



School Breakfast Scorecard

2014-2015 School Year

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Acknowledgments

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About FRAC

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national organization working for more effective public and private policies to eradicate domestic hunger and undernutrition. For more information about FRAC, or to sign up for FRAC's Weekly News Digest and monthly School Breakfast Newsletter, go to: www.frac.org.



I. Introduction

Since the 1960s, the School Breakfast Program has helped to fill nutritional gaps and help families stretch limited budgets so all students can start the day ready to learn. As the economy slowly recovers from the depths of the recession, many families are being left behind. Wages have remained low and a growing number of working families are relying on the federally funded school meal programs to provide the nutrition their children need throughout the school day to learn and thrive.

School breakfast participation has steadily grown again this year, continuing a trend of rapid expansion over the last decade, driven by increased need and the proliferation of best practice models like breakfast in the classroom and offering free meals to all students in high-poverty schools. In the 2014–2015 school year, 54.3 low-income children participated in school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch, an increase from 53.2 to 100 in the previous school year. On an average day in the 2014–2015 school year, 11.7 million students eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals participated in school breakfast, an increase of 4.2 percent or nearly 475,000 children over the previous year.

Study after study shows that when children participate in the School Breakfast Program, it leads to improved dietary intake, reduced food insecurity, better test performance, and fewer distractions in the classroom throughout the morning (See FRAC’s *Breakfast for Learning* and *Breakfast for Health* for a summary of research on the health and learning benefits of school breakfast).

In recent years, educators and administrators have come to recognize the power of this simple and common sense educational intervention. More and more schools offer breakfast as well as lunch. School districts around the country have shifted from providing breakfast in the cafeteria before the start of the school day, to proven strategies that boost participation like breakfast in the classroom, that make breakfast a part of the school day and allow the program to reach more children. State, school district, and school officials in many of the top performing states in this year’s report have taken the step of implementing in high-poverty schools alternative service models where meals are delivered to the classroom or served from “grab and go” kiosks in the hallway.

This year, another key driver of growth was the incredibly successful nationwide rollout of the Community Eligibility Provision, a federal option for high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students. Phased in a few states at a time beginning in the 2011–2012 school year, 2014–2015 marked the first school year that the provision was available to eligible schools in all states and takeup of the provision was widespread. With more than 14,000 schools participating in the 2014–2015 school year, the impact is clear — community eligibility has significantly increased breakfast participation among low-income students.

Still, there is much room for growth. Federal and state agencies, school districts, educators, and advocates must continue to build on the momentum gained in recent years to ensure that more low-income children start the school day with a healthy meal.

About the Scorecard

This report measures the reach of the School Breakfast Program in the 2014–2015 school year — nationally and in each state — based on a variety of metrics, and examines the impact of trends and policies on program participation. First, we look at free and reduced-price school breakfast participation to determine how many low-income students school breakfast is reaching nationally and in each state, using free and reduced-price lunch participation as a benchmark. Because there is broad participation in the lunch program by low-income students across the states,

it is a useful comparison by which to measure how many students could and should be benefiting from school breakfast each day. Second, we compare the number of schools offering the School Breakfast Program to the number of schools operating the National School Lunch Program, as this is an important indicator of access to the program for low-income children in the states. Finally, we set an ambitious, but achievable, goal of reaching 70 free and reduced-price eligible students with breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch and calculate the federal dollars lost in each state that is not meeting this goal.

How the School Breakfast Program Works

Who Operates the School Breakfast Program?

Any public school, nonprofit private school, or residential child care institution can participate in the School Breakfast Program and receive federal funds for each breakfast served. The program is administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and in each state typically through the state department of education or agriculture.

Who Can Participate in the School Breakfast Program?

Any student attending a school that offers the program can eat breakfast. What the federal government covers, and what a student pays, depends on family income:

- Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for free school meals.
- Children from families with incomes between 130 to 185 percent FPL qualify for reduced-price meals and can be charged no more than 30 cents per breakfast.
- Children from families with incomes above 185 percent FPL pay charges (referred to as “paid meals”) which are set by the school.

How Are Children Certified for Free or Reduced-Price Meals?

Most children are certified for free or reduced-price meals via applications collected by the school district at the beginning of the school year or during the year. However, children in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), as well as foster youth, migrant, homeless, or runaway youth, and Head Start participants are “categorically eligible” (automatically eligible) for free school meals and can be certified without submitting a school meal application.

School districts are required to “directly certify” children in households participating in SNAP for free school meals through data matching of SNAP records with school enrollment lists. School districts have the option of directly certifying other categorically eligible children as well. Some categorically eligible children are missed through these processes and can still be certified by submitting an application.

School districts around the country have shifted from providing breakfast in the cafeteria before the start of the school day, to proven strategies that boost participation like breakfast in the classroom, that make breakfast a part of the school day and allow the program to reach more children.

How Are School Districts Reimbursed?

The federal reimbursement amount the school receives for each meal served depends on whether a student is certified to receive free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

For the 2014–2015 school year, schools received:

- \$1.62 per free breakfast;
- \$1.32 per reduced-price breakfast; and
- \$0.28 per “paid” breakfast.

“Severe need” schools received an additional 31 cents for each free or reduced-price breakfast served. Schools are considered severe need if at least 40 percent of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were free or reduced-price.

Offering Breakfast Free to All

Many high-poverty schools are able to offer free meals for all students. Providing breakfast at no charge to all students helps remove the stigma associated with means-tested school breakfast, opens the program to children from families that would struggle to pay the reduced-price copayment or the paid breakfast charges, and streamlines the implementation of breakfast in the classroom and other alternative service models. Schools can offer free

breakfast to all students through the following options:

- **Community Eligibility Provision:** Community eligibility schools offer free breakfast and lunch to all students and do not collect, process, or verify school meal applications, or keep track of meals by fee category, resulting in significant administrative savings and increased participation.
- **Provision 2:** Schools using Provision 2 do not have to collect, process, or verify school meal applications or keep track of meals by fee category for at least three out of every four years. (Schools collect school meal applications and count and claim meals by fee category during year one of the multi-year cycle, called the “base year.” Those data then are used for future years in the cycle.) Provision 2 schools have the option to serve only breakfast or lunch, or both breakfast and lunch, to all students at no charge, and use economies of scale from increased participation and significant administrative savings to offset the cost of offering free meals to all students.
- **Nonpricing:** No fees are collected from students, while schools continue to receive reimbursements for the meals served under the three-tier federal fee categories (free, reduced-price, and paid).

