SNAP: Strengthening Schools and Communities

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Agenda

• Intro
• Overview of Child Hunger
• SNAP
• CEP and Direct Certification
• Increasing SNAP Participation & getting Direct Certification
• Questions
Who are we?

Montana Food Bank Network works to end hunger in Montana through food acquisition and distribution, education and advocacy.

• Food Distribution
  • More than 150 Partner Agencies across the state
    • Food pantries
    • Senior centers
    • Soup kitchens
    • Youth homes

• Advocacy, Education, Outreach
  • Local, state, and federal levels
  • Supporting public food programs and other anti-poverty policies
Who are we?

**Office of Public Instruction** – The state of Montana’s agency that administers and coordinates educational support to schools.

**School Nutrition Programs** – Administer the USDA School Nutrition Programs

- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Special Milk Program
- USDA Foods Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- MT Team Nutrition Program
Hunger in Montana

1 in 7 Montanans live in households that experience food insecurity

1 in 5 children live in food insecure households

Over 110,000 different Montanans needed emergency food in 2015 making over 1,000,000 visits.
What we mean by Food Insecurity

USDA measures food insecurity based on data collected by the US Census

**Food Security**: the ability to access nutritionally adequate food consistently and without need for emergency food.

**Food Insecurity**: Reduced quality and variety of diet, need for emergency food, lowered nutrition.

**Very Low Food Security**: most severe form of food insecurity, households must reduce food intake or skip meals because of lack of money or resources for food.
Child Food Insecurity by County

- Varies significantly by county
  - Map the Meal Gap for county level numbers

Highest Child Food Insecurity:
- Sanders County
- Lincoln County
- Mineral County
- Big Horn County
- Blaine County
- Glacier County
- Lake County
- Powell County
- Deer Lodge County
- Pondera County
Bridging the Food Security Gap

• Public Nutrition Programs are effective but underutilized.

• SNAP, WIC, School Meals, Summer Food, Childcare and Afterschool Meals, etc.

• Participation is not maximized due to stigma, not knowing about the program or eligibility, application barriers, lack of local programs.
Focus on SNAP

SNAP-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

• Approximately 1 in 4 Montanans likely to be eligible for SNAP do not participate

• Average benefit per household: $250/month
  Minimum benefit is $16/month

• Yearly SNAP revenue: $170 million
  This is money spent directly at local grocery stores, supermarkets, and Farmers’ Markets that accept EBT cards across the state

Currently 120,000 Montanans participate in SNAP
Who is Eligible?

RESOURCES:
For most applicants, there is no longer a resource limit. Only applicable is household has a member who was previously disqualified from SNAP. They will also have to meet a lower income level.

INCOME:
To qualify for SNAP, you need to meet two income guidelines, the Gross and the Net:

1. The first step is meeting the Gross Guideline. If you meet this guideline, submit an application to see if you also meet the Net Guideline.

2. Deduct all living expenses (i.e. rent, utilities, childcare costs, etc) to get a rough estimate of Net Income. If you Net Monthly is within the eligibility guidelines, individual should apply for SNAP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People in Household</th>
<th>Gross Monthly Income Limit*</th>
<th>Net Monthly Income Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,980</td>
<td>$990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$2,670</td>
<td>$1,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$3,360</td>
<td>$1,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each Add’l Member</td>
<td>+ $690</td>
<td>+ $345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to figure out SNAP eligibility

Go online to: Apply.mt.gov

Applicants will need information for all household members regarding:
• Income (earned and unearned)
• Resources (property and accounts)
• Expenses (including rent/mortgage, utilities, child or dependent care, medical costs if disabled or over 60)
Important Messages

• There are enough SNAP benefits for everyone who qualifies – you are not taking benefits away from anyone else.

• You can receive SNAP and still come to the food pantry, receive senior commodities, or participate in other food programs.

  • You have paid taxes to support SNAP, now the program is here when you need it.

  • You can be working and still get SNAP. In fact, more than 1 in 3 SNAP households in MT are employed.

  • Families enrolled in SNAP can automatically qualify for WIC and free school meals.
What is the Community Eligibility Provision?

