



# The Childhood Hunger Relief Act of 2000

What is working and  
what still needs to happen?

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# Introduction

The goal of the Childhood Hunger Relief Act (CHRA) of 2000 was to increase participation in federal child nutrition programs while simultaneously combating hunger among Illinois children. This was to be accomplished through the increased utilization of two federal entitlements, the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The primary tools in the final version of the legislation were four financial incentives. These incentives were designed to encourage schools that were not participating in the SBP to become program sponsors. The shared vision of the CHRA supporters was that as the number of program sponsors increased, the number of hungry Illinois children would proportionately decrease due to the increased access to consistent meals.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY**

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the CHRA. In addition, the research was designed to evaluate the appropriateness of the CHRA incentives and identify why so many Illinois schools continue not to participate in the SBP. The evaluation process began with identifying several topics that when addressed would yield information that could be used to make constructive recommendations that would improve the existing incentives and accordingly participation in the SBP. The topics included the following:

1. Are the incentives effective at encouraging non-participating schools to sponsor a SBP?
2. What are the barriers preventing non-participating schools from sponsoring a SBP and what solutions to combat the presence of those barriers are feasible?
3. Who are the important players if a school wants to begin a SBP?
4. What policy recommendations can be made that will encourage more schools to participate in the SBP?

These four central topics were expanded into seventeen (17) questions. The questions were formatted into a survey instrument that was distributed to six-hundred randomly selected Illinois schools. Of the six-hundred (600) schools, one-hundred and seventy four (174) responded, yielding a response rate of 29 percent. The surveys were sent to the attention of school principals at each of the selected schools. The justification for targeting school principals was that either they or someone they could identify would be able to accurately respond to all of the survey questions.

Other data employed included the three annual reports submitted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to the Governor's Office to report on the utilization of the financial incentives established through the CHRA. The ISBE report contains lists identifying which Illinois schools started new SBPs, which incentive(s) the schools utilized, and which schools discontinued their participation in the SBP. ISBE also provided data that supplemented what was available in these reports. Further materials and information from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food, Research and Action Center (FRAC), the Illinois General Assembly, and the Mid-West 5-Star Child Nutrition Task Force were also evaluated for related content.



## A Brief History of the CHRA of 2000

The Childhood Hunger Relief Act (CHRA) of 2000, or HB 2379, was initially introduced into the 91<sup>st</sup> Illinois General Assembly on February 19, 1999 (Illinois General Assembly). The bill was written by an organized group of hunger advocates and elected officials to address the nutritional needs of Illinois children by creating financial incentives targeted to encourage schools to participate in the SBP and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The lead advocacy group was the Illinois Hunger Coalition and the principal legislative sponsors of HB 2379 were state Representative Sonia Silva (D-Chicago) and state Senator Dan Cronin (R-Elmhurst). The bill's original language required the gradual implementation of the SBP in all Illinois schools over a three year

span. It also proposed a requirement for all Illinois schools with 80 percent or more of their student population eligible for free and reduced price lunches (FRPL) to either sponsor a SFSP or find a local sponsor willing to do so.

The bill successfully emerged from the House but ran into significant opposition while in the Senate. This opposition led to a year long negotiation among concerned parties to revise the bill. These negotiations led to the removal of the language that mandated participation in the SBP and replaced it with incentives. Due to ideological opposition from the School Management Alliance to the SFSP section of the bill, the language referring to the program was completely removed. Adjustments were made to reflect these changes and the bill successfully emerged from the General Assembly and the Governor signed the bill into law in the summer of 2000.



## Key Elements of the CHRA

The CHRA's original appropriation was 1 million dollars. This funding was to be utilized to fund the four CHRA incentives. The appropriation amounts for the incentives have varied since 2000. In FY 2001 through FY 2004 the appropriated amounts have ranged from 1 million dollars to \$473.5 thousand dollars. The four incentives that comprise the CHRA include:

1. Start-up grants;
2. A Illinois Universal Free Breakfast Program;
3. A \$.10 per meal additional reimbursement and;
4. The ability to utilize Provision Two or Provision Three of the National School Lunch Act.

### **INCENTIVE ONE: START-UP GRANTS**

The start-up grants can be awarded in amounts of up to, but not exceeding \$3500, for



nonrecurring costs associated with the initiation of the SBP. The following conditions must be met for a school to be eligible for a start-up grant:

1. The school does not currently operate a SBP;
2. The school agrees to operate the program for at least three years; and
3. Schools with the greatest number of students eligible

to receive free or reduced-price lunches under the NSLP are given priority in funding.

