBT, households reported high levels of food hardship and nutrition insecurity, along with strong support for making SEBT available in their state. These findings highlight opportunities to strengthen outreach, communication, and program access.

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## I. Introduction

Federal summer nutrition programs are designed to help households meet children’s nutrition needs when school meals are unavailable. This report examines household-reported experiences with two of these programs: the rural non-congregate summer meal option, also known as SUN Meals To-Go, and the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBT) program, sometimes referred to as SUN Bucks, in the summer of 2025. The report focuses on household experiences with program participation, access, and perceived benefits, as well as barriers that may limit participation.

The rural non-congregate summer meals option is available to all approved summer meal sites located in designated rural areas with limited access to traditional congregate summer meals. It enables them to distribute free meals to children to be consumed off-site. This option was authorized as a permanent feature of the summer meals programs in 2023. Program sponsors oversee and operate summer meal sites and determine how meals are distributed based on local needs and conditions. Depending on the site’s approach, households may pick up meals at a walk-up or drive-through location, pick them up from buses or vans at central locations, or have meals delivered to their home. Sites may distribute prepared meals or the groceries needed to prepare meals at home, and they may provide multiple days of meals or bulk items (i.e., loaves of bread, packs of deli meat, bags of salad greens) in a single pickup or delivery (USDA FNS, 2023a).

SEBT provides \$120 in grocery benefits per eligible school-age child during the summer.<sup>1</sup> SEBT was authorized as a permanent, nationwide program beginning in summer 2024 and may be operated by states, territories, and Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs). As shown in Exhibit 1,

### Key findings

#### Rural non-congregate summer meals

- Most participating households reported positive experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals and expressed strong interest in participating again.
- Participating households widely viewed rural non-congregate summer meals as an important source of nutrition and financial support during the summer months.
- Participating households identified opportunities to improve the program through earlier outreach, expanded pickup and delivery options, and enhancements to meal quality and variety.
- Limited program awareness remained an important barrier to participation.

#### SEBT

- Most participating households successfully used their SEBT benefits and indicated that they would like to receive benefits again in future summers.
- Participating households reported that SEBT helped them meet food needs, stretch household food budgets, and obtain healthier and preferred foods for their children during the summer.
- Participating households identified opportunities to improve the program through earlier outreach and clearer information about eligibility, benefit receipt, and benefit use.
- Many households in SEBT states that did not participate in the program reported limited awareness of SEBT or uncertainty about whether their children were eligible.
- Households in states that did not offer SEBT reported high levels of food hardship and nutrition insecurity, along with broad support for making the program available in their state.

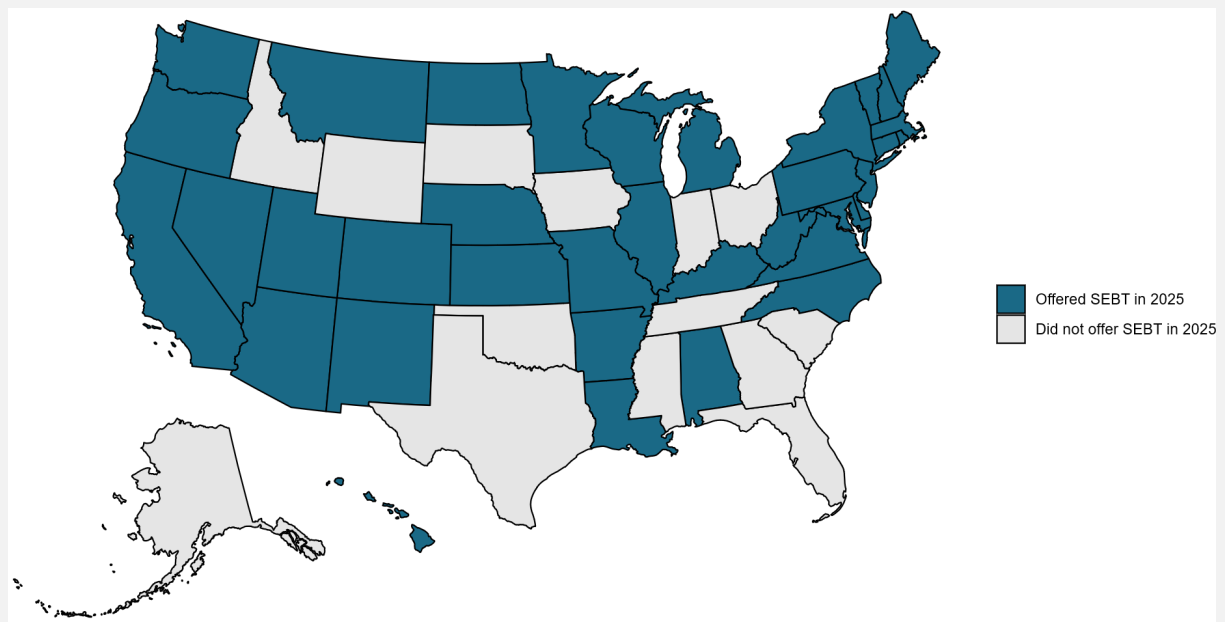
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<sup>1</sup> The SEBT benefit amount in Hawaii and the U.S. territories was \$177 per child in 2025. This reflects the higher food prices in these areas relative to prices in the contiguous United States (USDA FNS, 2025a).

37 states and the District of Columbia offered SEBT in 2025; all five U.S. territories and five ITOs also operated the program.

Where SEBT is offered, many eligible children are automatically enrolled based on participation in programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or certain other income-based assistance programs. In addition, children who attend schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) and who are approved for free or reduced-price meals are generally automatically enrolled. Households whose children are not automatically enrolled may still qualify based on income and other eligibility requirements and can apply to receive benefits. (USDA FNS, 2023a).

**Exhibit 1. States with SEBT in 2025**



Note: All five U.S. territories and five ITOs also offered SEBT in 2025. The territories include American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ITOs include the Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation, Muscogee Nation, and Otoe-Missouria Tribe.

ITO = Indian Tribal Organization; SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer.

Share Our Strength contracted with Mathematica to conduct two national surveys of caregivers with eligible children to better understand household experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals and SEBT. The surveys provide insight into how households access and use these programs, the challenges they face in participating, and the ways these programs support children's food needs during the summer. The SEBT survey also explored perceptions of the program among households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT.

The survey methods and analytic approach are described in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents findings on household experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals, and Chapters 4 and 5 present findings on household experiences with SEBT in states that did and did not offer the program in 2025. Chapter 6

summarizes key findings, implications, and study limitations. Supporting tables are provided in Appendices A through C.

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## II. Survey methods

This report draws on findings from two national online surveys of caregivers conducted in December 2025 and January 2026. One survey focused on household experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals, and the other focused on household experiences with SEBT. Both surveys were administered in English and Spanish to children’s caregivers, who responded on behalf of their household. The surveys included questions about program participation, barriers to participation, program experiences, perceived benefits, and future participation decisions.

The surveys used NORC at the University of Chicago’s AmeriSpeak® Panel together with an additional non-probability online sample source to improve coverage of key populations (NORC, 2025). Rural non-congregate meals and SEBT participants were oversampled to support subgroup analyses. Survey weights were applied to account for the survey design and produce estimates representative of the target populations described for each survey. Analyses focused on descriptive statistics summarizing household experiences and perceptions.

### A. Rural non-congregate survey methods

The rural non-congregate survey was administered to caregivers of children ages 18 and younger living within a 15-mile radius of an open site offering rural non-congregate summer meals. Open sites are located in areas with a high poverty level and any child may receive a free meal. The sites were identified using the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Summer Meals for Kids Site Finder according to current data as of July 15, 2025 (FNS, 2025b).

A total of 1,248 caregivers completed the survey, including 654 caregivers whose children participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and 594 caregivers whose children did not participate. The survey completion rate was 27.7 percent and the weighted cumulative response rate was 6.9 percent.<sup>2</sup> Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households living within 15 miles of an open rural non-congregate meals site in 2025.

### B. SEBT survey methods

The SEBT survey was administered to caregivers of children ages 5–18 in states that offered SEBT in 2025 and states that did not. Territories and Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) were not included in the survey. Respondents were screened to include households with school-age children and incomes consistent with eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. The survey included households that participated in SEBT, households in states that did not offer SEBT, and a smaller group of households in SEBT states that reported not receiving benefits in 2025.

A total of 1,053 caregivers completed the survey, including 485 participating households in SEBT states, 112 nonparticipating households in SEBT states, and 456 households in non-SEBT states. Estimates for

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<sup>2</sup> The survey completion rate reflects the share of invited respondents who completed the survey, accounting for the fact that some respondents who were invited to participate were not eligible. The weighted cumulative response rate is a broader measure that also accounts for participation at earlier stages of panel recruitment and survey administration, while adjusting for the survey design.

participating households in SEBT states and households in non-SEBT states are weighted to be nationally representative of low-income households with school-age children. The smaller group of nonparticipating households in SEBT states was not representatively sampled and should be interpreted with caution.

### III. Household experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals

This chapter presents findings on household experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals. Findings are presented separately for households that participated in the program in 2025 (Section A) and households that did not participate (Section B). Detailed tabulations are provided in Appendix A.

The characteristics of participating and nonparticipating households provide important context for interpreting the findings that follow. Compared with nonparticipating households, participating households generally had more children and were more likely to report their race as Black or African American or Hispanic. Consistent with the program's focus on supporting households with low incomes, participating households were also more likely than nonparticipating households to receive other forms of government assistance, including Head Start, subsidized child care, Medicaid, TANF, and other food assistance benefits (Appendix Table A.1).

#### A. Households that participated in rural non-congregate meals in 2025

Participating households generally reported positive experiences with rural non-congregate summer meals, including convenient meal access and meaningful support meeting household food needs.

##### 1. Reasons for participating and meal access

The most common reasons for participating in rural non-congregate meals highlight the program's role in supporting household food needs and reducing financial strain. More than half of participating households (56 percent) reported that receiving meals helped their household budget. Other commonly cited reasons were convenience and food quality (Appendix Table A.2).

##### Top reasons for participating in rural non-congregate summer meals

1. Helps with the household budget (56 percent)
2. Provides an easy way to feed children (49 percent)
3. Meals are healthy (44 percent)
4. Pickup location is close to home (36 percent)
5. Received helpful information about the program from a school, community organization, or government source (35 percent)
6. Pickup area feels safe (35 percent)

The program offers multiple ways for households to receive meals, allowing sponsors to tailor distribution to local needs. Most households (66 percent) picked up meals from a walk-up or drive through site. Fewer households received home-delivered meals (18 percent) or picked up meals from a mobile site, such as a bus or van route (13 percent).

Most participants who picked up meals reported relatively short travel times. Forty-three percent reached a site within 10–19 minutes, and 38 percent traveled for less than 10 minutes to reach the site. Travel times longer than 19 minutes were uncommon.