II. Key National Findings

Student Participation

Participation among free and reduced-price eligible children across the country continued to rise at a steady rate in the 2014–2015 school year:

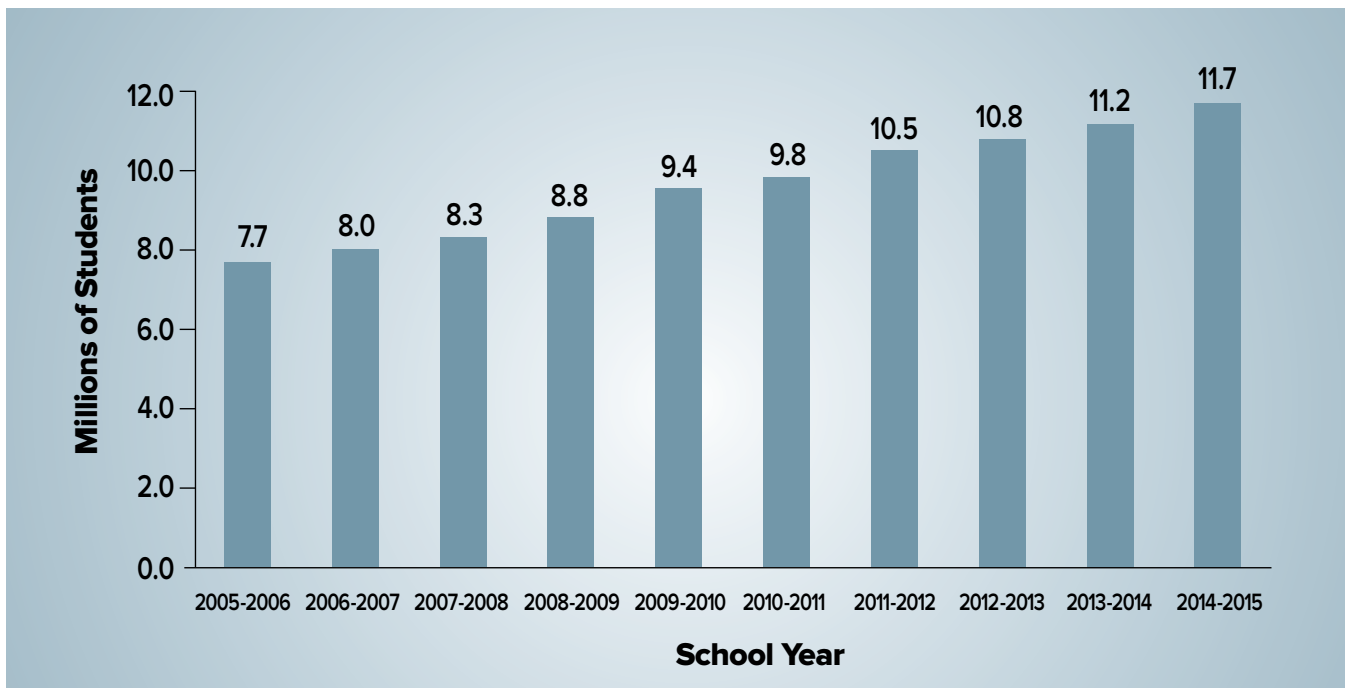
- 11.7 million low-income children — those certified for free and reduced-price school meals — participated in school breakfast on an average day.
- 475,000 more low-income children participated each day than in the previous school year, an increase of 4.2 percent.
- 54.3 low-income children participated in school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch, up from 53.2 to 100 in the previous school year.

School Participation

The number of schools participating in the School Breakfast Program rose again this year:

- 89,771 schools offered the School Breakfast Program, an increase of 1,114 schools over the prior year.
- 91.2 percent of schools offering the National School Lunch Program also offered the School Breakfast Program, slightly higher than the 90.2 percent that did in the previous year.

Figure 1: Free and Reduced-Price Participation in the School Breakfast Program



III. State Findings

Earning the top spot in last year’s Scorecard as well, West Virginia continued to increase participation steeply. The state grew to serving 82.3 children free and reduced-price school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch in the 2014–2015 school year, up from 73.8 to 100 in the 2013–2014 school year and 55.6 to 100 just five years prior in the 2009–2010 school year.¹ State legislation passed in 2013 requiring all schools to offer alternative breakfast service models has been the primary driver of participation increases in recent years. In addition, wide usage of the Community Eligibility Provision and strong state leadership have contributed significantly to the precipitous rise in West Virginia’s participation in recent years.

This year’s top three states — West Virginia, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia — all demonstrate the power of linking alternative breakfast service models with offering free school breakfast through the Community Eligibility Provision. All three states require all or some schools to offer free breakfast through alternative models and implement community eligibility widely in qualifying high-poverty schools.

Overall, 44 states increased their free and reduced-price school breakfast participation in the 2014-2015 school year. A number of states that robustly implemented the Community Eligibility Provision showed remarkable growth in school breakfast participation — well above the national average of 4.2 percent, including Pennsylvania (9.6 percent), Alaska (21.4 percent), Delaware (21.9 percent), and Tennessee (11.0 percent). (See page 11 for community eligibility takeup data by state).

Top 10 States: Ratio of Free and Reduced-Price School Breakfast to Lunch Participation

State	Ratio of F&RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP
West Virginia	82.3
New Mexico	70.6
District of Columbia	66.6
Maryland	64.2
Texas	62.4
Kentucky	62.2
Arkansas	61.8
Tennessee	61.6
South Carolina	61.6
Vermont	61.1

Other states demonstrated notable progress precipitated by state legislative efforts, advocacy, and outreach campaigns. In Massachusetts, a statewide campaign to increase participation in school breakfast led to a solid 8.2 percent increase in free and reduced-price participation. New Jersey continued to build on strong multi-year growth, rising to be the 23rd ranking state this year from 48th just four years ago, due to the efforts of a strong school breakfast expansion coalition bringing together a broad range of education, children’s, anti-hunger, and health stakeholders. Free and reduced-price participation in Colorado jumped nearly 10 percent in the first year of a two-year implementation of the state’s new law requiring high-poverty schools to offer free breakfast to all students

¹ See FRAC’s *School Breakfast Scorecard School Year 2009-2010*.