### **INCENTIVE TWO: UNIVERSAL FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

The second incentive is funding for a Universal Free Breakfast Program for schools where 80 percent or more of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches under the NSLP based on FY 2001 data (Illinois State Board of Education). Universal school breakfast is defined as any school program that offers breakfast at no charge to all students, regardless of income (Food Research and Action Center). If Illinois schools choose to take advantage of this incentive, they cannot receive the third incentive, the additional \$.10 per meal reimbursement.

### **INCENTIVE THREE: ADDITIONAL \$.10 REIMBURSEMENT**

The third incentive is an additional reimbursement of \$.10 that is distributed to school districts for each paid, free, and reduced-price breakfast that is served in a given month that exceeds the number of breakfasts served in the same month during the preceding year by 10 percent (Illinois State Board of Education). The only eligibility criteria a school district must meet to receive this incentive is at least one school within its district must currently operate a School Breakfast Program. (CHRA)

### **INCENTIVE FOUR: PROVISION TWO OR PROVISION THREE OF THE NSLA**

The final incentive included in the CHRA permits schools to enroll students in the SBP using the criteria established in either Provision Two or Provision Three of the NSLA. These provisions reduce extensive application burdens and simplify meal counting and claiming procedures. Specifically, Provision Two allows schools to establish claiming percentages and to serve all meals at no charge to students for a four-year period (Illinois State Board of Education). Provision Three allows schools to receive the same level of Federal cash and commodity assistance each year, with some adjustments, and to serve all meals at no charge to students for a four-year period. Schools electing either of these provisions must pay the difference, if one exists, between the Federal reimbursement and the cost of providing meals at no charge (Illinois State Board of Education).



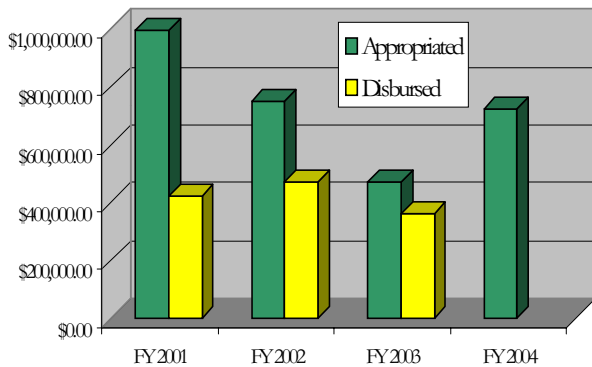


# Research Findings from the CHRA Annual Reports

An analysis of the three annual reports that have been submitted to the Governor's Office by ISBE, offered data that was useful in documenting the effectiveness of the incentives established through the CHRA.

## UTILIZATION OF THE FUNDING

**A Comparison of the CHRA Appropriated Funds to Actual Disbursements**



In each year of the CHRA's availability, the appropriated funds have not been used in their entirety. In the first year of the CHRA, FY 2001, \$422,434.88, or 42 percent, of the 1 million dollars appropriated was expended. In FY 2003, 76 percent of the funds appropriated were disbursed, however the entire amount appropriated was reduced from 1 million dollars to \$473,500.00. The graph to the left shows the appropriations that were made each FY to fund the incentives compared to the actual disbursement of those funds to Illinois schools and school districts.

## UTILIZATION OF INCENTIVE ONE: START-UP GRANTS

In each of the years subsequent to the implementation of the CHRA, schools that had not previously operated the SBP, took advantage of the financial incentives available through the CHRA and began operating the SBP. In 2001, one hundred and four (104) schools received the school breakfast start-up funding of \$3500. In 2002, sixty-three (63) schools received the funding, and in 2003, thirty-six (36) schools did. In total, two-hundred and three (203) schools started the SBP following the implementation of the CHRA in 2000. (Illinois State Board of Education) However, the bulk of schools utilizing this incentive did so in the first two years of its availability. Since then, the number of schools utilizing this financial incentive has decreased by 65 percent<sup>1</sup>. Of the two-hundred and three (203) schools that started the SBP following the implementation of the CHRA, only three (3) have since dropped the program. In all three instances, the schools were permanently closed.