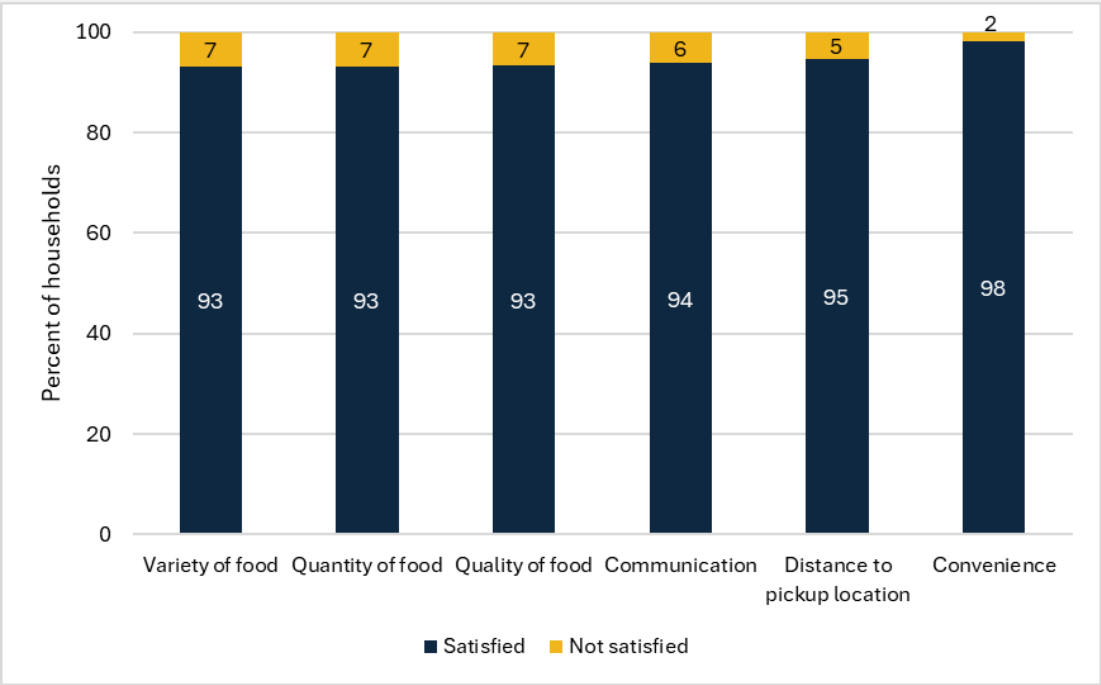
Most participants who picked up meals drove their own vehicle (75 percent). Other modes of transportation were less common, including walking (13 percent), getting a ride from someone else (9 percent), and using public transportation (1 percent) (Appendix Table A.3).

2. Program satisfaction and perceived benefits

As shown in Exhibit 2, participants reported satisfaction with the rural non-congregate summer meals program. Nearly all participants were very or somewhat satisfied with the quality, variety, and quantity of the food, as well as communications about the program (93–94 percent for each). Satisfaction with convenience was especially high: 98 percent were satisfied with how easy it was to receive meals, and 95 percent of households that picked up meals were satisfied with the distance to the pickup location or stop (Appendix Table A.4a).

Satisfaction was high across all meal distribution models, although households valued different aspects of the program depending on how meals were received. Households that picked up meals reported higher satisfaction with food quality, variety, and quantity, whereas households receiving home-delivered meals reported higher satisfaction with convenience and program communications (Appendix Table A.4b).

Exhibit 2. Participant satisfaction with key features of the rural non-congregate summer meals program in 2025



Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data. Refer to Appendix Table A.4.  
Note: n = 654. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Most participating households also viewed rural non-congregate summer meals as a meaningful source of nutrition and financial support during the summer months. Almost two-thirds strongly agreed that summer meals helped households stretch their food budgets (64 percent), helped children get enough to eat during the summer (61 percent), and provided needed support during times of rising food costs (67 percent). When including households that agreed somewhat, more than 90 percent agreed with each of these statements (Appendix Table A.5).

3. Decisions about future participation, barriers to participation, and features that could improve program experiences

Most households that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals in 2025 also participated the previous summer (76 percent), indicating strong program retention (Appendix Table A.6). Almost three-

quarters (72 percent) said they planned to participate again in 2026, while 17 percent were unsure and 11 percent said they did not plan to participate (Appendix Table A.7).

Most households (85 percent) were able to participate as much as their household needed (Appendix Table A.8). Among the 15 percent that did not, the most commonly cited reasons were learning about the program later in the summer (29 percent) and schedule conflicts with meal pickup or delivery times (27 percent). Other reasons included feeling that other families may need the meals more (23 percent), difficulty getting to the meal site (21 percent), and the requirement that children need to be present at meal pick up (20 percent).

Among the 21 percent of households that had difficulty reaching a summer meals site, the most common barrier was distance to the site (62 percent), followed by unreliable transportation (52 percent) and not having a car (49 percent). These findings highlight that transportation and site accessibility are still meaningful barriers for some households (Appendix Table A.9).

Participating households also named several features that they said would improve their experience with the program. For example, 41 percent said that more fresh produce would improve their experience “a lot,” while 38 percent said the same about food that tastes good and 37 percent about food that looks appealing. About one-third also said that healthier foods (36 percent), variety in food types (36 percent), and meals that are easy to carry and take home (34 percent) would improve their experience a lot (Appendix Table A.10).

With respect to program communications, 36 percent of households said that making program details available online would improve their experience a lot. Smaller but notable shares said the same about receiving instructions for preparing meals (32 percent), having opportunities to provide feedback about the program (32 percent), seeing menus in advance (31 percent), and receiving nutrition information (30 percent).

Households also identified several program access features that they said would improve their experience. These included offering multiple pickup or delivery dates and times (34 percent), early morning or late afternoon options for working households (34 percent), multiple pickup locations or stops (33 percent), and minimizing wait times (30 percent).

Together, these findings suggest that although most participating households are able to use the program as much as needed and plan to continue participating in the future, improvements in outreach, scheduling, transportation access, and meal quality could help more households to fully benefit from the program.

#### **Preferred meal distribution methods and meal types for 2026 participation**

- Walk-up or drive-through pickup sites were the most commonly preferred meal distribution method (49 percent), followed by home delivery (40 percent). Relatively few households preferred picking up meals from a mobile site (9 percent).
- Most households (70 percent) preferred receiving ingredients to prepare meals at home. Many also expressed interest in complete prepared meals (42 percent) and meal components (30 percent).

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data. Refer to Appendix Table A.7.

Note: Estimates include participating households who intended to participate in 2026 or said they were unsure if they would participate in 2026.

B. Households that did not participate in rural non-congregate meals in 2025

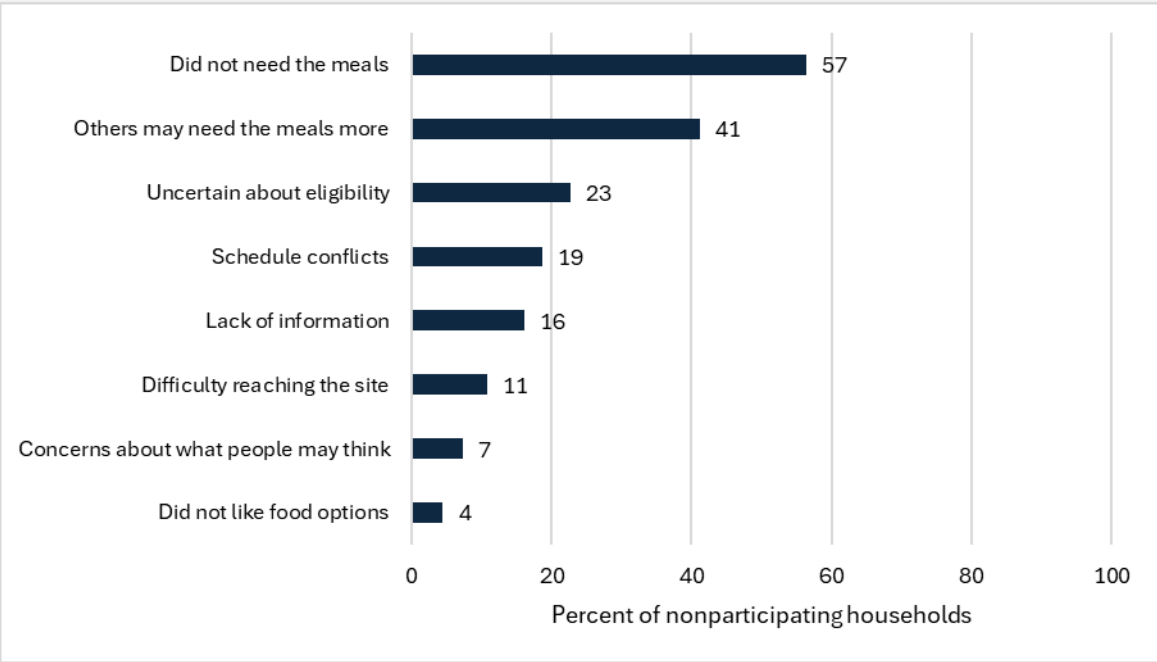
This section summarizes perspectives from households that lived close to a rural non-congregate summer meals site in 2025 but did not participate in the program. Most nonparticipating households were not aware of the program. Among those that were, most said they did not need it, but they still valued rural non-congregate summer meals as an important resource for households in need of nutrition support.

1. Program awareness and reasons for not participating

Limited awareness of the program is still a primary barrier to participation. More than two-thirds of nonparticipating households (68 percent) were unaware of the program; 27 percent were somewhat aware of the program, and only 5 percent were very aware of the program (Appendix Table A.11).

More than half of the nonparticipating households that were aware of the program said that they did not need the program (57 percent; Exhibit 3). A substantial share also believed other families may need the meals more (41 percent). Other reasons for nonparticipation were less common and included uncertainty about eligibility (23 percent), schedule conflicts (19 percent), and lack of information about the program (16 percent) (Appendix Table A.12).

Exhibit 3. Top reasons for not participating in rural non-congregate summer meals in 2025 among households aware of the program



Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data. Refer to Appendix Table A.12.  
Note: n = 401. The sample is limited to households that were aware of the rural non-congregate summer meals program. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025 and did not participate in the program.

Taken together, these findings suggest that both limited awareness and perceptions about need play an important role in nonparticipation. Increasing awareness of the program and clearly communicating

eligibility and availability may help improve participation among households who may benefit from the program.

## **2. Perceived program benefits and decisions about future participation**

Many nonparticipating households recognized the potential benefits of rural non-congregate summer meals even though they did not participate in the program in 2025. Most strongly agreed the program helps children get enough to eat in the summer (70 percent), helps households stretch their food budgets (68 percent), and provides needed support during times of rising food costs (67 percent; Appendix Table A.5). These findings suggest that the program is broadly valued, even among households that did not use it.

Although many nonparticipating households recognized the program's potential benefits, relatively few (8 percent) said they planned to participate in the future; however, about one-third (34 percent) were unsure whether they would participate. Limited awareness of the program remained common among nonparticipating households overall, while households that were aware of the program often reported that they did not need it or believed other families needed the meals more. Together, these findings suggest that some households may benefit from clearer information about the program's availability, eligibility requirements, and purpose.

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## IV. Household experiences in states that offered SEBT in 2025

This chapter presents findings on household experiences with SEBT in states that offered the program in 2025. Findings include program access, benefit use, perceived benefits, and future participation intentions among both participating and nonparticipating households. Detailed tabulations are provided in Appendix B.

The characteristics of participating and nonparticipating households provide important context for interpreting the findings that follow. Participating households commonly included multiple children and frequently participated in other assistance programs. Most had two or more children, and nearly two-thirds had children ages 5–10. More than 90 percent of participating households reported receiving at least one form of government assistance or nutrition support. For example, 68 percent reported receiving free or reduced-price school lunches, 60 percent reported participating in SNAP, and 41 percent reported participating in Medicaid. Because participation in these programs was self-reported and SEBT eligibility may be established through multiple pathways, these measures should be interpreted as descriptive characteristics of participating households rather than indicators of how households qualified for SEBT.

The nonparticipating households discussed in this chapter include households in SEBT states that reported not receiving benefits in 2025. Because this group was not separately sampled and represents only the households that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources, findings for nonparticipating households should be interpreted with caution and are not necessarily representative of all eligible households that did not receive SEBT. Several demographic characteristics of these households were generally similar to those of participating households, including household size and the ages of children. However, they appeared somewhat less connected to government assistance and nutrition support programs. About two-thirds (68 percent) reported receiving some form of government assistance or nutrition support; 35 percent reported participating in SNAP and 24 percent reported participating in Medicaid (Appendix Table B.1).