Top 10 States Based on Percentage Growth in Free and Reduced-Price Participation, 2013-2014 to 2014-2015

State	Percent Increase in F&RP Students in SBP
Delaware	21.9%
Alaska	21.4%
West Virginia	14.3%
New Jersey	11.2%
Tennessee	11.0%
Maryland	10.5%
Colorado	9.9%
Pennsylvania	9.6%
Massachusetts	8.2%
Minnesota	8.1%

through alternative service models, including “grab and go” and breakfast delivered to the classroom.

Just seven states experienced decreases in breakfast participation among free and reduced-price eligible children. The largest decreases by percentage were in New Hampshire, down 4.6 percent, and the District of Columbia, which fell by 3.1 percent. Although the District of Columbia remains a top performer in this report, training and enforcement to support the District’s robust breakfast in the classroom mandate for high-poverty schools has slipped, causing a dip in participation in the last year.

Several states continued to struggle to reach low-income children with school breakfast, leaving significant room for growth. The 10 lowest-performing states in this report served breakfast to 46 or less free or reduced-price eligible students for every 100 participating in school lunch — far below the national average of 54.3 to 100 and FRAC’s goal of 70 to 100.

Bottom 10 States: Ratio of Free and Reduced-Price School Breakfast to Lunch Participation

State	Ratio of F&RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP
Illinois	46.0
Massachusetts	45.9
South Dakota	44.2
Washington	43.9
Hawaii	43.3
Iowa	42.1
Wyoming	41.0
Nebraska	40.8
New Hampshire	38.7
Utah	34.8

The Cost of Low Participation

In the 2014–2015 school year, just two states — West Virginia and New Mexico — met FRAC’s challenging, but attainable, goal of reaching 70 low-income students with school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch. As a result, many states left a significant amount of money on the table by not reaching more children that were eligible. Large states with average-to-low participation rates such as 24th-ranked California, 33rd-ranked Florida, and 39th-ranked New York, have the most to gain by meeting FRAC’s goal. These states would have brought in an additional \$107.9 million, \$74.5 million, and \$76.5 million respectively, if they had met the 70 to 100 goal. States that are not maximizing school breakfast participation not only miss out on the student academic and health benefits associated with the program, but also on significant potential economic activity that comes with millions of dollars’ worth of additional federal resources coming into the state and local communities.

School Participation

This year, five states offered the School Breakfast Program in virtually all schools that operate the National School Lunch Program. In Arkansas, Texas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Hawaii, 99 percent or more of all schools that serve school lunch also serve school breakfast. This is an important indicator of access to the School Breakfast Program. In addition, two states — Connecticut and Delaware — showed strong growth in schools offering the School Breakfast Program, increasing by 7.7 percent and 13.5 percent respectively. By contrast, in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Wisconsin, about one out of every five schools that offers lunch does not offer school breakfast, denying the many low-income children attending those schools the opportunity to start their day with a healthy breakfast.

Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Every five years, Congress has an opportunity to reexamine and make changes to the School Breakfast Program and other vital child nutrition programs through Child Nutrition Reauthorization. In September of 2015, the latest legislation — the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 — expired, and policy makers and advocates have been hard at work to put together a bipartisan bill. FRAC will continue to advocate for smart investments that support access to the School Breakfast Program and effective strategies like breakfast in the classroom and offering breakfast free to all students to increase participation as it moves through the legislative process.



IV. Trends and Best Practices in the 2014–2015 School Year

Community Eligibility Rolls Out Nationwide

In its first year of nationwide availability, the Community Eligibility Provision proved to be a very effective tool for increasing participation in the school meal programs, and school breakfast in particular. By spring of 2015, there were more than 14,000 high-poverty schools, serving 6.8 million children, offering breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students. For the 2015–2016 school year, the total increased to more than 17,000 schools and 8 million children.

Particularly successful in improving school breakfast participation among low-income children were the states where the Community Eligibility Provision was implemented most broadly. Top performers in overall adoption among all eligible schools in the 2014–2015 school year were Montana, West Virginia, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Alaska, and Tennessee, all with more than 70 percent of all eligible schools in the state participating.

In the aggregate, average daily participation among low-income children, in the 10 states with the highest percentage of eligible schools participating, increased at a considerably higher rate than in the remaining states. In these states, average daily School Breakfast Program participation among low-income children grew by 7.9 percent, compared to 3.9 percent for the remaining states. Overall breakfast participation — including free, reduced-price, and paid — grew at a higher rate in these states, too, with 4.9 percent growth in the top 10 community eligibility states compared with 3.6 percent in the remaining states.

Of the states with strong community eligibility implementation a couple saw overall school breakfast participation decrease. Most significantly, the District of Columbia dropped 2.4 percent overall (and 3.1 percent among free and reduced-price eligible students). Community eligibility has been available to high-poverty

School Breakfast Participation Growth in Top 10 Community Eligibility States

State	SY 2013-2014	SY 2014-2015	F&RP Percent Change	SY 2013-2014	SY 2014-2015	Total Percent Change
	F&RP SBP Students	F&RP SBP Students		Total SBP Students	Total SBP Students	
Alaska	17,034	20,684	21.4%	20,214	24,512	21.3%
Connecticut	75,370	79,410	5.4%	91,149	93,709	2.8%
Delaware	31,870	38,861	21.9%	40,159	47,171	17.5%
District of Columbia	31,301	30,320	-3.1%	34,934	34,084	-2.4%
Kentucky	235,642	242,449	2.9%	274,763	277,819	1.1%
Montana	22,257	23,885	7.3%	28,353	30,657	8.1%
New Mexico	121,195	126,283	4.2%	147,781	147,313	-0.3%
North Dakota	14,314	14,976	4.6%	23,710	24,544	3.5%
Tennessee	294,362	326,765	11.0%	354,058	371,475	4.9%
West Virginia	93,433	106,787	14.3%	128,357	148,057	15.3%
Top 10 CEP states	936,778	1,010,420	7.9%	1,143,478	1,199,342	4.9%
All Remaining States	10,243,718	10,644,675	3.9%	12,075,298	12,508,243	3.6%