## UTILIZATION OF INCENTIVE TWO: UNIVERSAL FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The second financial incentive is the Universal Free Breakfast Program incentive. Subsequent to the implementation of the CHRA in 2000, a total of eighty-four (84) schools with 80 percent or more of their student populations eligible for FRPLs have taken advantage of the Universal Free Breakfast Program incentive. This is 28 percent<sup>2</sup> of the total number of Illinois schools eligible to take advantage of this incentive.

<sup>1</sup> 104 schools utilized this incentive in 2001. In 2003, 36 schools utilized this incentive.  $104-36/104 = 65$  percent decrease.

<sup>2</sup> The total number of Illinois schools with 80 percent of their student population eligible for free and reduced price lunches is 696. For technical reasons, the 400 schools in the City of Chicago Sch Dis 299 with 80 percent of their student population eligible for free and reduced price lunches were subtracted from the 696 because they are not eligible to participate in the state incentive program. Of the remaining 296 eligible schools, 84 have taken advantage of the UFBP, or 28 percent.



### **UTILIZATION OF INCENTIVE THREE: ADDITIONAL \$ .10 REIMBURSEMENT**

The third financial incentive established through the CHRA pays \$.10 for each breakfast served in a school district that exceeds the number served in the same month during the previous year by 10 percent. In 2001, two-hundred and twenty-five (225) school districts benefited from this incentive by increasing participation, and in 2002, two-hundred and seventy-six (276) school districts did. In 2003, two-hundred and ninety three (293) school districts eligible to participate in the SBP successfully served more than four-hundred and fifty thousand (450,355) more breakfasts than in the previous school year. Those meals resulted in a total additional reimbursement of \$45,035.00.

### **UTILIZATION OF INCENTIVE FOUR: PROVISION TWO OR PROVISION THREE OF THE NSLA**

The number of schools utilizing Provision Two or Provision Three is considerably less than the number of schools that have taken advantage of the other incentives. From 2001-2003, sixty-two (62) schools have utilized Provision Two and twenty-six (26) have utilized Provision Three. In 2003, 81 percent of the schools that utilized Provision Two were located within East St. Louis' school district 189, whereas in 2002, only 48 percent of the schools utilizing Provision Two were within that district.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE UTILIZATION OF THE CHRA INCENTIVES**

The data collected from the three CHRA annual reports submitted to the Governor's office by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has several implications. First, although the start-up grant successfully encouraged two-hundred and three (203) schools to begin participating in the SBP, its appeal has diminished. This loss of appeal could be attributed to the unique financial situations of individual schools that necessitate a larger start-up grant to cover the anticipated costs associated with administering the SBP. Also, of the two-hundred and three (203) schools that took advantage of the start-up incentive, 99 percent continue to operate their programs in 2003. This implies that the schools that began SBPs by utilizing the financial incentives available through the CHRA continue to successfully operate their new SBPs. However, the success of the programs may not be the only factor influencing their

continued operation. The CHRA does require new SBPs to operate for a minimum of three years, otherwise all financial incentives must be forfeited.

The UFBP incentive successfully encouraged eighty-four (84) schools, or 28 percent of the schools eligible to take advantage of this incentive, to begin participating in the SBP. Although this is a success, 82 percent of the eligible schools have not been persuaded by the UFBP incentive to begin participating in the SBP. Schools eligible for the UFBP must have 80 percent or more of their student populations composed of low-income children that are eligible for free and reduced priced meals.

From 2000-2003, six-hundred and sixty (660) reimbursements were issued to school districts that served 10 percent more breakfasts than did so in the same month during the prior year. This indicates that participation can be increased when there are incentives to do so.

Another indication is that as schools operate the SBP another year, the school food service staff and administration become more skilled at identifying which promotional methods and breakfast menus the students respond to. Each additional year of experience has augmented the schools abilities to effectively market the SBP and thus increase the number of their students participating in the SBP.

Many of the schools eligible to take advantage of the Provision Two or Provision Three incentive of the NSLA have continued to not do so. This could be explained by either a lack of knowledge about the incentive or that the incentive is not compatible with the existing needs of schools that do not operate the SBP.

The appropriated funds for the CHRA has decreased each year. In each of the years, less than half of the original appropriation of 1 million dollars has been disbursed. The level of participation by Illinois schools in the CHRA is less than what was initially anticipated and can be attributed to the inability of the incentives to meet the anticipated financial needs of schools.

Although the implementation of the CHRA in 2000 successfully encouraged two-hundred and three (203) schools to begin participating in the School Breakfast Program, the SBP participation trends for the state as a whole have not been as impressive.