Overall, participating households generally reported positive experiences receiving and using SEBT benefits. Most received benefits automatically and reported using their full benefit amount. Many households also said SEBT helped them meet food needs and stretch household food budgets during the summer months. At the same time, some households, including those that participated in SEBT as well as nonparticipants, experienced ongoing challenges related to program communication and understanding eligibility and enrollment requirements. Additionally, some SEBT participants experienced challenges navigating benefit use. Many nonparticipating households reported limited awareness of the program or uncertainty about whether their children qualified for benefits. Schools and government agencies also played important roles in program outreach and communication.

### A. Enrollment, applications, and awareness

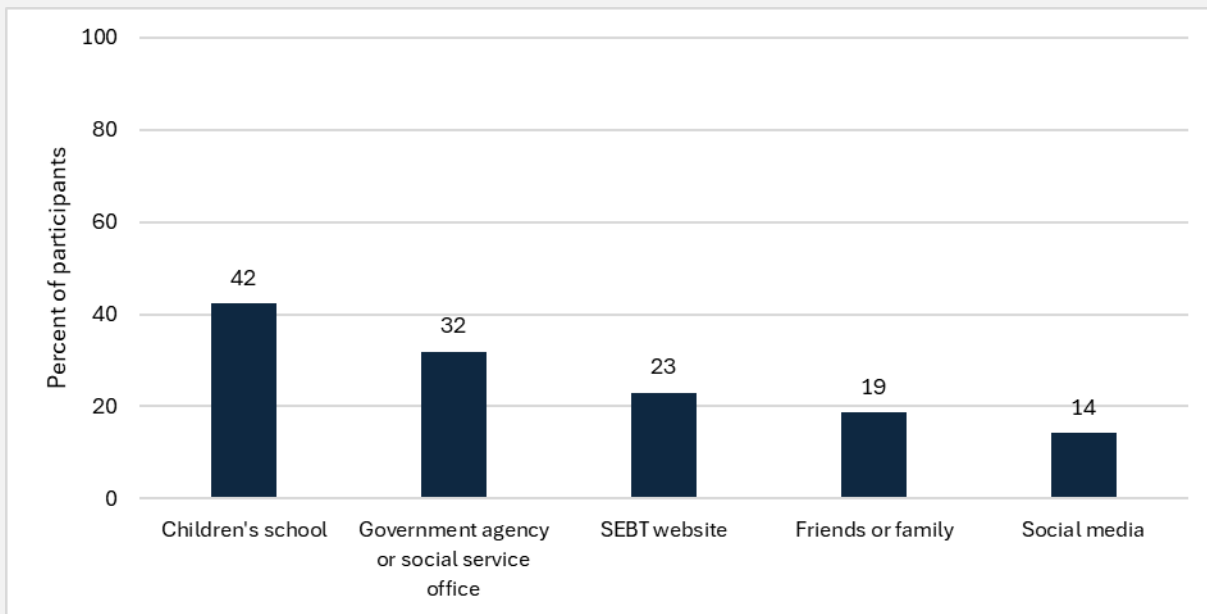
Eligible children are automatically enrolled in SEBT if their household participates in income-based public assistance programs, including free or reduced-price meals through the NSLP or SBP. Households with eligible children who are not automatically enrolled must apply for benefits (7 CFR § 292.12). In 2025, more than 80 percent of SEBT-participating households reported that they received benefits automatically, whereas 14 percent said they applied for the program. Another 4 percent did not know

whether they received benefits automatically or applied for them (Appendix Table B.2). Among households that applied for SEBT, 65 percent said the application process was very or somewhat easy, while 35 percent found it somewhat or very difficult (Appendix Table B.3).

Almost three-fourths of nonparticipating households (74 percent) said they did not apply for SEBT in 2025; 16 percent said they did apply; and 10 percent did not know whether they applied (Appendix Table B.4). About half of households that did not apply did not know about the program or were unsure whether their child was eligible. Among the relatively small group of households that applied but did not receive benefits, most did not know why their application was denied, and some said they were denied because their income exceeded eligibility limits.

As shown in Exhibit 4, participating households learned about SEBT from a range of sources, most typically their child’s school (42 percent). Other common sources included government agencies or social services offices (32 percent) and SEBT websites (23 percent). Among nonparticipating households that were familiar with the program (51 percent), government agencies or social service offices were the most commonly reported source of information (27 percent). Compared with participating households, nonparticipating households were less likely to report learning about SEBT through their children’s school. However, nearly one in five nonparticipating households (19 percent) did not know where they had heard about the program (Appendix Table B.5).

**Exhibit 4.** Most common ways participating households heard about SEBT in 2025



Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 National Caregiver Survey on Experiences with SEBT data. Refer to Appendix Table B.5.

Note: n = 676. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025.

## **B. Experiences receiving and using benefits**

States use different approaches when issuing SEBT benefits. In some states, benefits are loaded onto an existing SNAP or EBT card, whereas others issue a separate card. States also vary in whether they reuse

cards across years or issue new cards annually, and whether benefits for multiple children are loaded onto a single card or multiple cards (USDA FNS, 2026b; USDA FNS, 2026c; USDA FNS, 2023b).

Participating households reported a range of experiences receiving and using SEBT benefits (Appendix Table B.6). Nearly half (48 percent) said benefits were loaded onto a card—either a new card or an existing card—without any notification. Fewer households reported other challenges, including cards arriving later than expected (15 percent), benefits covering only some eligible children (10 percent), or difficulty receiving cards by mail (10 percent). Other reported issues included uncertainty about when benefits expired (9 percent), difficulty setting up cards (6 percent), and uncertainty about allowable purchases (6 percent).

More than three-quarters (77 percent) of households that participated in SEBT in 2025 also received benefits in 2024 (Appendix Table B.7). More than half of these households (56 percent) said receiving benefits was equally easy in both years, whereas 24 percent said it was easier in 2025. Among households reporting an easier experience in 2025, the most commonly cited reasons were receiving earlier notification of eligibility (54 percent) and receiving benefits earlier in the summer (35 percent) (Appendix Table B.8).

SEBT provides households with \$120 per eligible child during the summer to purchase food from authorized retailers in participating states. Benefits must be used within 122 days of issuance or they are removed from the EBT account (7 CFR Part 292, Subpart D). This is a shorter time frame than the one for SNAP benefits, which remain available for up to 274 days, or nine months, before expungement (7 CFR § 274.2). Despite this shorter timeframe, SEBT redemption was high in 2025, with 88 percent of participating households reporting that they used their full benefit (Appendix Table B.9). Among the relatively small share of households that did not use all benefits, the most commonly reported reason was not knowing the benefits expired. Fewer households reported issues such as benefit theft, difficulty activating the card, or losing the card.

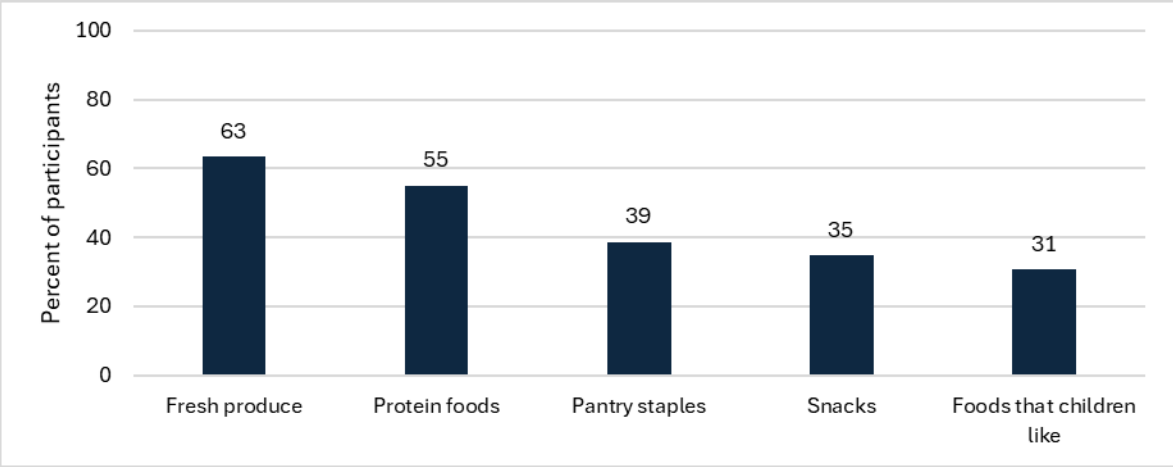
Most participating households (83 percent) thought it was very or somewhat easy to find information about receiving or using SEBT. Among the relatively small share of households that found it difficult, commonly reported challenges included not knowing where to find information, not knowing where to direct questions, and feeling that available information lacked sufficient detail. Some households also reported difficulty reaching customer service or said they did not receive updates about application or enrollment status (Appendix Table B.10).

### **C. Understanding SEBT eligibility rules**

Both participating and nonparticipating households that were aware of SEBT demonstrated general knowledge of key eligibility rules. Awareness of some rules appeared somewhat higher among participating households than nonparticipating households (Appendix Table B.11). For example, 72 percent of participating households and 56 percent of nonparticipating households knew that some children are automatically enrolled and other households must apply. Awareness levels were more similar for other rules: 76 percent of participating households and 72 percent of nonparticipating households knew that eligibility is income-based, and 84 percent and 81 percent, respectively, knew that children in SNAP households are eligible for SEBT. However, understanding general eligibility rules does not

necessarily mean households know whether their own children qualify, underscoring the importance of clear and consistent messaging about eligibility and enrollment.

**Exhibit 5.** Types of foods purchased with SEBT benefits by participating households in 2025



Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 National Caregiver Survey on Experiences with SEBT data. Refer to Appendix Table B.14.  
Note: n = 474. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025.  
SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer.

**D. Perceived program benefits and future participation decisions**

SEBT-participating households widely reported that the program helped them meet food needs. Three-quarters said SEBT allowed them to obtain more of the food they needed or wanted for their children (Appendix Table B.12). Without SEBT, many participating households said they would need to make trade-offs, including buying less food (42 percent), cutting back on other necessities (41 percent), purchasing cheaper, less healthy foods (32 percent), or buying foods their children liked less (24 percent) (Appendix Table B.13).

As shown in Exhibit 5, SEBT also expanded the types of foods households were able to obtain. Participating households most commonly used benefits to purchase fresh produce (63 percent), protein foods such as meat, fish, and eggs (55 percent), and pantry staples such as pasta, rice, and canned goods (39 percent). Nonparticipating households said they would use benefits for similar purchases if they received benefits, suggesting that SEBT may support comparable improvements in food purchasing among other eligible households (Appendix Table B.14).

Both households participating in SEBT (92 percent) and nonparticipating households (79 percent) expressed strong interest in receiving SEBT in the future (Appendix Table B.15).

Households also shared their preferences for how they would like to receive information about SEBT. Email was the most preferred communication method for both participating households (69 percent) and nonparticipating households (59 percent). A majority of participating households also preferred mail and text messages (51 percent each). Among nonparticipating households, websites (30 percent) and mail (29 percent) were the next most preferred methods after email (Appendix Table B.16).

When asked what information they would like to receive about SEBT, both participating and nonparticipating households were most likely to say they wanted to know how to check their children's eligibility (68 and 67 percent, respectively), understand eligibility rules (61 and 65 percent), and know how to apply for benefits (59 and 68 percent). Households also expressed interest in information about where to go for help or questions (Appendix Table B.17).

Across many topics, nonparticipating households expressed greater interest in receiving program information than participating households did. These findings highlight the importance of clear, proactive communication, particularly for households that may be eligible but are not participating.