Community Eligibility Takeup School Year 2014–2015

State	Schools Adopting CEP	Schools Eligible for CEP	Percentage of Eligible Adopting Schools
Alabama	347	818	42%
Alaska	123	168	73%
Arizona	73	237	31%
Arkansas	4	401	1%
California	208	1,106	19%
Colorado	34	236	14%
Connecticut	133	208	64%
Delaware	96	128	75%
District of Columbia	125	168	74%
Florida	548	2,070	26%
Georgia	589	1,075	55%
Hawaii	6	81	7%
Idaho	50	179	28%
Illinois	1,041	1,877	55%
Indiana	214	447	48%
Iowa	78	234	33%
Kansas	18	258	7%
Kentucky	611	889	69%
Louisiana	335	897	37%
Maine	21	NA	NA
Maryland	25	396	6%
Massachusetts	294	729	40%
Michigan	625	1,018	61%
Minnesota	56	358	16%
Mississippi	257	539	48%
Missouri	298	695	43%
Montana	93	119	78%
Nebraska	2	95	2%
Nevada	13	158	8%
New Hampshire	0	53	0%
New Jersey	197	570	35%
New Mexico	343	551	62%
New York	1,246	2,252	55%
North Carolina	648	1,265	51%
North Dakota	23	36	64%
Ohio	739	NA	NA
Oklahoma	100	NA	NA
Oregon	262	675	39%
Pennsylvania	646	1,036	62%
Rhode Island	1	98	1%
South Carolina	226	588	38%
South Dakota	142	231	61%
Tennessee	862	1,205	72%
Texas	1,477	3,591	41%
Utah	22	68	32%
Vermont	32	64	50%
Virginia	87	444	20%
Washington	122	393	31%
West Virginia	369	475	78%
Wisconsin	348	688	51%
Wyoming	5	9	56%
Totals	14,214	30,736	45%

Table Data Source: Neuberger, Z., Segal, B., Nchako, C., & Masterson, K. (2015). Take Up of Community Eligibility This School Year. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2-25-15fa.pdf>. Accessed on December 29, 2015. Note: For SY 2014–2015, Maine, Ohio, and Oklahoma did not publish a list of eligible schools.

What is the Community Eligibility Provision?

Authorized in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the Community Eligibility Provision allows high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch free of charge to all students and to realize significant administrative savings by eliminating school meal applications. Any district, group of schools in a district, or school with 40 percent or more “identified students” — children eligible for free school meals who already are identified by other means than an individual household application — can choose to participate.

Identified students include:

- Children directly certified through data matching because their households receive SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR, and in some states and areas, Medicaid benefits.
- Children who are certified for free meals without an application because they are homeless, migrant, enrolled in Head Start, or in foster care.

Reimbursements to the school are calculated by multiplying the percentage of identified students by 1.6 to determine the percentage of meals reimbursed at the federal free rate. For example, a school with 50 percent identified students would be reimbursed for 80 percent of the meals eaten at the free reimbursement rate ($50 \times 1.6 = 80$), and 20 percent at the paid rate.

schools in the District of Columbia since the 2012-2013 school year and the jurisdiction experienced strong growth in prior years immediately following implementation of community eligibility. The decreases in participation seen in this year’s report were due primarily to the need for renewed training and enforcement by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to support the district’s comprehensive breakfast in the classroom mandate for high-poverty schools.

What about School Lunch?

Overall this year, school lunch participation increased modestly by 0.6 percent, with free and reduced-price participation rising by 2.1 percent. Notably, the top five states in terms of overall school lunch participation growth all saw robust community eligibility implementation. Alaska, Tennessee, Delaware, and the District of Columbia were all at the top for the percentage of eligible schools adopting community eligibility and increased overall lunch participation by between 3.2 to 6.1 percent. Illinois, after participating as a pilot community eligibility state since the 2011–2012 school year, saw a large increase in community eligibility schools in the 2014–2015 school year and corresponding strong growth in free and reduced-price — as well as overall — lunch participation.

Top Five States: Overall School Lunch Participation Growth from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015

State	F&RP Increase	F&RP % Change	Overall Increase	Overall % Change
Alaska	2,652	71%	3,052	6.1%
Tennessee	56,659	12.0%	32,583	5.1%
Illinois	33,518	4.1%	45,344	4.3%
Delaware	6,270	10.5%	3,061	3.3%
District of Columbia	810	1.8%	1,588	3.2%

Breakfast After the Bell Legislation

In many of the top performing states, in this report and in previous years, the adoption of breakfast after the bell legislation has been the key catalyst for growth and maintaining high breakfast participation rates. Since 2010, four states and the District of Columbia have all adopted legislation requiring all or some schools to offer breakfast after the bell.

District of Columbia

In 2010, the District of Columbia became the first to legislate breakfast in the classroom. The D.C. Healthy Schools Act requires all public and public charter

Breakfast After the Bell:

Implementing an alternative service model has proven to be the most successful strategy for schools to increase breakfast participation. Options include:

- **Breakfast in the Classroom:** Meals can either be delivered to the classroom or be served from the cafeteria or carts in the hallway, to be eaten in the classroom at the start of the school day.
- **“Grab and Go”:** Children (particularly older students) can easily grab the components of their breakfast quickly from carts or kiosks in the hallway or the cafeteria line, to eat in their classroom.
- **Second Chance Breakfast:** Students are offered a second chance to eat breakfast after homeroom or first period. Many middle and high school students are not hungry first thing in the morning. Serving them breakfast after first period allows them ample time to arrive to class on time or socialize before school, while still providing them with a nutritious start early in the day.

schools in the District to offer free breakfast to all students. Elementary schools with more than 40 percent of the students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals must serve it in the classroom. In addition to traditional breakfast served in the cafeteria before the start of school, middle and high schools must serve breakfast through an alternative model such as breakfast in the classroom, “grab and go” carts, or second chance breakfast.

New Mexico

In 2011, the New Mexico legislature passed a mandate requiring all elementary schools with 85 percent or more of students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals during the prior school year to implement free breakfast after the bell.

Colorado

In July 2013, the Colorado state legislature passed a law requiring schools with 80 percent free and reduced-price eligible children to offer free breakfast after the bell starting in the 2014–2015 school year. The mandate extended to all schools with 70 percent free and reduced-price certified students in the 2015–2016 school year.

West Virginia

The Feed to Achieve Act, passed in 2013, requires all schools to adopt a delivery system approved by the state agency that ensures all students be given an adequate opportunity to eat breakfast, including but not limited to, “grab and go,” breakfast in the classroom, or second chance breakfast.

Nevada

This past summer, the Nevada State Assembly passed a bill that requires schools with 70 percent or more free or reduced-price eligible students to offer breakfast after the bell, provided there is state funding to support implementation. The bill currently provides \$2 million in funding over two years (SY 2015–2016 and SY 2016–2017).