The State of Illinois has a total of 894 school districts and 5,536 public and nonpublic schools and residential child care institutions. In 2003, only 46% or 2,529 had an active SBP (ISBE). Illinois' low participation in the SBP has resulted in it being ranked by the Food, Research and Action Center (a national anti-hunger advocate organization) as the forty-ninth (49<sup>th</sup>) worst state in the nation in 2003 for providing breakfast to its students (2003 State of the States Report, p. 39).

The Illinois State Board of Education reported to the Governor's office that following the implementation of the CHRA, the total number of schools participating in the SBP from 2000 through 2003 declined. During this same time period budget cuts forced many schools to permanently close their doors or consolidate with surrounding schools. Of the schools that have dropped the SBP since 2000, 50 percent can be attributed to school closings or consolidations. The remaining 50 percent of schools dropping the SBP were attributed to low participation, a la carte sales, or no explanation (ISBE).

Of the schools that have voluntarily withdrawn (their school was not consolidated or closed) from the SBP from 2000 through 2003, 69 percent withdrew from the program in 2003. To discover what the motivating factors were that influenced such a large percentage of schools to drop their SBPs in 2003, the research team referred to the annual reports submitted to the Governor's Office by the ISBE. This process discovered that the most common explanation for withdrawing from the SBP in 2003 was low participation among their student population. Upon further evaluation of this group, it was also found that more than half of the schools that withdrew from the program due to low participation have 76 percent or higher of their student populations eligible for free or reduced price meals.





# Research Findings from the Survey

## BARRIERS PREVENTING SCHOOLS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE SBP

Many anti-hunger and community based organizations across the nation have become involved in encouraging schools to participate in the SBP. This movement has led to the identification of many barriers that appear to transcend demographic, geographic and economic environments. Twelve (12) barriers were identified in the School Breakfast Scorecard: 2002, published by the Food, Research and Action Center and were included in a survey that was distributed to Illinois schools for the purposes of this research. The literature review completed for this study also uncovered six (6) solutions that have been used throughout the nation to alleviate the twelve (12) identified barriers. These solutions were also included in the survey. The survey was sent to six-hundred (600) randomly selected Illinois school principals. The following information was taken from the survey responses and evaluated using a statistical software program.

The survey respondents **currently operating** a SBP identified what they perceived to be the four most influential barriers that interfere with schools participating in the SBP. They are the following:

1. The school buses arrive too late in the morning;
2. Students are unwilling or unable to arrive at school early enough to eat breakfast;
3. Parents are unaware of the benefits of the SBP; and
4. Students are unwilling to eat breakfast first thing in the morning, they prefer to socialize away from the cafeteria.

The survey respondents that indicated they **do not** currently have a SBP, identified what they perceived to be the four strongest barriers preventing their school from participating in the SBP. They include the following:

1. The school buses arrive too late in the morning;
2. Parents are unaware of the benefits of the SBP;
3. Teachers and administrators are opposed to breakfast in the classroom; and
4. Students do not want to be perceived as poor.

Schools with and without SBPs indicated that “school buses arriving too late in the morning” and “parents are unaware of the benefits of the SBP” to be influential barriers preventing school participation in the SBP.

Of the respondents that **do not** have a SBP, 97 percent reported that they believe eating breakfast has impacts on the academic and behavioral performance of students. However, 82 percent of that same group also indicated it is the parents or the students’ responsibility to ensure that children are

provided adequate meals throughout the school day. This data indicates that administrators are aware of the benefits of the SBP, but that they perceive it to be the parent’s responsibility to ensure that children have adequate meals throughout the school day.

Of those respondents that indicated it is the parents or students responsibility to ensure students have adequate meals throughout the school day, 32 percent indicated there is a strong need for a SBP for all students regardless of income. This indicates that even if the administrators believe it is

the parents or students responsibility to ensure children eat breakfast, some still recognize that a need exists for the SBP to ensure that the children whose parents forget or cannot afford to feed them breakfast do eat at some point before the school day begins.

Of the respondents who were interested or possibly interested in sponsoring a SBP, 61 percent had not received information about the incentive program. This indicates a need for more intense marketing of the incentives to increase their visibility and usage.

### SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

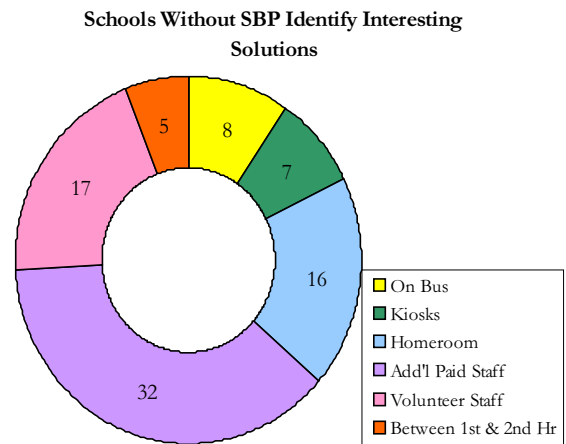
The survey recipients were asked to rate a list of potentially viable solutions that have been implemented in other schools across the nation to overcome the SBP barriers identified in the survey.

As is evident by the graph on the right, the responding schools that **do not** currently operate a SBP indicated that the following three solutions were the most desirable and feasible to pursue:

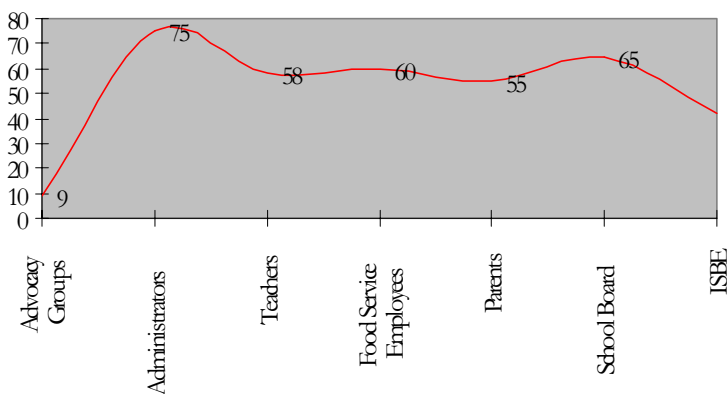
1. To receive funding to pay for additional staff time and operate the SBP in the cafeteria;
2. To receive volunteer staff to operate the SBP in the cafeteria; and
3. To serve breakfast in homeroom classes with the assistance of teachers.

This indicates there is a need and desire for additional funding to cover the cost of additional staff, for the development of a system to recruit volunteers, and/or for training schools on how to effectively serve breakfast during homeroom.

The schools that indicated they **currently operate** a SBP were encouraged to rate the influence that seven stakeholder groups had on the development of their SBP (please refer to the chart on the left). The two most influential groups were determined to be school administrators and the local school board.



Schools With SBP Rate Influence of Key Groups on Developing a SBP



port of the school administrators and local school boards.

Of the respondent's that specified their school **currently operates** an active SBP, 96 percent said they would recommend that other schools sponsor a SBP. The remaining 4 percent said they might make this recommendation. This indicates that many of the barriers and complexities that schools anticipate as a consequence of participating in the SBP do not materialize, or if they do, they can be overcome.



# The Benefits of the National School Breakfast Program

Numerous scientific studies support the understanding that children are distracted by the affects of hunger. This is also evident by their substandard academic and behavioral performance in the classroom. (Food Research and Action Center) Traditionally, schools have recognized these statements as truth. Examples supporting this assumption are the intense efforts made by schools to promote breakfast during standardized testing weeks. Clearly, this behavior implies that school faculties are aware that missing breakfast has an adverse affect on children's ability to retain and convey information. Despite this, many school districts in Illinois neglect to operate the School Breakfast Program. Of the school officials surveyed by the ICAA, 58 percent reported that it remains the primary responsibility of parents to guarantee children are fed throughout the school day. The dilemma with this expectation is that parents cannot always adhere to this requisite and consequently their children end up disadvantaged compared to their peers that have access to breakfast.



The implementation of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in 1946, had a significant impact on reducing the effects of hunger on school children. That same program still exists today, but has been modified and improved over time. The Child Nutrition Act, enacted in 1966, is an example of some of those significant improvements. Included in the act was a section authorizing the School Breakfast Program (SBP) as a two-year pilot project designed to provide categorical grants to assist schools serving breakfasts to “nutritionally needy” children (United State Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service). This legislation stipulated that first consideration for program implementation was to be given to schools located in areas where children had to travel a great distance prior to arriving at school and in low-income areas. To encourage schools in the targeted areas to participate, Congress authorized higher federal payments for schools

determined to be in “severe need”. During the first year of operation, the SBP served about 80,000 children at a federal cost of \$573,000 (USDA, FNS). As time progressed, interest and participation in the SBP increased. During the next few years, the pilot program was extended several times, and a number of modifications were made to expand it.