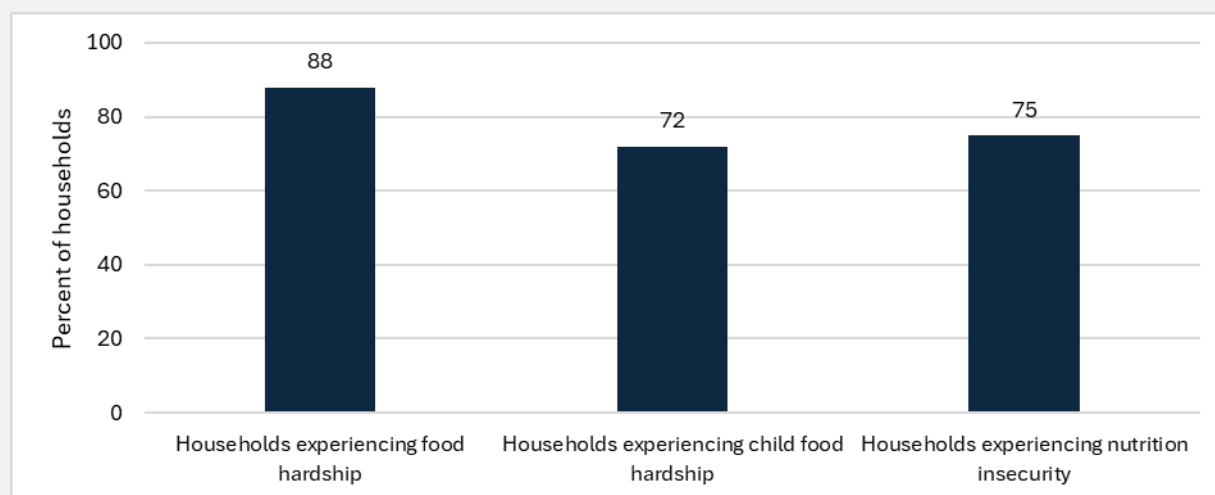
## V. Household experiences in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025

In 2025, 14 states did not offer SEBT (Exhibit 1): Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming. The survey in these states focused on low-income households with school-age children whose incomes were generally consistent with eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. Households were asked about their awareness of SEBT, interest in the program, and how they met their food needs during the summer.

Most surveyed households reported participating in other assistance programs, including free or reduced-price school meals, SNAP, Medicaid, and food assistance programs such as food pantries or food banks. These findings indicate that many households in non-SEBT states were already participating in nutrition assistance programs that are commonly associated with SEBT eligibility (Appendix Table C.1).

Households in states that did not offer SEBT reported high levels of food hardship and nutrition insecurity. Eighty-eight percent of households experienced food hardship, and child food hardship was present in 72 percent of households. In addition, three-quarters of households were classified as nutrition insecure, highlighting substantial unmet food needs among households in states without SEBT (Exhibit 6 and Appendix Table C.2).

**Exhibit 6.** Food hardship and nutrition insecurity among households with low incomes in states without SEBT in 2025



Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 National Caregiver Survey on Experiences with SEBT data. Refer to Appendix Table C.2.

Note: n = 456. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025.

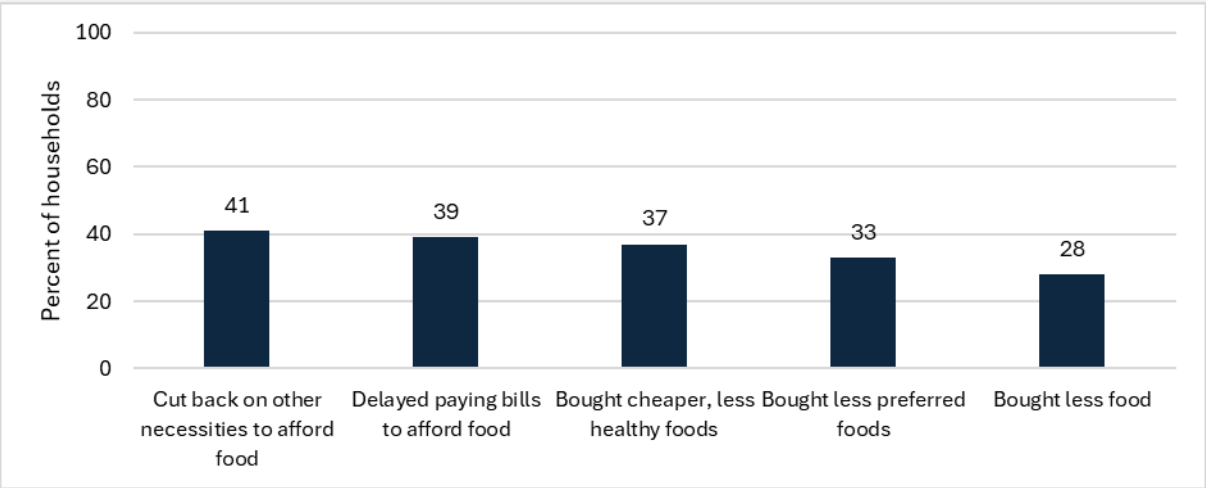
SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer.

Most households reported spending more money on groceries during the summer than they did during the school year, when school meals are available. Caregivers reported that these higher grocery costs posed a major financial strain for 47 percent of households and a minor financial strain for another 24 percent (Appendix Table C.3). As shown in Exhibit 7, households reported making a range of financial and food-related trade-offs to manage these costs. Many reported cutting back on other necessities (41 percent), delaying bill payments (39 percent), purchasing cheaper, less healthy foods (37 percent), buying less preferred foods (33 percent), or buying less food overall (28 percent) (Appendix Table C.4).

Key definitions

- **Food security** means access by all people in a household at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life (Rabbitt et al., 2025).
- **Food hardship** means a household has trouble affording enough food. It includes worrying that food will run out before there is money to buy more, or finding that food does not last and there is not enough money to get more (Heflin et al., 2026).
- **Nutrition security** is consistent access to and availability and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being and prevent and, if needed, treat disease (Craig et al., 2025; Mozaffarian et al., 2021).

Exhibit 7. Top ways households managed higher summer food costs in states without SEBT in 2025



Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 National Caregiver Survey on Experiences with SEBT data. Refer to Appendix Table C.2.  
Note: n = 456. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025.  
SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer.

Households also reported a range of strategies to cope with rising food costs in summer 2025. More than half (52 percent) said they put items back or bought less food than planned. Many also reported buying fewer protein foods such as meat, fish, and eggs (45 percent), fewer fresh fruits and vegetables (43 percent), and fewer healthy foods overall (42 percent). In addition, 41 percent said they delayed paying other bills so they could afford food (Appendix Table C.5).

Awareness of SEBT was limited among households in states that did not offer the program in 2025. Thirty-eight percent of households reported that they had heard of SEBT, whereas 62 percent had not (Appendix Table C.6). Despite limited awareness, support for the program was strong: 88 percent said their state

should offer SEBT, and 93 percent said they would participate if it were available (Appendix Tables C.7 and C.8).

Together, these findings point to substantial unmet food needs in states without SEBT. Among households that were aware of the program, perceptions of its potential benefits were overwhelmingly positive. More than nine in 10 said SEBT would help meet household food needs, support children's well-being, stretch food budgets, and reduce stress, among other perceived benefits (Appendix Table C.9).

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## VI. Summary and conclusions

Findings from the caregiver surveys indicate that both rural non-congregate summer meals and SEBT provide important summer nutrition support for households with children, while also highlighting ongoing barriers to awareness, access, and participation. This chapter summarizes key findings across both programs and discusses implications for program outreach and implementation as well as study limitations.

### A. Rural non-congregate summer meals

Most participating households reported positive experiences with the rural non-congregate summer meals program, including convenient access to meals through sites located close to home. Satisfaction with key program features—including food quality, quantity, variety, communications, and convenience—was consistently high, with more than 90 percent of participating households reporting they were very or somewhat satisfied across these measures. Participating households also reported that the program helped them stretch food budgets and supported children’s access to food during the summer months.

Participation in the program also appeared relatively stable across years. Most participating households (76 percent) reported receiving rural non-congregate summer meals in the previous summer, and nearly three-quarters said they planned to participate again in 2026.

At the same time, some households did not participate—or did not participate as much as needed—because they learned about the program too late in the summer, had scheduling conflicts, or believed that other families needed the meals more. These findings suggest that earlier outreach, particularly before the end of the school year, could help increase awareness and participation among households who could benefit from participation. Although most participating households received meals through walk-up or drive-through pickup sites, many also identified opportunities for greater flexibility in how meals are distributed, including additional pickup locations, more pickup or delivery times, and scheduling options that better accommodate working households. Expanding pickup and delivery options and reinforcing that meals are free and available to all children may help reduce barriers and increase program reach.

### B. Households in states that offered SEBT in 2025

SEBT provided important summer nutrition support for participating households by reducing financial strain and helping households obtain healthier and preferred foods for their children. Many households reported that without SEBT they would need to make difficult trade-offs, including buying less food, cutting back on other necessities, or purchasing cheaper and less healthy foods. Participating households generally reported positive experiences receiving and using benefits, and most of them expressed interest in participating again in future summers.

At the same time, findings point to opportunities to reduce barriers to participation and improve communication with households. Some nonparticipating households reported not applying because they were unaware of the program or uncertain whether their children qualified. Participating households also reported challenges obtaining information about the program. Many said benefits were loaded onto a

card or arrived by mail without clear notification or explanation. Schools appeared to play a particularly important role in outreach for participants, serving as both a primary source of information and a trusted communication channel, suggesting they may be well positioned to help communicate information about eligibility, enrollment, and benefit issuance.

Although many households demonstrated general awareness of SEBT eligibility rules, findings suggest that broader understanding of program rules does not always translate into knowing whether a specific child is eligible. Clearer, more targeted communication about eligibility, enrollment, benefit issuance, and expiration timelines may help more households access and fully use benefits.

### **C. Households in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025**

Households in states that did not offer SEBT reported substantial food hardship and strong interest in the program. Many households described making difficult trade-offs to manage higher summer food costs, including buying less food, purchasing cheaper and less healthy foods, reducing purchases of fresh produce and protein foods, and delaying payment of bills or other expenses to afford food.

Although awareness of SEBT was limited in these states, support for the program was strong. Most households said their state should offer SEBT, and nearly all reported that they would participate if benefits were available. Households that were aware of the program had overwhelmingly positive perceptions of SEBT's potential benefits, believing it would help households stretch food budgets, reduce stress, and support children's well-being.

Many households in these states appeared likely to meet the income criteria for SEBT eligibility if the program had been offered. These findings suggest that SEBT may help address important gaps in summer nutrition support in states that do not currently offer the program.

### **D. Study limitations**

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting findings. First, the surveys relied on self-reported information from caregivers and may therefore be subject to recall error or misreporting. Second, although survey weights were used to improve representativeness, cumulative survey response rates were relatively low, which may increase the potential for nonresponse bias despite weighting adjustments. Some subgroup analyses are also based on relatively small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution. In particular, the sample of SEBT nonparticipants in participating states was not designed to be representative of all eligible nonparticipating households, and findings for this group are descriptive of surveyed households only.

In addition, the surveys were conducted online, which may have kept some households from participating if they did not have internet access or had limited digital engagement, despite efforts to improve

#### **Additional resource**

Many households in this study reported uncertainty about SEBT eligibility, enrollment, and benefit use, underscoring the importance of effective outreach and communication. Readers interested in implementation strategies may wish to consult Share Our Strength's [Summer EBT Outreach Playbook](#), which provides examples of approaches for communicating with families about the program.

coverage through mixed sample sources and weighting adjustments. Finally, findings describe household experiences and perceptions during summer 2025 and do not assess program impacts or causal effects.