CEP allows eligible schools to provide free meals to all enrolled students.
1 in 5

Montana Children are at Risk of Food Insecurity

CEP simplifies the process for children to access healthy school meals and reduces stigma.
Who benefits from CEP? Everyone!

**Students**
- All students have access to **free** healthy school meals
- No Stigma attached
- Streamlined meal service operation provides more time for students to consume food
- Simplified access results in more students nourished and ready to learn

**Parents**
- Do not have to complete a household application
- No worries about funding school meal accounts

**Schools**
- Reduces paperwork & administrative costs by eliminating free & reduced applications
- Eliminates the burden of tracking individual eligibility and collecting money for meals
- Makes it easier to implement alternate meal service styles such as breakfast in the classroom
How do Schools Qualify for CEP?

CEP Eligibility

• 40% or more of enrolled students identified as directly certified

Direct Certification

• Process of determining students eligible for free meal benefits using documentation from the State or local agency.

Direct Certification Sources

• SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
• TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
• FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations)
• Homeless
• Migrant
• Head Start
• Foster Care
## Calculating Directly Certified Students for CEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified</th>
<th># of Identified Students Directly Certified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student % =</td>
<td>Total # of enrolled students X 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May be determined by:
- an individual participating school
- a group of participating schools in the district
- district-wide calculation

**April 1st -**
The date CEP eligibility is established for the following school year
CEP Reimbursement

**Direct Cert %  X  1.6 = Reimbursement Rate**

The CEP reimbursement is the percent of total meals served reimbursed at the Federal ‘free’ reimbursement rate.

Remaining percent reimbursed at the Federal ‘paid’ reimbursement rate.

CEP rates are locked in for a period of four school years and protected from decreases.

CEP rates can increase each year if the percent of directly certified students increases.
School Implementation

FUN FACT

MT Schools operating CEP saw about a 20% increase in School Breakfast Program participation.
CEP - Calculation Example

Students Directly Certified: 112
Students Enrolled: 198
Direct Certification %: 56.57%

56.57% \times 1.6 = 90.5%

90.5% of meals served reimbursed at the Federal free rate
9.5% of meals served reimbursed at the Federal paid rate

Schools with a direct cert rate at or above 62.5% (before applying the 1.6 multiplication factor) will receive 100% of meals at the Federal free rate.
Direct Certification Application (DCA) System

The OPI, School Nutrition Program’s automated matching system that directly certifies eligible students.

The OPI utilizes the DCA system to capture direct certification percentages on April 1st.
April 1\textsuperscript{st} data snapshot is near.

Do you know your school’s current direct certification percentage(s)?

Many reports within the DCA System relay direct certification percentages including the Direct Certification Report.
How can schools maximize direct certification rates?
AIM (Achievement in Montana)

• AIM is the OPI student information system

• The Direct Certification Application (DCA) system utilizes student information from the AIM system

• Ensure that the AIM system includes up-to-date student information
DCA – Potential Matches

Review ‘Potential Matches’

The DCA system automatically matches most SNAP, TANF, FDPIR and Foster Care children to enrolled students.

**We need your help**

Determine if the ‘potential matches’ are indeed a match (one in the same person) and link matches.
Student records in DCA can be manually directly certified

**Eligible Sources:** SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, Homeless, Migrant, Head Start & Foster Care

- Documentation must be confirmed through the appropriate source
- SNAP letters do not count as direct cert (search for the case & link to student)

**Extended Eligibility:** If any child in the household is directly certified through SNAP, TANF or FDPIR the eligibility should be extended to *all* students within that household.
What You Can Do

Outreach to Families
• Have SNAP, WIC, and TANF resources available at your school for families
• Offer SNAP Application Assistance or refer to the Montana Food Bank Network Helpline 239-6475

Direct Certification Records
• Ensure direct certification is performed frequently
• Maximize direct cert rates
  • DCA – Check potential matches
  • DCA – Ensure extended eligibility students are directly certified
  • Compare school information to information in DCA to for consistencies and accuracy
  • Ensure all eligible students are determined to receive their school meal benefits
Questions?

For information about SNAP & SNAP Resources contact Elizabeth- eweaver@mfbn.org

For information about CEP & Direct Certification contact Alie- AlieW@mt.gov