Congress permanently authorized the SBP in 1975. As part of the legislation making the SBP permanent, Congress declared the program's intent to “be made available in all schools where it is needed to provide adequate nutrition for children in attendance” (USDA/FNS). Moreover, the legislation continued to emphasize participation by schools in severe need and to provide higher reimbursement rates to those schools.

As the program stands currently, any child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the SBP. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. (For the period

July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$23,920 for a family of four; 185 percent is \$33,040.) Children from families over 185 percent of poverty pay full price, although their meals are still subsidized by the USDA to some extent.

Most of the support USDA provides to schools in the School Breakfast Program comes in the form of a cash reimbursement. Please refer below to Chart 1 for the current (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004) basic cash reimbursement rates. Schools may qualify for higher “severe need” reimbursements if a specified percentage of their lunches are served free or at a reduced price. Severe need payments are up to 23 cents higher than the normal reimbursements for free and reduced-price breakfasts (USDA, FNS). Nationally, about 65 percent of the breakfasts served in the School Breakfast Program receive severe need payments (USDA, FNS).

National participation in the SBP has steadily grown over the years from .5 million children in 1970 to 8.1 million children in 2002 and the allotment provided by Congress for the SBP has also increased respectively from \$10.8 million in 1970 to \$1.57 billion in 2002. Illinois participation has also increased from 190,537 children in 1998 to 213,598 children in 2002 (please refer to Chart 2).

**Chart 1**

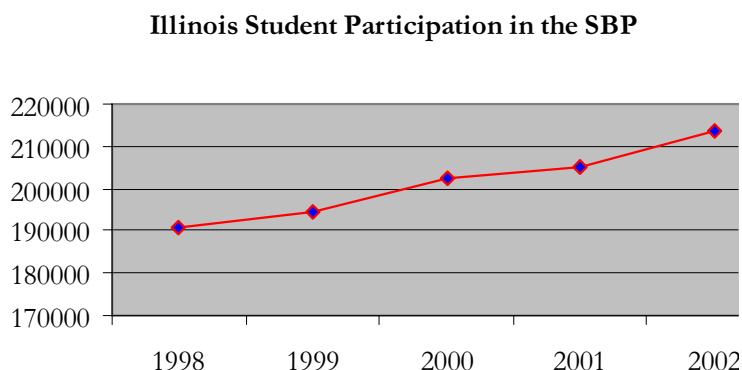
<b>USDA Reimbursement Rates for the SBP School Year 2003-2004</b>		
	<b>Non-Severe Need</b>	<b>Severe Need</b>
<b>Paid</b>	\$0.22	\$0.22
<b>Reduced Price</b>	\$0.90	\$1.13
<b>Free</b>	\$1.20	\$1.43

While the SBP is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA at the federal level, the state agency responsible for administering the SBP varies for each state. The program is usually managed by state education agencies which operate the program through agreements with local school food service authorities. The Illinois State Board of Education administers the SBP in Illinois, and participation in the program by local schools is voluntary.

Twenty-two other (22) states in the United States have required their schools to participate in the SBP through legislative mandates (School Breakfast Scorecard, p. 31-35). These mandates require all schools or, more frequently, those with a certain percentage of low-income students, to participate in the SBP. Twenty (20) of those states operated the SBP in at least 90 percent of the schools operating the NSLP for the 2001-2002 school year. By comparison, Illinois is rated as one of the seven worst performing states in the nation because only 57 percent of its schools operating the NSLP for the 2001-2002 school year also operated a SBP (School Breakfast Scorecard, p.9).

A listing of all the State agencies that administer Child Nutrition Programs may be found at [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov). (USDA, FNS) More information on the operation of the School Breakfast Program and the other Child Nutrition Programs in Illinois can be obtained by contacting the Illinois State Board of Education, Nutrition Programs and Support Services.

**Chart 2**





# Policy Recommendations

## RESEARCH SUMMARY

How should the success of the Childhood Hunger Relief Act of 2000 (CHRA) be utilized to further increase School Breakfast Program (SBP) participation? Should Illinois be content with low rankings regarding SBP participation, or does it want to ensure that all hungry students are given the opportunity to learn without coping with the consequences of hunger?