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## Appendix A

### Rural non-congregate summer meals supplemental tables

**Table A.1.** Characteristics of rural non-congregate summer meals participating and nonparticipating households in 2025

|                                                                               | Participating households |          | Nonparticipating households |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                                                               | Number of households     | Estimate | Number of households        | Estimate |
| <b>Demographic characteristics</b>                                            |                          |          |                             |          |
| <b>Number of children (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                                     |                          |          |                             |          |
| One                                                                           | 299                      | 36.3     | 261                         | 39.0     |
| Two                                                                           | 202                      | 33.9     | 220                         | 41.6     |
| Three                                                                         | 107                      | 21.3     | 79                          | 15.1     |
| Four or more                                                                  | 46                       | 8.6      | 34                          | 4.4      |
| None                                                                          | -                        | -        | -                           | -        |
| <b>Ages of children (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                                       |                          |          |                             |          |
| Under age 5                                                                   | 237                      | 40.9     | 154                         | 31.4     |
| Ages 5-10                                                                     | 319                      | 54.0     | 243                         | 46.8     |
| Ages 11-13                                                                    | 200                      | 32.5     | 207                         | 37.5     |
| Ages 14-18                                                                    | 240                      | 33.5     | 273                         | 29.9     |
| Household size (mean)                                                         | 649                      | 4.2      | 594                         | 4.1      |
| <b>Respondent race/ethnicity (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                              |                          |          |                             |          |
| White                                                                         | 293                      | 34.6     | 419                         | 69.2     |
| Black or African American, non-Hispanic                                       | 214                      | 32.2     | 63                          | 5.6      |
| Hispanic                                                                      | 99                       | 24.3     | 70                          | 16.2     |
| Other                                                                         | 48                       | 9.0      | 42                          | 9.0      |
| <b>Economic characteristics</b>                                               |                          |          |                             |          |
| <b>Receipt of food assistance and Head Start participation (%)</b>            |                          |          |                             |          |
| Received free or reduced-price lunch at school                                | 399                      | 60.4     | 219                         | 32.1     |
| Received free or reduced-price breakfast at school                            | 316                      | 45.8     | 183                         | 26.5     |
| Received food from a food pantry, food bank, or soup kitchen                  | 264                      | 36.9     | 66                          | 6.8      |
| Received snacks at before-school or after-school programs                     | 154                      | 21.0     | 36                          | 6.3      |
| Daycare program or childcare center that provides meals and snacks at no cost | 105                      | 15.4     | 37                          | 6.2      |
| Head Start                                                                    | 92                       | 14.9     | 11                          | 1.2      |
| None of the above                                                             | 76                       | 13.0     | 293                         | 57.2     |
| <b>Receipt of public assistance (%)</b>                                       |                          |          |                             |          |
| Participated in SNAP                                                          | 315                      | 45.8     | 117                         | 12.5     |
| Participated in Medicaid                                                      | 187                      | 25.2     | 90                          | 10.1     |
| Received assistance to pay electric or gas utility bills from LIHEAP          | 159                      | 23.3     | 46                          | 3.9      |
| Participated in WIC                                                           | 100                      | 15.3     | 42                          | 5.7      |
| Received financial assistance to pay rent or housing costs                    | 93                       | 11.8     | 27                          | 2.2      |
| Participated in TANF                                                          | 64                       | 9.8      | 11                          | 0.9      |

|                   | Participating households |          | Nonparticipating households |          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                   | Number of households     | Estimate | Number of households        | Estimate |
| None of the above | 181                      | 31.1     | 407                         | 80.0     |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=654 caregivers from participating households and 594 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Estimates for nonparticipating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025 and did not participate in the program.

<sup>a</sup>Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

LIHEAP = Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; WIC = The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table A.2.** Reasons for participation in rural non-congregate summer meals in 2025

|                                                                                                       | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| The free meals for children help with the household budget                                            | 380                  | 55.9                  |
| The meals provide an easy way to feed children                                                        | 326                  | 49.2                  |
| The meals are healthy                                                                                 | 306                  | 44.0                  |
| The pickup location is close to home                                                                  | 248                  | 36.0                  |
| Received helpful information about the program from the school, community organization, or government | 243                  | 34.8                  |
| The pickup area feels safe                                                                            | 236                  | 34.6                  |
| Family or friends spoke positively about the program                                                  | 231                  | 31.7                  |
| The pickup schedule is convenient                                                                     | 196                  | 28.2                  |
| The meal delivery is convenient                                                                       | 180                  | 26.0                  |
| The pickup location is close to work                                                                  | 91                   | 12.4                  |
| Other                                                                                                 | 10                   | 2.0                   |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=654 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025.

**Table A.3.** Rural non-congregate meal distribution, travel time, and transportation characteristics in 2025

|                                                                                             | Number of households | Percent of households |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Typical meal delivery model</b>                                                          |                      |                       |
| Pick up from a walk-up or curbside drive-through site                                       | 399                  | 66.4                  |
| Home delivery                                                                               | 122                  | 18.0                  |
| Pick up from a bus or van route                                                             | 108                  | 13.4                  |
| Other                                                                                       | 21                   | 2.3                   |
| <b>Time to reach the summer meals site</b>                                                  |                      |                       |
| Less than 10 minutes                                                                        | 195                  | 38.0                  |
| 10 to 19 minutes                                                                            | 200                  | 43.0                  |
| 20 to 29 minutes                                                                            | 62                   | 11.0                  |
| 30 to 39 minutes                                                                            | 35                   | 5.4                   |
| 40 to 49 minutes                                                                            | 7                    | 1.0                   |
| 50 to 59 minutes                                                                            | 5                    | 1.1                   |
| 60 minutes or longer                                                                        | 4                    | 0.6                   |
| <b>Typical mode of transportation to summer meals site, among those who picked up meals</b> |                      |                       |
| Family car                                                                                  | 370                  | 75.4                  |
| Walk                                                                                        | 81                   | 12.7                  |
| A ride in someone else's car                                                                | 55                   | 9.0                   |
| Public transportation                                                                       | 10                   | 1.2                   |
| Bike                                                                                        | 6                    | 0.9                   |
| Other                                                                                       | 6                    | 0.9                   |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=654 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A.4a.** Participant satisfaction with food, convenience, and communication in the rural non-congregate summer meals program in 2025

|                                        | Number of households | Percent of households |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Quality of food</b>                 |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 355                  | 53.4                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 258                  | 40.0                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 33                   | 6.8                   |
| <b>Variety of food</b>                 |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 341                  | 49.7                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 268                  | 43.4                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 36                   | 6.9                   |
| <b>Quantity of food</b>                |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 362                  | 55.1                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 249                  | 38.0                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 36                   | 6.8                   |
| <b>Convenience of food</b>             |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 434                  | 65.3                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 198                  | 32.8                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 14                   | 1.9                   |
| <b>Distance to the pickup location</b> |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 331                  | 62.5                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 168                  | 32.2                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 28                   | 5.3                   |
| <b>Communication about the program</b> |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 404                  | 59.8                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 213                  | 34.0                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 33                   | 6.2                   |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=654 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A.4b.** Participant satisfaction with food, convenience, and communication by meal delivery model in the rural non-congregate summer meals program in 2025

|                                        | Pick up from a walk-up or curbside drive-through site |                       | Pick up from a bus or van route |                       | Home delivery        |                       |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                        | Number of households                                  | Percent of households | Number of households            | Percent of households | Number of households | Percent of households |
| <b>Quality of food</b>                 |                                                       |                       |                                 |                       |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 221                                                   | 56.0                  | 60                              | 52.0                  | 65                   | 47.8                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 158                                                   | 38.6                  | 41                              | 44.0                  | 49                   | 39.7                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 16                                                    | 5.4                   | 5                               | 4.1                   | 7                    | 12.5                  |
| <b>Variety of food</b>                 |                                                       |                       |                                 |                       |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 207                                                   | 48.3                  | 56                              | 50.5                  | 71                   | 55.9                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 170                                                   | 46.3                  | 43                              | 43.1                  | 43                   | 31.8                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 20                                                    | 5.4                   | 5                               | 6.4                   | 7                    | 12.3                  |
| <b>Quantity of food</b>                |                                                       |                       |                                 |                       |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 224                                                   | 56.9                  | 61                              | 53.1                  | 67                   | 51.8                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 155                                                   | 37.8                  | 39                              | 40.6                  | 47                   | 37.9                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 17                                                    | 5.4                   | 6                               | 6.3                   | 7                    | 10.2                  |
| <b>Convenience of food</b>             |                                                       |                       |                                 |                       |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 270                                                   | 67.8                  | -                               | -                     | -                    | -                     |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 119                                                   | 30.0                  | -                               | -                     | -                    | -                     |
| Not satisfied                          | 7                                                     | 2.3                   | -                               | -                     | -                    | -                     |
| <b>Distance to the pickup location</b> |                                                       |                       |                                 |                       |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 259                                                   | 65.5                  | 60                              | 49.2                  | n.a.                 | n.a.                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 119                                                   | 29.7                  | 45                              | 46.6                  | n.a.                 | n.a.                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 18                                                    | 4.8                   | 3                               | 4.2                   | n.a.                 | n.a.                  |
| <b>Communication about the program</b> |                                                       |                       |                                 |                       |                      |                       |
| Very satisfied                         | 261                                                   | 64.3                  | 63                              | 52.0                  | 69                   | 51.6                  |
| Somewhat satisfied                     | 117                                                   | 29.7                  | 37                              | 38.8                  | 49                   | 44.3                  |
| Not satisfied                          | 19                                                    | 6.0                   | 6                               | 9.2                   | 4                    | 4.2                   |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=629 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

n.a. = not applicable.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table A.5.** Perceived rural non-congregate summer meals program benefits in 2025

|                                                                              | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                                              | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| <b>Summer meals help families stretch their food budgets</b>                 |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Strongly Agree                                                               | 425                      | 63.9                  | 414                         | 68.3                  |
| Somewhat Agree                                                               | 182                      | 28.0                  | 156                         | 28.4                  |
| Somewhat Disagree                                                            | 35                       | 7.4                   | 15                          | 2.6                   |
| Strongly Disagree                                                            | 6                        | 0.8                   | 4                           | 0.7                   |
| <b>Summer meals help children get enough to eat in the summer</b>            |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Strongly Agree                                                               | 409                      | 60.8                  | 421                         | 70.0                  |
| Somewhat Agree                                                               | 188                      | 30.4                  | 155                         | 27.2                  |
| Somewhat Disagree                                                            | 43                       | 6.7                   | 10                          | 1.9                   |
| Strongly Disagree                                                            | 5                        | 2.1                   | 5                           | 1.0                   |
| <b>Summer meals provide needed support during times of rising food costs</b> |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Strongly Agree                                                               | 441                      | 66.9                  | 404                         | 67.2                  |
| Somewhat Agree                                                               | 160                      | 26.7                  | 169                         | 28.8                  |
| Somewhat Disagree                                                            | 35                       | 4.6                   | 14                          | 3.2                   |
| Strongly Disagree                                                            | 8                        | 1.9                   | 4                           | 0.8                   |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=654 caregivers from participating households and 594 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Estimates for nonparticipating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025 and did not participate in the program. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A.6.** Participation in the rural non-congregate summer meals program, among households that participated in 2025

|     | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 497                  | 75.6                  |
| No  | 154                  | 24.5                  |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=654 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A.7.** Intentions to participate in and preferences for rural non-congregate summer meals in 2026

|                                                                                                                                                       | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                       | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| <b>Household intends to participate in 2026<sup>a</sup></b>                                                                                           |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Yes                                                                                                                                                   | 488                      | 71.6                  | 68                          | 8.1                   |
| No                                                                                                                                                    | 56                       | 11.5                  | 292                         | 58.0                  |
| Unsure                                                                                                                                                | 109                      | 16.9                  | 233                         | 33.9                  |
| <b>Preferences for receiving meals in 2026, among households that intend to participate and those who may participate but were unsure<sup>b</sup></b> |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Pick up from a walk-up or curbside drive-through site                                                                                                 | 304                      | 53.8                  | 134                         | 45.4                  |
| Pick up from a bus or van route                                                                                                                       | 100                      | 15.3                  | 21                          | 5.2                   |
| Home delivery                                                                                                                                         | 186                      | 30.6                  | 137                         | 45.3                  |
| Other                                                                                                                                                 | 3                        | 0.3                   | 8                           | 4.0                   |
| <b>Preferences for meal types in 2026, among households that intend to participate and those who may participate but were unsure<sup>b</sup></b>      |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Prepared complete meals                                                                                                                               | 348                      | 57.1                  | 88                          | 32.1                  |
| Ingredients to prepare meals at home                                                                                                                  | 380                      | 63.3                  | 229                         | 73.7                  |
| Components of meals                                                                                                                                   | 169                      | 28.9                  | 110                         | 30.3                  |
| None of the above                                                                                                                                     | 9                        | 2.5                   | 14                          | 6.7                   |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Estimates for nonparticipating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025 and did not participate in the program. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

<sup>a</sup> n=654 caregivers from participating households and 594 caregivers from nonparticipating households.

