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# Increasing Food Security in Children

## What is Summer EBT?

Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provided households of eligible children with cash assistance for the purchase of approved foods during the summer months. FNS created Summer EBT as a pilot project in 2011.



## Why is Summer EBT important?

Child food insecurity increases during the summer months due to the lack of access to school meals for children from low-income households. Food insecurity among children is associated with poor academic achievement and social functioning. Previous evaluations have shown the Summer EBT benefit significantly reduced severe food insecurity among children and improved nutrition outcomes, as children eat healthier foods.



## What is Abt's role?

Abt Associates has evaluated Summer EBT pilot projects' effectiveness and outcomes for more than a decade. Abt's findings paved the way for Congress to pass a bipartisan bill in December 2022 that created a permanent nationwide program for more than 29 million families. States, Tribal Organizations, and Territories will start to roll out their Summer EBT programs in 2024, and the knowledge Abt accumulated provides a playbook for how to do it. Abt generated insights that states can consider implementing, plus an intuitive, interactive digital dashboard to help officials understand program use and trends. It includes information from grantees who know local needs, enabling customized solutions.

## Turn over for implementation insights

## Considerations for Program Implementation:

- ✓ **Allow for flexible food choices.** If electricity is unreliable, for example, consumers can't buy food that requires refrigeration. This can require training retailers.

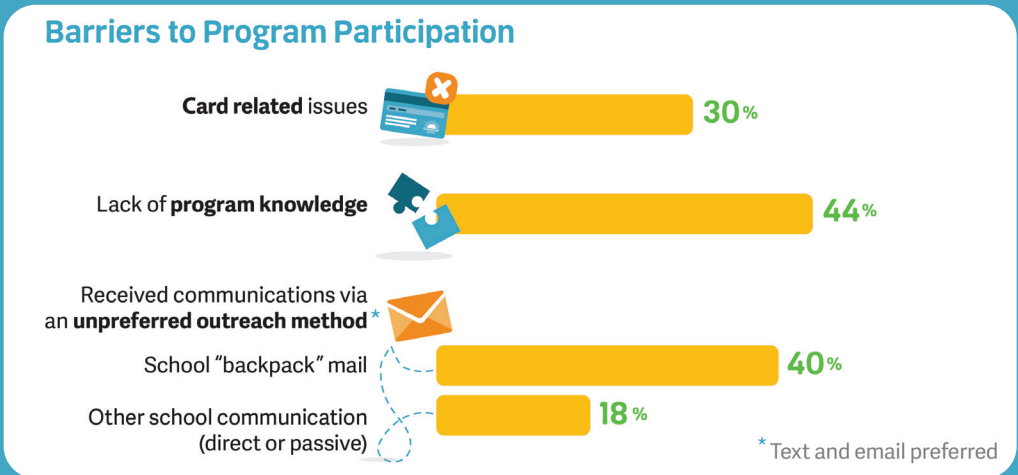
- ✓ **Use spatial analysis and mapping data.** States, Tribal Organizations, and Territories need to know where eligible households live, how far they have to travel to shop at a participating store, and whether transportation is available. They may need to enlist more retailers.



The availability of authorized retailers and travel distances to them were key metrics in the Abt evaluation team's spatial analyses.

- ✓ **Monitor redemption rates.** To boost redemption rates, text benefit balances twice a month and send other texts weekly. Buying is higher after texts.

- ✓ **Address barriers to participation.** Increase program and card use knowledge and identify the communication methods your audience prefers.



Scan for more information on increasing food security in children.



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