Following the passage of the CHRA, two-hundred and three (203) schools started the SBP, participation by students in schools that continue to operate the SBP has increased, eighty-four (84) schools started the Universal Free Breakfast Program (UFBP), and eighty-eight (88) schools have utilized Provision II or Provision III of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA). However, during this same time period, statewide school participation in the SBP decreased (Illinois State Board of Education).

The research indicates that although the financial incentives successfully enticed schools to become active in the SBP and increased access to breakfast for children who previously lacked it, 54 percent of Illinois schools continue to not participate in the SBP.

The majority of schools who choose not to participate in the SBP have significant student populations that could greatly benefit from the availability of breakfast at school. These same schools are aware of those benefits, yet continue to prevent their schools from participating in the SBP. Non-participating schools are concerned about the additional staff and resources that are needed to operate the SBP. They feel that although children need breakfast, the parents should be responsible for providing it. There are also indications of inability or lack of interest to effectively negotiate with bus companies to ensure students are at school in time for breakfast. Another barrier is how to effectively combat low interest and participation in the SBP once it is started. Amid these concerns, this research indicates that these barriers can be circumvented by allocating additional financial resources and developing training opportunities for school administrators and food service staff.

The following sections outline specific activities that will promote increased participation in the SBP by Illinois schools.

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING

1. Resources need to be made available within the CHRA for community based outreach to promote the existence and use of the incentives to Illinois schools. Appropriating funds for local advocacy groups to promote the use of the incentives may lead to their increased utilization. This is possible considering 61 percent of the survey respondents who were interested or possibly interested in sponsoring a SBP had not received information about the state incentive program, the CHRA.
2. The start-up grant needs to be increased and its authorized use expanded to accommodate for inflation and schools limited financial resources. The availability of the \$3500 start-up grant has been inadequate at encouraging schools to begin operating the SBP. In each year since 2000, less than half of the initial 1 million dollar appropriation for the CHRA has been disbursed. This indicates that regardless of the availability of the \$3500 incentive, schools are not being persuaded to begin

the SBP. This also indicates that the funds tied to the incentive are insufficient and do not meet the anticipated needs of the schools. If the start-up grant is increased to accommodate this, more schools will be compelled to begin the SBP and a greater proportion of the appropriation will be utilized.

3. Due to the remaining 54 percent of Illinois schools that have not taken advantage of the CHRA incentives, schools with 40 percent or more of their student population eligible for FRPL, should be required to participate in the SBP. The SBP provisions of SB 1400, now pending in the Illinois Senate, would be a mechanism to successfully achieve this activity. This will ensure that Illinois children who are the most vulnerable to food insecurity will be guaranteed access to breakfast and that the relevant schools will receive financial assistance to implement the SBP through the CHRA.

### ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Resources need to be made available through the CHRA to fund the following activities.

1. The process of implementing innovative techniques, which were favorably rated by the survey respondents such as serving breakfast during homeroom or by recruiting volunteers, should be thoroughly explained to school administrators and school food service staff. This will dispel misconceptions about the complexity of attempting innovative techniques to implement the SBP.
2. Schools currently operating the SBP and knowledgeable community organizations need to be recruited for a peer-to-peer technical assistance program that will serve as a resource to schools wishing to implement the SBP.
3. The most successful incentive of the four (4) appears to be the additional \$.10 reimbursement for school districts increasing the number of breakfasts they served in the same month during the prior year by 10 percent. The added experience of operating the SBP another year has assisted school food service staff and administrators to identify promotional methods and breakfast menus that students respond to. Training or a system to share information should be created to enable experienced school food service staff and administrators to share their knowledge with other schools that are beginning the SBP and those that are struggling to maintain student interest and participation.
4. School administrators need training on how to effectively negotiate with local bus companies to arrange for children to be dropped off at school early enough to have sufficient time to eat breakfast.
5. The various factors that have characterized East St. Louis' school district 189 need to be identified, due to its effective use of Provision Two. This may lead to the targeting of similar school districts to encourage the utilization of this incentive.

## ICAA's Mission Statement

The Illinois Community Action Association is a membership organization which serves as the network for Illinois' not-for-profit corporations and units of government which strive to raise the health, education and economic standards of the low income population in every county within the State of Illinois. The Illinois Community Action Association serves the collective interests of its members by: advocating public policies, promoting the value of the Association, providing information on issues relevant to the membership, and building partnerships that advance the community action network.

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Illinois Community Action Association

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