<sup>b</sup> n=597 caregivers from participating households and 301 caregivers from nonparticipating households.

**Table A.8.** Whether household participated in the rural non-congregate summer meals program as much as needed in 2025, among participating households

|     | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 533                  | 85.3                  |
| No  | 112                  | 14.7                  |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=654 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A.9.** Perceived barriers to participation in the rural non-congregate summer meal program in 2025, among households that did not participate as much as needed

|                                                                                                          | Number of households | Percent of households |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Reasons for not participating in the rural non-congregate summer meal program as much as needed</b>   |                      |                       |
| Didn't learn about it until later in the summer                                                          | 40                   | 29.5                  |
| Times did not work with our schedule                                                                     | 35                   | 27.5                  |
| Other people may need it more                                                                            | 28                   | 23.0                  |
| Difficulty getting to the meal site                                                                      | 25                   | 20.7                  |
| My local summer meal site required that my children be present during pickup                             | 17                   | 20.2                  |
| Concerns about what people may think                                                                     | 15                   | 17.5                  |
| Concerns about safety in the political environment                                                       | 6                    | 11.5                  |
| Didn't like the food options                                                                             | 11                   | 8.6                   |
| My local summer meal site only allowed parents, but not other caregivers, to pick up meals for children  | 5                    | 6.8                   |
| Other                                                                                                    | 3                    | 1.6                   |
| <b>Reasons it is difficult to get to the site, among those who found it difficult to get to the site</b> |                      |                       |
| Distance to site                                                                                         | 13                   | 61.6                  |
| Unreliable transportation                                                                                | 11                   | 51.8                  |
| No car                                                                                                   | 13                   | 49.3                  |
| Mobility challenges                                                                                      | 5                    | 24.9                  |
| Cost of gas or public transit fares                                                                      | 7                    | 22.7                  |
| Taking my children along                                                                                 | 5                    | 22.0                  |
| Time required to get to site                                                                             | 4                    | 15.1                  |
| Weather                                                                                                  | 4                    | 14.2                  |
| Didn't work with my schedule                                                                             | 4                    | 12.2                  |
| Effort is not worth the food received                                                                    | -                    | -                     |
| Other                                                                                                    | -                    | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=112 caregivers from participating households that did not participate in the rural non-congregate summer meals program as much as needed. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in rural non-congregate summer meals and lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table A.10.** Features that would enhance the rural non-congregate summer meals program, among households that participated in 2025

|                                                       | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Features that could enhance program experience</b> |                      |                       |
| <b>Food that tastes great</b>                         |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 250                  | 38.2                  |
| Somewhat                                              | 255                  | 39.4                  |
| No difference                                         | 74                   | 11.2                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program              | 70                   | 11.2                  |
| <b>Food that looks appealing</b>                      |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 254                  | 37.3                  |
| Somewhat                                              | 242                  | 37.5                  |
| No difference                                         | 80                   | 14.5                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program              | 71                   | 10.7                  |
| <b>Food that is less processed</b>                    |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 223                  | 33.3                  |
| Somewhat                                              | 244                  | 38.6                  |
| No difference                                         | 118                  | 19.1                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program              | 60                   | 9.0                   |
| <b>Food that is healthier</b>                         |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 251                  | 36.1                  |
| Somewhat                                              | 234                  | 40.0                  |
| No difference                                         | 81                   | 12.6                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program              | 81                   | 11.4                  |
| <b>More fresh produce</b>                             |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 283                  | 41.0                  |
| Somewhat                                              | 216                  | 33.9                  |
| No difference                                         | 78                   | 12.6                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program              | 70                   | 12.6                  |
| <b>Less repetition in meals</b>                       |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 203                  | 31.2                  |
| Somewhat                                              | 267                  | 41.2                  |
| No difference                                         | 115                  | 18.9                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program              | 62                   | 8.8                   |
| <b>Variety of food types for storage and cooking</b>  |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 242                  | 36.4                  |
| Somewhat                                              | 256                  | 39.0                  |
| No difference                                         | 84                   | 14.7                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program              | 61                   | 9.9                   |
| <b>Larger amounts of food</b>                         |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                 | 230                  | 31.4                  |

|                                                                      | Number of households | Percent of households |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Somewhat                                                             | 249                  | 40.8                  |
| No difference                                                        | 115                  | 18.6                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 50                   | 9.2                   |
| <b>Meals that are easy to carry and take home</b>                    |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                | 240                  | 34.1                  |
| Somewhat                                                             | 232                  | 36.8                  |
| No difference                                                        | 78                   | 14.1                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 97                   | 15.0                  |
| <b>Features that could improve program communication</b>             |                      |                       |
| <b>Make program details available online</b>                         |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                | 252                  | 36.4                  |
| Somewhat                                                             | 203                  | 32.6                  |
| No difference                                                        | 124                  | 20.0                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 67                   | 11.1                  |
| <b>List nutrition information for foods</b>                          |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                | 210                  | 29.8                  |
| Somewhat                                                             | 211                  | 35.9                  |
| No difference                                                        | 159                  | 24.2                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 66                   | 10.1                  |
| <b>Share menus in advance</b>                                        |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                | 215                  | 30.7                  |
| Somewhat                                                             | 236                  | 35.9                  |
| No difference                                                        | 137                  | 24.3                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 54                   | 9.2                   |
| <b>Give families a chance to share opinions</b>                      |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                | 217                  | 31.7                  |
| Somewhat                                                             | 231                  | 34.7                  |
| No difference                                                        | 137                  | 22.9                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 57                   | 10.8                  |
| <b>Provide instructions for preparing meals</b>                      |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                | 211                  | 32.1                  |
| Somewhat                                                             | 217                  | 32.6                  |
| No difference                                                        | 153                  | 24.9                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 62                   | 10.4                  |
| <b>Features that could improve program access</b>                    |                      |                       |
| <b>Offer multiple options for pickup or delivery dates and times</b> |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                | 243                  | 34.1                  |
| Somewhat                                                             | 223                  | 32.6                  |
| No difference                                                        | 102                  | 19.2                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                             | 79                   | 14.1                  |

|                                                                                           | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Offer early morning or late afternoon pickup or delivery times for working parents</b> |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                                     | 251                  | 33.8                  |
| Somewhat                                                                                  | 216                  | 37.2                  |
| No difference                                                                             | 103                  | 16.2                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                                                  | 77                   | 12.8                  |
| <b>Offer multiple pickup locations or stops</b>                                           |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                                     | 223                  | 33.1                  |
| Somewhat                                                                                  | 223                  | 34.2                  |
| No difference                                                                             | 109                  | 16.6                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                                                  | 94                   | 16.0                  |
| <b>Minimize waiting times</b>                                                             |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                                     | 209                  | 30.3                  |
| Somewhat                                                                                  | 217                  | 33.8                  |
| No difference                                                                             | 129                  | 21.7                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                                                  | 88                   | 14.2                  |
| <b>Staff the program with people from the local community</b>                             |                      |                       |
| A lot                                                                                     | 197                  | 26.8                  |
| Somewhat                                                                                  | 220                  | 38.0                  |
| No difference                                                                             | 128                  | 18.8                  |
| Already true/offered at my local program                                                  | 100                  | 16.4                  |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=594 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025 and did not participate in the program.

**Table A.11.** Awareness of the rural non-congregate summer meals program, among households that did not participate in 2025

|               | Number of households | Percent of households |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes, a lot    | 36                   | 4.9                   |
| Yes, a little | 174                  | 27.4                  |
| No            | 384                  | 67.7                  |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=594 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025 and did not participate in the program. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A.12.** Reasons for nonparticipation in the rural non-congregate summer meals program, among households aware of the program in 2025

|                                                    | Number of households | Percent of households |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Didn't need it                                     | 107                  | 56.5                  |
| Other people may need it more                      | 96                   | 41.2                  |
| Didn't know if we were eligible                    | 49                   | 22.8                  |
| Times did not work for our schedule                | 42                   | 18.8                  |
| Didn't know enough about it                        | 42                   | 16.2                  |
| Difficulty getting to the meal site                | 26                   | 10.9                  |
| Concerns about what people may think               | 20                   | 7.3                   |
| Didn't like the food options                       | 16                   | 4.5                   |
| Concerns about safety in the political environment | -                    | -                     |
| Other                                              | -                    | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of Summer 2025 Rural Non-Congregate Caregiver Survey data.

Note: n=210 caregivers from nonparticipating households that were aware of the rural non-congregate summer meals program. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that lived within a 15-mile radius of an open summer meals site in 2025 and did not participate in the program.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

## Appendix B

Supplemental tables for households in states that offered SEBT

**Table B.1.** Characteristics of participating and nonparticipating SEBT households in 2025

|                                                                               | Participating households |          | Nonparticipating households |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                                                               | Number of households     | Estimate | Number of households        | Estimate |
| <b>Demographic characteristics</b>                                            |                          |          |                             |          |
| <b>Number of children (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                                     |                          |          |                             |          |
| One                                                                           | 152                      | 28.6     | 42                          | 39.5     |
| Two                                                                           | 176                      | 39.4     | 33                          | 26.0     |
| Three                                                                         | 94                       | 20.5     | 23                          | 28.2     |
| Four or more                                                                  | 63                       | 11.6     | 14                          | 6.4      |
| None                                                                          | -                        | -        | -                           | -        |
| <b>Ages of children (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                                       |                          |          |                             |          |
| Under age 5                                                                   | 114                      | 24.7     | 28                          | 21.8     |
| Ages 5-10                                                                     | 277                      | 63.0     | 67                          | 64.4     |
| Ages 11-13                                                                    | 215                      | 51.9     | 38                          | 37.0     |
| Ages 14-18                                                                    | 246                      | 33.2     | 52                          | 32.3     |
| Household size (mean)                                                         | 485                      | 4.5      | 112                         | 4.5      |
| <b>Respondent race/ethnicity (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                              |                          |          |                             |          |
| White                                                                         | 205                      | 40.1     | 61                          | 40.6     |
| Hispanic                                                                      | 126                      | 32.7     | 26                          | 34.0     |
| Black or African American, non-Hispanic                                       | 112                      | 15.0     | 15                          | 15.4     |
| Other                                                                         | 42                       | 12.2     | 10                          | 10.0     |
| <b>Economic characteristics</b>                                               |                          |          |                             |          |
| <b>Receipt of food assistance and Head Start participation (%)</b>            |                          |          |                             |          |
| Received free or reduced-price lunch at school                                | 338                      | 68.5     | 61                          | 53.3     |
| Received free or reduced-price breakfast at school                            | 284                      | 57.7     | 41                          | 31.2     |
| Received food from a food pantry, food bank, or soup kitchen                  | 177                      | 42.3     | 28                          | 27.0     |
| Received snacks at before-school or after-school programs                     | 85                       | 16.9     | 11                          | 11.8     |
| Daycare program or childcare center that provides meals and snacks at no cost | 50                       | 11.2     | 5                           | 2.7      |
| Head Start                                                                    | 27                       | 5.7      | 4                           | 1.4      |
| None of the above                                                             | 72                       | 15.6     | 37                          | 40.0     |
| <b>Receipt of public assistance (%)</b>                                       |                          |          |                             |          |
| Participated in SNAP                                                          | 281                      | 59.9     | 30                          | 34.6     |
| Participated in Medicaid                                                      | 176                      | 40.7     | 28                          | 23.9     |
| Received assistance to pay electric or gas utility bills from LIHEAP          | 137                      | 25.6     | 20                          | 16.3     |
| Received financial assistance to pay rent or housing costs                    | 83                       | 18.7     | 4                           | 2.7      |
| Participated in WIC                                                           | 59                       | 13.6     | 9                           | 5.4      |
| Participated in TANF                                                          | 43                       | 8.2      | 3                           | 5.9      |
| None of the above                                                             | 100                      | 22.0     | 57                          | 51.2     |