State School Breakfast Legislation Resources

- ***FRAC’s School Breakfast State Legislation Table*** provides more details on legislation in other states.
- For more information about school breakfast in your state, check out FRAC’s interactive ***School Breakfast Map***.

The School Day is Starting Healthier

Since the 2012–2013 school year, new, stronger nutrition standards for school meals rolled out in phases. The first phase of the new breakfast standards began in the 2013–2014 school year and required that half of all grains served be whole grain-rich, put in place new calorie limits, and eliminated trans-fats. The second phase began in the 2014–2015 school year and required schools to double the amount of fruits and vegetables offered at breakfast, required all grains served to be whole grain-rich, and implemented limitations on overall sodium levels.

Throughout this transition, school breakfast participation among students eligible for free and reduced-price meals continued to grow rapidly, and participation among paid students has remained stable, indicating widespread acceptance of the new, healthier meals. To learn more about school breakfast participation trends before and after the standards went into effect, check out FRAC’s 2015 report ***School Breakfast Program: Trends and Factors Affecting Student Participation***.

V. Conclusion



The results described in this year's report underscores again what works with school breakfast. The increases in school breakfast participation were linked to the proliferation of best practice strategies like offering free breakfast through the Community Eligibility Provision and serving meals through models like breakfast in the classroom to encourage participation. Momentum has been building for several years as community eligibility has phased in, and the tremendous growth in the 2014–2015 school year proved the power of this new program in high-poverty schools. Looking ahead to the 2015–2016 school year,

additional growth is anticipated as nearly 3,000 additional schools have adopted the provision. Similarly, USDA, state agencies, legislators, and education and anti-hunger advocates continue to push for expansion of breakfast after the bell models to help schools maximize gains from offering free meals to all students. Still, with just over half of low-income children that eat lunch at school starting the day with a healthy breakfast, there is much more progress to be made and many opportunities for growth to seize in this school year and coming years. The findings of this report show what's working and what is a clear path for success.

Technical Notes

The data in this report are collected from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and an annual survey conducted by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) of state child nutrition officials. This report does not include students or schools that participate in school meal programs in Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, or Department of Defense schools.

Due to rounding, totals in the tables may not add up to 100 percent. In Table 1, Georgia increased free and reduced-price school breakfast participation by 256 students. However, due to rounding and the size of the state this appears as 0.0 percent growth. We have included Georgia among the 44 states with free and reduced-price school breakfast participation increases, as the number of free and reduced-price students increased from the 2013-2014 to 2014-2015 school year.

Student participation data for the 2014-2015 school year and prior years are based on daily averages of the number of breakfasts and lunches served during the nine months from September through May of each year, as provided by USDA. States report to USDA the number of meals they serve each month. These numbers may undergo later revisions by states as accounting procedures find errors or other estimates become confirmed.

For consistency, all USDA data used in this report are from the states' 90-day revisions of the monthly reports. The 90-day revisions are the final required reports from the states, but states have the option to change numbers at any time after that point. FRAC applies a formula (divide by 0.938 for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015) to adjust numbers upwards as an attendance factor to account for participation by different students in a month.

The number of participating schools is reported by states to USDA in October of the relevant school year. The number includes not only public schools but also private schools, residential child care institutions, and other institutions that operate school meal programs. FRAC's School Breakfast Scorecard uses the October number, which is verified by FRAC with state officials and provides an opportunity for state officials to update or correct the school numbers.

For each state, FRAC calculates the average daily number of children receiving free or reduced-price breakfasts for every 100 children who were receiving free or reduced-price lunches during the same school year. Based on the top states' performance, FRAC has set an attainable benchmark of every state reaching a ratio of 70 children receiving free or reduced-price breakfast for every 100 receiving free or reduced-price lunch. FRAC then calculates the number of additional children who would be reached if each state reached this 70 to 100 ratio. FRAC multiplies this unserved population by the reimbursement rate for breakfast. While some states served breakfast for more or fewer days during the 2014-2015 school year, 166 was the national average. FRAC assumes each state's mix of free and reduced-price students would apply to any new participants, and conservatively assumes that no additional student's meal is reimbursed at the somewhat higher rate that severe need schools receive. Severe need schools are those where more than 40 percent of lunches served in the second preceding school year were free or reduced-price.

Table 1:**Low-Income Student Participation In School Lunch (NSLP) And School Breakfast (SBP) School Years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015**