|                                                              | Participating households |          | Nonparticipating households |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                                              | Number of households     | Estimate | Number of households        | Estimate |
| Participated in any food assistance or public assistance (%) | 452                      | 92.0     | 84                          | 68.2     |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>a</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.2.** Method of SEBT receipt among participating households in 2025

|                                                          | Number of households | Percent of households |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Received automatically                                   | 390                  | 82.2                  |
| Applied                                                  | 57                   | 12.0                  |
| Applied and was denied, but eventually received benefits | 13                   | 2.2                   |
| Don't know                                               | 21                   | 3.6                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table B.3.** Degree of difficulty in applying for SEBT in 2025

|                    | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                    | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| Very easy          | 12                       | 19.3                  | 3                           | 62.1                  |
| Somewhat easy      | 35                       | 45.3                  | 4                           | 10.0                  |
| Somewhat difficult | 15                       | 23.34                 | -                           | -                     |
| Very difficult     | 8                        | 12.0                  | 5                           | 25.0                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.4.** SEBT application experiences among nonparticipating households in 2025

|                                                               | Number of households | Percent of households |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Familiar with SEBT<sup>a</sup></b>                         |                      |                       |
| Very familiar                                                 | 20                   | 13.4                  |
| Somewhat familiar                                             | 33                   | 38.0                  |
| Not familiar                                                  | 59                   | 48.6                  |
| <b>Applied for SEBT in 2025<sup>a</sup></b>                   |                      |                       |
| Yes                                                           | 14                   | 16.4                  |
| No                                                            | 86                   | 74.0                  |
| Don't know                                                    | 11                   | 9.6                   |
| <b>Reason for denial, among those who applied<sup>a</sup></b> |                      |                       |
| Income too high                                               | 3                    | 29.7                  |
| Child does not attend an eligible school                      | -                    | -                     |
| Don't know                                                    | 7                    | 65.0                  |
| Other                                                         | -                    | -                     |
| <b>Reason did not apply, among those who did not apply</b>    |                      |                       |
| Didn't know if we were eligible                               | 47                   | 51.9                  |
| Didn't know about the program                                 | 50                   | 50.2                  |
| Concerned about immigration status                            | 4                    | 15.7                  |
| Didn't know if we would be automatically enrolled             | 11                   | 8.8                   |
| Didn't know where to get information about the program        | 7                    | 7.5                   |
| Application was too complicated                               | -                    | -                     |
| Benefit amount wasn't enough                                  | -                    | -                     |
| Couldn't reach anyone on the customer service line            | -                    | -                     |
| Other                                                         | -                    | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. This sample reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>a</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.5.** Sources of information about SEBT in 2025

|                                                                          | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                                          | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| Children's school                                                        | 165                      | 42.5                  | 11                          | 11.1                  |
| Government agency or social service office                               | 138                      | 31.9                  | 9                           | 26.6                  |
| SEBT program website                                                     | 110                      | 23.0                  | 4                           | 14.4                  |
| Friends or family                                                        | 76                       | 18.8                  | 12                          | 16.0                  |
| Social media                                                             | 72                       | 14.3                  | 8                           | 14.9                  |
| Community organization such as a library, food bank, or community center | 25                       | 4.8                   | -                           | -                     |
| Tribe                                                                    | 5                        | 2.5                   | -                           | -                     |
| Church or place of worship                                               | 7                        | 2.1                   | -                           | -                     |
| Doctor or clinic                                                         | 7                        | 0.8                   | -                           | -                     |
| Don't know                                                               | 49                       | 10.2                  | 13                          | 19.1                  |
| Other                                                                    | 13                       | 3.4                   | 3                           | 1.4                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households that were aware of SEBT. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.6.** Experiences receiving or using SEBT in 2025

|                                                                      | Number of households | Percent of households |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Card arrived or benefits loaded on existing card without explanation | 232                  | 47.6                  |
| Card arrived later than expected                                     | 68                   | 14.9                  |
| Cards arrived for only some of my school-age children                | 33                   | 10.4                  |
| Had trouble getting card in mail                                     | 22                   | 9.7                   |
| Did not know when benefits would expired                             | 32                   | 9.4                   |
| Not sure what could be purchased with benefits                       | 21                   | 6.3                   |
| Had trouble setting up card or creating a PIN to us it               | 24                   | 6.3                   |
| Benefits not available when tried to use for the first time          | 15                   | 5.0                   |
| Confused about which card benefits were loaded on                    | 16                   | 3.3                   |
| Card did not always work due to technical issues                     | 9                    | 1.8                   |
| Benefits stolen                                                      | 5                    | 1.2                   |
| Preferred store did not accept benefits                              | -                    | -                     |
| None of the above                                                    | 125                  | 23.6                  |
| Other                                                                | 10                   | 2.9                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.7.** Household SEBT participation in 2024

|            | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|            | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| Yes        | 368                      | 77.0                  | 18                          | 17.5                  |
| No         | 72                       | 14.3                  | 80                          | 74.1                  |
| Don't know | 40                       | 8.7                   | 14                          | 8.4                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table B.8.** Ease of receiving SEBT in 2025 compared with 2024

|                                                                                                                                           | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Ease of receiving SEBT in 2025, compared with 2024<sup>a</sup></b>                                                                     |                      |                       |
| Easier this year                                                                                                                          | 85                   | 23.9                  |
| Harder this year                                                                                                                          | 35                   | 9.3                   |
| Equally easy both years                                                                                                                   | 211                  | 56.2                  |
| Equally hard both years                                                                                                                   | 12                   | 5.3                   |
| Don't know                                                                                                                                | 23                   | 5.4                   |
| <b>Reasons using benefits was easier this year than last year, among those who used benefits both years and found it easier this year</b> |                      |                       |
| Received notification about eligibility earlier                                                                                           | 47                   | 54.4                  |
| Benefit arrived earlier                                                                                                                   | 24                   | 34.5                  |
| Knew more about what could be purchased with benefits                                                                                     | 18                   | 16.9                  |
| Knew where to go with questions                                                                                                           | 16                   | 12.0                  |
| Preferred store accepted benefits                                                                                                         | 12                   | 11.4                  |
| Other                                                                                                                                     | 5                    | 5.8                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=368 caregivers from participating households that received SEBT in 2024 and 2025. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025.

<sup>a</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table B.9.** Use of SEBT benefits in 2025

|                                                                                | Number of households | Percent of households |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Spent entire benefit this year</b>                                          |                      |                       |
| Yes                                                                            | 431                  | 88.1                  |
| No                                                                             | 32                   | 6.5                   |
| Don't know                                                                     | 20                   | 5.4                   |
| <b>Reason didn't use all benefits, among those who didn't use all benefits</b> |                      |                       |
| Did not know benefits expired                                                  | 9                    | 45.6                  |
| Benefits stolen                                                                | 6                    | 22.2                  |
| Unable to set up or activate the card                                          | 4                    | 9.8                   |
| Lost card                                                                      | 3                    | 9.3                   |
| Benefits expired before I could use them                                       | 4                    | 4.7                   |
| Card did not arrive and did not receive a replacement card                     | -                    | -                     |
| Card did not arrive and it took too long to receive a replacement card         | -                    | -                     |
| Did not know which card had the benefits                                       | -                    | -                     |
| Did not need benefits                                                          | -                    | -                     |
| Not comfortable using a government benefit                                     | -                    | -                     |
| Other                                                                          | -                    | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.10.** Experiences finding information about SEBT in 2025

|                                                                                                                           | Number of households | Percent of households |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Finding information about receiving or using benefits<sup>a</sup></b>                                                  |                      |                       |
| Very easy                                                                                                                 | 217                  | 40.1                  |
| Somewhat easy                                                                                                             | 189                  | 42.6                  |
| Somewhat difficult                                                                                                        | 59                   | 13.4                  |
| Very difficult                                                                                                            | 15                   | 3.9                   |
| <b>Reasons it was difficult to find information about receiving or using benefits, among those who found it difficult</b> |                      |                       |
| Did not know where to find information                                                                                    | 33                   | 58.5                  |
| Did not know where to go with questions                                                                                   | 28                   | 51.5                  |
| Not enough detail was provided                                                                                            | 30                   | 50.3                  |
| Could not get through to customer service                                                                                 | 22                   | 36.5                  |
| Did not get updates on the status of application or enrollment                                                            | 15                   | 28.1                  |
| Other                                                                                                                     | -                    | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025.

<sup>a</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.11.** Awareness of SEBT eligibility rules in 2025

|                                                                               | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                                               | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| <b>Some children are automatically enrolled, while others need to apply</b>   |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Yes                                                                           | 338                      | 72.2                  | 24                          | 56.4                  |
| No                                                                            | 141                      | 27.9                  | 28                          | 43.6                  |
| <b>Children must be income eligible to get SEBT</b>                           |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Yes                                                                           | 365                      | 76.2                  | 33                          | 71.7                  |
| No                                                                            | 107                      | 23.8                  | 19                          | 28.3                  |
| <b>Children whose families receive SNAP are also eligible to receive SEBT</b> |                          |                       |                             |                       |
| Yes                                                                           | 400                      | 84.1                  | 37                          | 80.9                  |
| No                                                                            | 71                       | 15.9                  | 14                          | 19.1                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households that were aware of SEBT. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table B.12.** Whether SEBT enabled purchase of foods needed or wanted for children in 2025

|                    | Number of households | Percent of households |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes                | 360                  | 74.6                  |
| Made no difference | 79                   | 17.7                  |
| No                 | 21                   | 5.8                   |
| Don't know         | 19                   | 2.0                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table B.13.** Household adjustments in the absence of SEBT

|                                                                               | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Cut back on grocery spending by buying less food                              | 190                  | 41.7                  |
| Spend less on other necessities                                               | 188                  | 40.8                  |
| Cut back on spending by buying foods that may be less healthy but are cheaper | 154                  | 31.8                  |
| Cut back on spending by buying foods that are not preferred                   | 132                  | 24.2                  |
| Would not need to make any adjustments to be able to get food                 | 88                   | 16.7                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households. Estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table B.14.** Foods households would buy with SEBT

|                                                                         | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                                         | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| Fresh produce                                                           | 310                      | 63.4                  | 85                          | 73.1                  |
| Meat, fish, eggs and other proteins                                     | 269                      | 55.1                  | 78                          | 63.5                  |
| Pantry staples like pasta, rice, and canned food                        | 206                      | 38.7                  | 46                          | 46.2                  |
| Snacks                                                                  | 173                      | 34.9                  | 36                          | 29.3                  |
| Foods that children like                                                | 146                      | 30.7                  | 38                          | 38.7                  |
| Greater variety of food                                                 | 128                      | 30.4                  | 39                          | 32.7                  |
| Healthier versions of the same foods that child(ren) currently consumes | 109                      | 21.8                  | 43                          | 40.7                  |
| Foods that meet dietary restrictions or allergies of children           | 57                       | 11.2                  | 24                          | 23.5                  |
| Foods that may not be provided by other programs                        | 32                       | 7.5                   | 11                          | 17.0                  |
| Foods that are part of heritage or culture                              | 33                       | 5.2                   | 12                          | 16.3                  |
| None of the above                                                       | 18                       | 3.4                   | 4                           | 3.5                   |
| Other                                                                   | 3                        | 0.7                   | -                           | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.15.** Interest in receiving SEBT in future summers

|        | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|        | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| Yes    | 453                      | 92.0                  | 96                          | 79.1                  |
| No     | 13                       | 3.6                   | -                           | -                     |
| Unsure | 15                       | 4.4                   | 14                          | 18.9                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.16.** Household preferences for receiving information about SEBT

|              | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|              | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| Email        | 333                      | 69.4                  | 75                          | 59.5                  |
| Mail         | 248                      | 51.2                  | 49                          | 28.7                  |
| Text message | 225                      | 50.5                  | 37                          | 21.5                  |
| Website      | 119                      | 24.1                  | 32                          | 29.6                  |
| Phone call   | 71                       | 16.5                  | 17                          | 9.6                   |
| Flyers       | 50                       | 12.1                  | 17                          | 11.3                  |
| Social media | 56                       | 10.5                  | 20                          | 18.1                  |
| Other        | -                        | -                     | -                           | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table B.17.** SEBT information households wanted to receive in 2025

|                                         | Participating households |                       | Nonparticipating households |                       |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                         | Number of households     | Percent of households | Number of households        | Percent of households |
| How to check if child is eligible       | 314                      | 67.6                  | 80                          | 67.5                  |
| Rules for who may be eligible           | 270                      | 61.0                  | 85                          | 65.4                  |
| How to apply                            | 285                      | 59.0                  | 81                          | 68.1                  |
| How to check child's enrollment status  | 237                      | 46.2                  | 47                          | 41.4                  |
| Where to go with questions or problems  | 185                      | 39.4                  | 34                          | 30.2                  |
| Website where there is more information | 182                      | 36.0                  | 47                          | 40.3                  |
| Expiration date of card                 | 171                      | 34.5                  | 28                          | 26.3                  |
| Foods that can be purchased             | 164                      | 29.4                  | 47                          | 54.3                  |
| How to update contact information       | 135                      | 28.4                  | 21                          | 19.0                  |
| Locations of where benefit can be used  | 141                      | 25.7                  | 46                          | 48.2                  |
| How to avoid fraud or theft of card     | 105                      | 23.0                  | 22                          | 28.0                  |
| Other                                   | -                        | -                     | -                           | -                     |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=485 caregivers from participating households and 112 caregivers from nonparticipating households. Estimates for participating households are weighted to be nationally representative of households with children that participated in SEBT in 2025. The sample of nonparticipating households in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

## Appendix C

Supplemental tables for households in states that did not offer SEBT

**Table C.1.** Characteristics of households in non-SEBT states in 2025

|                                                                               | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Demographic characteristics</b>                                            |                      |                       |
| <b>Number of children (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                                     |                      |                       |
| One                                                                           | 156                  | 30.4                  |
| Two                                                                           | 142                  | 35.9                  |
| Three                                                                         | 104                  | 23.6                  |
| Four or more                                                                  | 54                   | 10.1                  |
| None                                                                          | -                    | -                     |
| <b>Ages of children (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                                       |                      |                       |
| Under age 5                                                                   | 108                  | 22.1                  |
| Ages 5-10                                                                     | 242                  | 60.0                  |
| Ages 11-13                                                                    | 172                  | 46.9                  |
| Ages 14-18                                                                    | 229                  | 32.3                  |
| Household size (mean)                                                         | 456                  | 4.4                   |
| <b>Respondent race/ethnicity (%)<sup>a</sup></b>                              |                      |                       |
| Hispanic                                                                      | 175                  | 39.0                  |
| White                                                                         | 163                  | 33.0                  |
| Black or African American, non-Hispanic                                       | 101                  | 21.0                  |
| Other                                                                         | 17                   | 7.0                   |
| <b>Economic characteristics</b>                                               |                      |                       |
| <b>Receipt of food assistance and Head Start participation (%)</b>            |                      |                       |
| Received free or reduced-price lunch at school                                | 284                  | 58.8                  |
| Received free or reduced-price breakfast at school                            | 245                  | 48.7                  |
| Received food from a food pantry, food bank, or soup kitchen                  | 185                  | 33.1                  |
| Received snacks at before-school or after-school programs                     | 86                   | 15.6                  |
| Daycare program or childcare center that provides meals and snacks at no cost | 48                   | 10.5                  |
| Head Start                                                                    | 26                   | 8.7                   |
| None of the above                                                             | 73                   | 24.0                  |
| <b>Receipt of public assistance (%)</b>                                       |                      |                       |
| Participated in SNAP                                                          | 226                  | 45.0                  |
| Participated in Medicaid                                                      | 117                  | 22.2                  |
| Received financial assistance to pay rent or housing costs                    | 68                   | 16.3                  |
| Received assistance to pay electric or gas utility bills from LIHEAP          | 74                   | 14.4                  |
| Participated in WIC                                                           | 50                   | 8.7                   |
| Participated in TANF                                                          | 24                   | 4.6                   |
| None of the above                                                             | 134                  | 37.5                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025.

<sup>a</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

**Table C.2.** Food hardship and nutrition insecurity among households with low incomes in non-SEBT states in 2025

|                                            | Number of households | Percent of households |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Household food hardship</b>             |                      |                       |
| No                                         | 42                   | 12.0                  |
| Yes                                        | 414                  | 88.0                  |
| <b>Child food hardship</b>                 |                      |                       |
| No                                         | 123                  | 28.0                  |
| Yes                                        | 330                  | 72.0                  |
| <b>Household nutrition security status</b> |                      |                       |
| Nutrition secure                           | 101                  | 25.1                  |
| Nutrition insecure                         | 354                  | 74.9                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table C.3.** Summer grocery costs among households in non-SEBT states in 2025

|                                                            | Number of households | Percent of households |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Do not spend more relative to school year                  | 51                   | 15.9                  |
| Spend more relative to school year, major financial strain | 227                  | 46.7                  |
| Spend more relative to school year, minor financial strain | 121                  | 24.1                  |
| Spend more relative to school year, not a financial strain | 35                   | 9.6                   |
| Don't know                                                 | 21                   | 3.7                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table C.4.** Adjustments households made to get food during the summer, among households in non-SEBT states in 2025

|                                                                               | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Spent less on other necessities to get food                                   | 191                  | 41.0                  |
| Delayed paying bills to get food                                              | 174                  | 38.7                  |
| Cut back on spending by buying foods that may be less healthy but are cheaper | 186                  | 37.3                  |
| Cut back on spending by buying foods that are not preferred                   | 153                  | 32.5                  |
| Cut back on grocery spending by buying less food                              | 128                  | 27.7                  |
| Delayed getting medical care to afford food                                   | 92                   | 18.5                  |
| Did not need to make any adjustments to be able to get food                   | 71                   | 18.3                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table C.5.** Actions households in non-SEBT states took in 2025 due to the cost of food

|                                                                    | Number of households | Percent of households |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Put items back or bought less food than planned                    | 244                  | 51.7                  |
| Bought fewer protein foods such as meat, fish, and eggs            | 215                  | 44.6                  |
| Bought fewer fresh fruits and vegetables                           | 212                  | 42.9                  |
| Bought less healthy foods                                          | 188                  | 42.4                  |
| Delayed paying for other bills to afford food                      | 182                  | 40.9                  |
| Bought fewer dairy products                                        | 153                  | 32.4                  |
| Paid for utilities instead of food                                 | 140                  | 28.3                  |
| Went into debt to afford food                                      | 131                  | 26.6                  |
| Paid for housing instead of food                                   | 126                  | 21.4                  |
| Delayed paying medical care to afford food                         | 88                   | 19.2                  |
| Traveled farther or to less convenient stores to find cheaper food | 90                   | 19.1                  |
| Paid for school expenses instead of food                           | 51                   | 15.2                  |
| Reduced use of heating or air conditioning to afford food          | 58                   | 13.6                  |
| None of these                                                      | 39                   | 10.8                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table C.6.** Awareness of SEBT among households in non-SEBT states in 2025

|     | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 215                  | 38.1                  |
| No  | 236                  | 61.9                  |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table C.7.** Whether state should make SEBT available, among households in non-SEBT states in 2025

|            | Number of households | Percent of households |
|------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes        | 422                  | 88.2                  |
| No         | 11                   | 2.8                   |
| Don't know | 21                   | 9.0                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table C.8.** Whether household would like to receive SEBT in future summers, among households in non-SEBT states in 2025

|        | Number of households | Percent of households |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes    | 428                  | 93.0                  |
| No     | 11                   | 2.8                   |
| Unsure | 15                   | 4.2                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Participant estimates are weighted to be nationally representative of SEBT participants in 2025. The sample of nonparticipants in SEBT states reflects survey respondents that could be identified and recruited through the available sample sources and findings should be interpreted with caution. Estimates for non-SEBT states are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

**Table C.9.** Perceived benefits of SEBT among households aware of the program in non-SEBT states in 2025

|                                                                          | Number of households | Percent of households |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>SEBT can help families stretch their food budgets</b>                 |                      |                       |
| Strongly agree                                                           | 324                  | 70.8                  |
| Somewhat agree                                                           | 101                  | 22.6                  |
| Somewhat disagree                                                        | 14                   | 3.8                   |
| Strongly disagree                                                        | 4                    | 1.0                   |
| No opinion/don't know                                                    | 9                    | 1.8                   |
| <b>SEBT can help alleviate stress</b>                                    |                      |                       |
| Strongly agree                                                           | 324                  | 70.0                  |
| Somewhat agree                                                           | 99                   | 22.3                  |
| Somewhat disagree                                                        | 11                   | 4.1                   |
| Strongly disagree                                                        | -                    | -                     |
| No opinion/don't know                                                    | 15                   | 3.5                   |
| <b>SEBT can help get kids healthy foods</b>                              |                      |                       |
| Strongly agree                                                           | 333                  | 72.6                  |
| Somewhat agree                                                           | 82                   | 19.0                  |
| Somewhat disagree                                                        | 17                   | 5.1                   |
| Strongly disagree                                                        | 4                    | 0.3                   |
| No opinion/don't know                                                    | 13                   | 3.0                   |
| <b>SEBT can help set up kids for success when the school year starts</b> |                      |                       |
| Strongly agree                                                           | 305                  | 63.9                  |
| Somewhat agree                                                           | 106                  | 25.4                  |
| Somewhat disagree                                                        | 24                   | 7.1                   |
| Strongly disagree                                                        | 5                    | 0.5                   |
| No opinion/don't know                                                    | 13                   | 3.1                   |
| <b>SEBT can support families' well-being</b>                             |                      |                       |
| Strongly agree                                                           | 330                  | 70.6                  |
| Somewhat agree                                                           | 95                   | 20.5                  |
| Somewhat disagree                                                        | 13                   | 6.0                   |
| Strongly disagree                                                        | 4                    | 0.9                   |
| No opinion/don't know                                                    | 10                   | 2.1                   |
| <b>SEBT can support children's well-being</b>                            |                      |                       |
| Strongly agree                                                           | 331                  | 72.3                  |
| Somewhat agree                                                           | 100                  | 22.0                  |
| Somewhat disagree                                                        | 11                   | 3.7                   |
| Strongly disagree                                                        | -                    | -                     |
| No opinion/don't know                                                    | 7                    | 1.2                   |

|                                                                         | Number of households | Percent of households |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>SEBT combined with summer meal programs can help meet food needs</b> |                      |                       |
| Strongly agree                                                          | 331                  | 71.3                  |
| Somewhat agree                                                          | 97                   | 22.9                  |
| Somewhat disagree                                                       | 13                   | 3.6                   |
| Strongly disagree                                                       | -                    | -                     |
| No opinion/don't know                                                   | 10                   | 1.8                   |

Source: Tabulations of national caregiver survey on experiences with SEBT data.

Note: n=456 caregivers from households in non-SEBT states. Estimates are weighted to be representative of households with low incomes in states that did not offer SEBT in 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SEBT = Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer.

- Estimate is suppressed due to a small sample size (less than 3).

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