State	School Year 2013–2014				School Year 2014–2015				Change in Ratio of SBP to NSLP Participation	Percent Change in Number of F&RP Students in SBP
	Free & Reduced-Price (F&RP) SBP Students	F&RP NSLP Students	F&RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP	Rank	Free & Reduced-Price (F&RP) SBP Students	F&RP NSLP Students	F&RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP	Rank		
Alabama	203,270	383,736	53.0	22	219,735	396,684	55.4	22	2.4	8.1%
Alaska	17,034	37,316	45.6	39	20,684	39,968	51.8	29	6.2	21.4%
Arizona	252,436	496,365	50.9	27	260,098	499,312	52.1	28	1.2	3.0%
Arkansas	146,709	246,560	59.5	10	150,887	244,281	61.8	7	2.3	2.8%
California	1,386,366	2,630,987	52.7	24	1,442,886	2,648,028	54.5	24	1.8	4.1%
Colorado	131,905	243,488	54.2	20	144,932	244,534	59.3	11	5.1	9.9%
Connecticut	75,370	159,046	47.4	32	79,410	166,050	47.8	37	0.4	5.4%
Delaware	31,870	59,613	53.5	21	38,861	65,883	59.0	12	5.5	21.9%
District of Columbia	31,301	44,743	70.0	3	30,320	45,553	66.6	3	-3.4	-3.1%
Florida	652,267	1,327,401	49.1	30	678,109	1,369,679	49.5	33	0.4	4.0%
Georgia	536,344	929,364	57.7	13	536,600	937,840	57.2	18	-0.5	0.0%
Hawaii	29,480	70,954	41.5	46	29,638	68,379	43.3	46	1.8	0.5%
Idaho	57,615	103,408	55.7	17	58,674	102,440	57.3	17	1.6	1.8%
Illinois	371,232	817,404	45.4	40	391,350	850,922	46.0	42	0.6	5.4%
Indiana	213,444	454,027	47.0	34	223,614	457,840	48.8	34	1.8	4.8%
Iowa	71,549	178,337	40.1	48	76,959	182,874	42.1	47	2.0	7.6%
Kansas	95,485	202,014	47.3	33	97,102	202,750	47.9	36	0.6	1.7%
Kentucky	235,642	375,945	62.7	5	242,449	389,919	62.2	6	-0.5	2.9%
Louisiana	228,795	405,204	56.5	16	235,403	412,217	57.1	19	0.6	2.9%
Maine	34,956	61,659	56.7	15	35,881	62,473	57.4	16	0.7	2.6%
Maryland	176,127	294,150	59.9	9	194,577	303,112	64.2	4	4.3	10.5%
Massachusetts	134,409	304,490	44.1	44	145,451	316,583	45.9	43	1.8	8.2%
Michigan	328,973	602,928	54.6	18	334,677	591,459	56.6	20	2.0	1.7%
Minnesota	136,113	282,312	48.2	31	147,200	287,113	51.3	30	3.1	8.1%
Mississippi	188,130	318,421	59.1	11	187,674	320,622	58.5	13	-0.6	-0.2%
Missouri	216,384	380,127	56.9	14	223,000	386,816	57.7	15	0.8	3.1%
Montana	22,257	48,494	45.9	37	23,885	47,790	50.0	32	4.1	7.3%
Nebraska	49,349	123,537	39.9	49	49,642	121,592	40.8	49	0.9	0.6%
Nevada	81,177	173,946	46.7	35	81,569	175,683	46.4	41	-0.3	0.5%
New Hampshire	16,374	41,204	39.7	50	15,615	40,367	38.7	50	-1.0	-4.6%
New Jersey	226,924	446,315	50.8	28	252,420	456,120	55.3	23	4.5	11.2%
New Mexico	121,195	169,438	71.5	2	126,283	178,975	70.6	2	-0.9	4.2%
New York	556,848	1,227,025	45.4	40	575,455	1,234,112	46.6	39	1.2	3.3%
North Carolina	361,136	662,085	54.5	19	388,168	693,450	56.0	21	1.5	7.5%
North Dakota	14,314	30,979	46.2	36	14,976	31,672	47.3	38	1.1	4.6%
Ohio	351,108	679,081	51.7	25	370,094	689,655	53.7	25	2.0	5.4%
Oklahoma	185,031	313,972	58.9	12	183,701	314,243	58.5	13	-0.4	-0.7%
Oregon	112,028	211,658	52.9	23	118,752	222,004	53.5	26	0.6	6.0%
Pennsylvania	272,503	602,297	45.2	42	298,565	642,529	46.5	40	1.3	9.6%
Rhode Island	27,149	53,872	50.4	29	26,811	53,064	50.5	31	0.1	-1.2%
South Carolina	228,043	355,603	64.1	4	225,008	365,558	61.6	8	-2.5	-1.3%
South Dakota	21,892	50,819	43.1	45	23,063	52,152	44.2	44	1.1	5.3%
Tennessee	294,362	474,076	62.1	6	326,765	530,735	61.6	8	-0.5	11.0%
Texas	1,556,343	2,511,074	62.0	7	1,596,202	2,556,356	62.4	5	0.4	2.6%
Utah	59,787	172,538	34.7	51	60,605	174,160	34.8	51	0.1	1.4%
Vermont	17,038	27,783	61.3	8	17,157	28,068	61.1	10	-0.2	0.7%
Virginia	221,414	428,904	51.6	26	228,562	435,572	52.5	27	0.9	3.2%
Washington	160,112	362,009	44.2	43	163,257	371,831	43.9	45	-0.3	2.0%
West Virginia	93,433	126,533	73.8	1	106,787	129,817	82.3	1	8.5	14.3%
Wisconsin	136,557	298,687	45.7	38	144,908	300,502	48.2	35	2.5	6.1%
Wyoming	10,916	26,788	40.7	47	10,672	26,019	41.0	48	0.3	-2.2%
TOTAL	11,180,496	21,028,716	53.2		11,655,095	21,465,354	54.3		1.1	4.2%

Table 2:**School Participation In School Lunch (NSLP) And School Breakfast (SBP)
School Years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015**

State	School Year 2013–2014				School Year 2014–2015				Percent Change in Number of SBP Schools
	SBP Schools	NSLP Schools	SBP Schools as % of NSLP Schools	Rank	SBP Schools	NSLP Schools	SBP Schools as % of NSLP Schools	Rank	
Alabama	1,439	1,495	96.3%	15	1,436	1,483	96.8%	15	-0.2%
Alaska	362	441	82.1%	44	368	434	84.8%	45	1.7%
Arizona	1,620	1,756	92.3%	28	1,650	1,775	93.0%	29	1.9%
Arkansas	1,076	1,077	99.9%	2	1,071	1,072	99.9%	1	-0.5%
California	8,836	10,159	87.0%	36	8,829	10,101	87.4%	37	-0.1%
Colorado	1,388	1,741	79.7%	46	1,401	1,673	83.7%	46	0.9%
Connecticut	804	1,077	74.7%	51	866	1,075	80.6%	47	7.7%
Delaware	222	228	97.4%	11	252	257	98.1%	11	13.5%
District of Columbia	223	225	99.1%	5	226	229	98.7%	7	1.3%
Florida	3,674	3,784	97.1%	13	3,747	3,823	98.0%	12	2.0%
Georgia	2,264	2,364	95.8%	17	2,341	2,416	96.9%	14	3.4%
Hawaii	289	294	98.3%	6	287	290	99.0%	5	-0.7%
Idaho	655	694	94.4%	21	655	691	94.8%	23	0.0%
Illinois	3,331	4,245	78.5%	47	3,400	4,225	80.5%	48	2.1%
Indiana	1,913	2,140	89.4%	33	1,894	2,110	89.8%	33	-1.0%
Iowa	1,311	1,418	92.5%	27	1,346	1,455	92.5%	31	2.7%
Kansas	1,406	1,529	92.0%	29	1,433	1,510	94.9%	22	1.9%
Kentucky	1,308	1,389	94.2%	23	1,298	1,365	95.1%	17	-0.8%
Louisiana	1,545	1,634	94.6%	20	1,563	1,644	95.1%	18	1.2%
Maine	597	628	95.1%	18	609	641	95.0%	20	2.0%
Maryland	1,503	1,530	98.2%	7	1,487	1,512	98.3%	9	-1.1%
Massachusetts	1,710	2,217	77.1%	48	1,752	2,190	80.0%	49	2.5%
Michigan	3,078	3,499	88.0%	35	3,031	3,501	86.6%	41	-1.5%
Minnesota	1,684	2,021	83.3%	43	1,727	2,021	85.5%	44	2.6%
Mississippi	861	917	93.9%	24	858	912	94.1%	25	-0.3%
Missouri	2,292	2,495	91.9%	30	2,306	2,492	92.5%	30	0.6%
Montana	689	817	84.3%	39	714	821	87.0%	40	3.6%
Nebraska	792	966	82.0%	45	836	960	87.1%	39	5.6%
Nevada	533	584	91.3%	31	567	606	93.6%	27	6.4%
New Hampshire	403	447	90.2%	32	410	456	89.9%	32	1.7%
New Jersey	2,008	2,635	76.2%	49	2,077	2,659	78.1%	50	3.4%
New Mexico	791	825	95.9%	16	833	883	94.3%	24	5.3%
New York	5,745	6,172	93.1%	26	5,858	6,248	93.8%	26	2.0%
North Carolina	2,444	2,491	98.1%	9	2,476	2,517	98.4%	8	1.3%
North Dakota	360	407	88.5%	34	361	410	88.0%	35	0.3%
Ohio	3,158	3,782	83.5%	42	3,203	3,741	85.6%	42	1.4%
Oklahoma	1,816	1,864	97.4%	11	1,793	1,844	97.2%	13	-1.3%
Oregon	1,274	1,343	94.9%	19	1,267	1,335	94.9%	21	-0.5%
Pennsylvania	3,140	3,663	85.7%	38	3,116	3,518	88.6%	34	-0.8%
Rhode Island	363	376	96.5%	14	362	377	96.0%	16	-0.3%
South Carolina	1,202	1,205	99.8%	3	1,207	1,211	99.7%	3	0.4%
South Dakota*	606	719	84.3%	39	808	944	85.6%	43	33.3%
Tennessee	1,769	1,802	98.2%	7	1,752	1,784	98.2%	10	-1.0%
Texas	8,218	8,251	99.6%	4	8,245	8,265	99.8%	2	0.3%
Utah	803	961	83.6%	41	818	939	87.1%	38	1.9%
Vermont	333	353	94.3%	22	325	342	95.0%	19	-2.4%
Virginia	1,920	1,968	97.6%	10	2,003	2,010	99.7%	4	4.3%
Washington	1,970	2,110	93.4%	25	1,970	2,110	93.4%	28	0.0%
West Virginia	742	742	100.0%	1	743	751	98.9%	6	0.1%
Wisconsin	1,905	2,510	75.9%	50	1,918	2,470	77.7%	51	0.7%
Wyoming	282	325	86.8%	37	276	315	87.6%	36	-2.1%
TOTAL	88,657	98,315	90.2%		89,771	98,413	91.2%		1.3%

* During SY2014-2015, the South Dakota Department of Education changed the way schools report their claim information. As a result, this report will show a large increase in participating school counts compared to SY 2013-2014.

Table 3:**Average Daily Student Participation In School Breakfast Program (SBP)
School Year 2014-2015**

State	Free (F) SBP Students		Reduced Price (RP) SBP Students		Total F&RP SBP Students		Paid SBP Students		Total SBP Students
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Alabama	208,386	83.3%	11,349	4.5%	219,735	87.8%	30,576	12.2%	250,312
Alaska	19,639	80.1%	1,045	4.3%	20,684	84.4%	3,829	15.6%	24,512
Arizona	237,773	78.3%	22,325	7.4%	260,098	85.7%	43,461	14.3%	303,559
Arkansas	134,040	75.4%	16,848	9.5%	150,887	84.9%	26,772	15.1%	177,659
California	1,276,200	76.6%	166,686	10.0%	1,442,886	86.6%	223,194	13.4%	1,666,080
Colorado	125,535	68.6%	19,397	10.6%	144,932	79.2%	38,115	20.8%	183,047
Connecticut	74,229	79.2%	5,181	5.5%	79,410	84.7%	14,299	15.3%	93,709
Delaware	37,560	79.6%	1,301	2.8%	38,861	82.4%	8,310	17.6%	47,171
District of Columbia	29,129	85.5%	1,191	3.5%	30,320	89.0%	3,764	11.0%	34,084
Florida	637,943	81.6%	40,165	5.1%	678,109	86.7%	103,794	13.3%	781,903
Georgia	501,075	81.1%	35,526	5.7%	536,600	86.8%	81,408	13.2%	618,008
Hawaii	26,003	69.3%	3,635	9.7%	29,638	79.0%	7,869	21.0%	37,507
Idaho	50,882	66.9%	7,791	10.2%	58,674	77.1%	17,386	22.9%	76,059
Illinois	384,086	91.6%	7,264	1.7%	391,350	93.3%	28,149	6.7%	419,499
Indiana	203,835	76.1%	19,779	7.4%	223,614	83.5%	44,260	16.5%	267,875
Iowa	70,076	72.3%	6,883	7.1%	76,959	79.3%	20,028	20.7%	96,987
Kansas	85,173	74.6%	11,928	10.4%	97,102	85.0%	17,124	15.0%	114,226
Kentucky	233,856	84.2%	8,593	3.1%	242,449	87.3%	35,371	12.7%	277,819
Louisiana	223,346	84.6%	12,057	4.6%	235,403	89.2%	28,482	10.8%	263,885
Maine	31,689	66.1%	4,192	8.7%	35,881	74.8%	12,067	25.2%	47,948
Maryland	174,211	67.1%	20,366	7.8%	194,577	74.9%	65,179	25.1%	259,755
Massachusetts	138,225	83.4%	7,227	4.4%	145,451	87.7%	20,352	12.3%	165,803
Michigan	312,596	79.2%	22,081	5.6%	334,677	84.8%	59,875	15.2%	394,552
Minnesota	124,867	59.0%	22,332	10.5%	147,200	69.5%	64,561	30.5%	211,760
Mississippi	177,369	87.8%	10,305	5.1%	187,674	92.9%	14,382	7.1%	202,056
Missouri	202,193	73.4%	20,807	7.6%	223,000	81.0%	52,300	19.0%	275,300
Montana	21,695	70.8%	2,190	7.1%	23,885	77.9%	6,772	22.1%	30,657
Nebraska	42,182	61.3%	7,460	10.8%	49,642	72.2%	19,129	27.8%	68,771
Nevada	73,002	80.7%	8,567	9.5%	81,569	90.2%	8,900	9.8%	90,469
New Hampshire	14,099	68.9%	1,516	7.4%	15,615	76.3%	4,852	23.7%	20,467
New Jersey	234,393	79.0%	18,027	6.1%	252,420	85.1%	44,232	14.9%	296,652
New Mexico	119,655	81.2%	6,629	4.5%	126,283	85.7%	21,029	14.3%	147,313
New York	540,943	81.4%	34,513	5.2%	575,455	86.6%	89,133	13.4%	664,588
North Carolina	363,525	80.8%	24,643	5.5%	388,168	86.3%	61,703	13.7%	449,870
North Dakota	13,182	53.7%	1,795	7.3%	14,976	61.0%	9,568	39.0%	24,544
Ohio	349,602	80.2%	20,493	4.7%	370,094	84.9%	65,607	15.1%	435,701
Oklahoma	164,155	73.6%	19,546	8.8%	183,701	82.4%	39,252	17.6%	222,952
Oregon	110,073	78.4%	8,679	6.2%	118,752	84.6%	21,623	15.4%	140,376
Pennsylvania	285,580	82.1%	12,985	3.7%	298,565	85.9%	49,109	14.1%	347,674
Rhode Island	24,648	76.9%	2,163	6.7%	26,811	83.6%	5,247	16.4%	32,058
South Carolina	211,630	80.7%	13,378	5.1%	225,008	85.8%	37,326	14.2%	262,334
South Dakota	21,045	74.8%	2,018	7.2%	23,063	82.0%	5,057	18.0%	28,120
Tennessee	314,104	84.6%	12,661	3.4%	326,765	88.0%	44,710	12.0%	371,475
Texas	1,487,245	79.3%	108,958	5.8%	1,596,202	85.1%	278,947	14.9%	1,875,150
Utah	53,152	71.3%	7,453	10.0%	60,605	81.3%	13,922	18.7%	74,527
Vermont	14,934	66.9%	2,223	10.0%	17,157	76.8%	5,174	23.2%	22,331
Virginia	203,503	72.7%	25,059	9.0%	228,562	81.7%	51,363	18.3%	279,925
Washington	144,287	77.0%	18,970	10.1%	163,257	87.2%	24,055	12.8%	187,312
West Virginia	101,778	68.7%	5,009	3.4%	106,787	72.1%	41,269	27.9%	148,057
Wisconsin	134,649	74.5%	10,259	5.7%	144,908	80.2%	35,782	19.8%	180,689
Wyoming	8,783	60.6%	1,889	13.0%	10,672	73.6%	3,824	26.4%	14,496
TOTAL	10,771,760	78.6%	883,335	6.4%	11,655,095	85.0%	2,052,490	15.0%	13,707,585

Table 4:**Additional Participation And Funding If 70 Low-Income Students Were Served School Breakfast (SBP) Per 100 Served School Lunch (NSLP) School Year 2014-2015**

State	Actual Total Free & Reduced Price (F&R) SBP Students	Total F&R Students if 70 SBP per 100 NSLP	Additional F&R Students if 70 SBP per 100 NSLP	Additional Annual Funding if 70 SBP per 100 NSLP F&R Students
Alabama	219,735	277,679	57,943	\$15,402,411
Alaska	20,684	27,978	7,294	\$1,939,258
Arizona	260,098	349,518	89,420	\$23,617,696
Arkansas	150,887	170,996	20,109	\$5,285,390
California	1,442,886	1,853,619	410,734	\$107,876,936
Colorado	144,932	171,174	26,241	\$6,868,290
Connecticut	79,410	116,235	36,825	\$9,763,785
Delaware	38,861	46,118	7,258	\$1,935,746
District of Columbia	30,320	31,887	1,567	\$417,470
Florida	678,109	958,775	280,667	\$74,500,822
Georgia	536,600	656,488	119,888	\$31,781,704
Hawaii	29,638	47,865	18,227	\$4,780,747
Idaho	58,674	71,708	13,034	\$3,412,180
Illinois	391,350	595,645	204,295	\$54,641,586
Indiana	223,614	320,488	96,874	\$25,573,668
Iowa	76,959	128,012	51,053	\$13,474,900
Kansas	97,102	141,925	44,823	\$11,756,312
Kentucky	242,449	272,943	30,495	\$8,130,715
Louisiana	235,403	288,552	53,149	\$14,129,238
Maine	35,881	43,731	7,850	\$2,061,215
Maryland	194,577	212,178	17,602	\$4,632,439
Massachusetts	145,451	221,608	76,156	\$20,251,271
Michigan	334,677	414,021	79,344	\$21,034,572
Minnesota	147,200	200,979	53,779	\$14,028,090
Mississippi	187,674	224,435	36,761	\$9,765,900
Missouri	223,000	270,771	47,771	\$12,599,675
Montana	23,885	33,453	9,568	\$2,524,285
Nebraska	49,642	85,114	35,472	\$9,255,307
Nevada	81,569	122,978	41,409	\$10,897,392
New Hampshire	15,615	28,257	12,642	\$3,331,943
New Jersey	252,420	319,284	66,864	\$17,708,140
New Mexico	126,283	125,282	0	\$0
New York	575,455	863,878	288,423	\$76,549,054
North Carolina	388,168	485,415	97,247	\$25,792,942
North Dakota	14,976	22,171	7,194	\$1,888,022
Ohio	370,094	482,759	112,665	\$29,927,542
Oklahoma	183,701	219,970	36,270	\$9,542,438
Oregon	118,752	155,403	36,651	\$9,703,364
Pennsylvania	298,565	449,770	151,206	\$40,254,663
Rhode Island	26,811	37,145	10,334	\$2,732,071
South Carolina	225,008	255,891	30,883	\$8,197,194
South Dakota	23,063	36,506	13,443	\$3,549,559
Tennessee	326,765	371,515	44,750	\$11,923,981
Texas	1,596,202	1,789,449	193,246	\$51,209,074
Utah	60,605	121,912	61,307	\$16,079,276
Vermont	17,157	19,648	2,490	\$652,377
Virginia	228,562	304,900	76,338	\$20,072,102
Washington	163,257	260,281	97,025	\$25,479,722
West Virginia	106,787	90,872	0	\$0
Wisconsin	144,908	210,351	65,444	\$17,333,943
Wyoming	10,672	18,213	7,541	\$1,957,542
TOTAL	11,655,095	15,025,748	3,387,570	\$896,416,518



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