



Nutrition Programs: Summer Meals, Local Foods, proposed federal changes to school meal programs and more!

Policy and Program Updates for Indigenous Stakeholders

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April 21, 2025

Agenda

Section 1: Access to Food and Nutrition Programs, including this summer!
(Sun Meals, Sun Bucks, FDPIR and DC, Try it Local, Farm to School)

Section 2: Current Nutrition Promotions from Health and Nutrition Services at the Arizona Department of Education

Section 3: Proposed Changes (federally) to the School Meals Programs

Resources

Questions and Answers

Section 1

Access to Food and Nutrition Programs including this summer!
(Sun Meals, Sun Bucks, FDPIR and DC, Try it Local, Farm to School)



Overview



- Summer Meal Service Programs
 - Seamless Summer Option (SSO) - offered by schools
 - Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) - offered by schools and community organizations
 - Non Congregate Feeding (offsite) option for eligible sites
 - Extended School Lunch and Breakfast (NSLP/SBP)
- Additional Summer Meal Assistance for Children
 - **SUN Bucks**, or the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (S-EBT) adds an additional supplement to the summer meals programs by providing grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children when schools are closed for the summer. Notably, families can benefit from SUN Bucks alongside other programs like SNAP, WIC, and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)/Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

Applying for the SFSP

Guidance: HNS 02-2025: Application for Summer Programs



APPLICATION PROCESS

SFAs and new or returning COs applying to be a sponsor of SFSP must have all application requirements submitted to HNS by May 31, 2025. The following must be submitted with the application:

- Management Plan
- Budget
- CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications
- Any applications received after May 31, 2025, will not be considered for sponsorship but may be considered as an SFSP site

NEW SPONSORS

Becoming a Sponsor:

Community organizations new to operating the SFSP can start the process by completing the SFSP Prospective Entity Form.

Becoming a Site:

Schools and community organizations interested in becoming a site that serves summer meals should contact Health and Nutrition Services to confirm the site is in an eligible area. Request information by submitting a Help Desk Ticket

Summer Food Service Program

RURAL NON-CONGREGATE MEAL SERVICE SITES



Guidance: [HNS 02-2025: Application for Summer Programs](#)

Some SFSP/SSO sites can be approved to provide meals to-go, also known as non-congregate feeding sites.

Operators interested in serving non-congregate may offer:

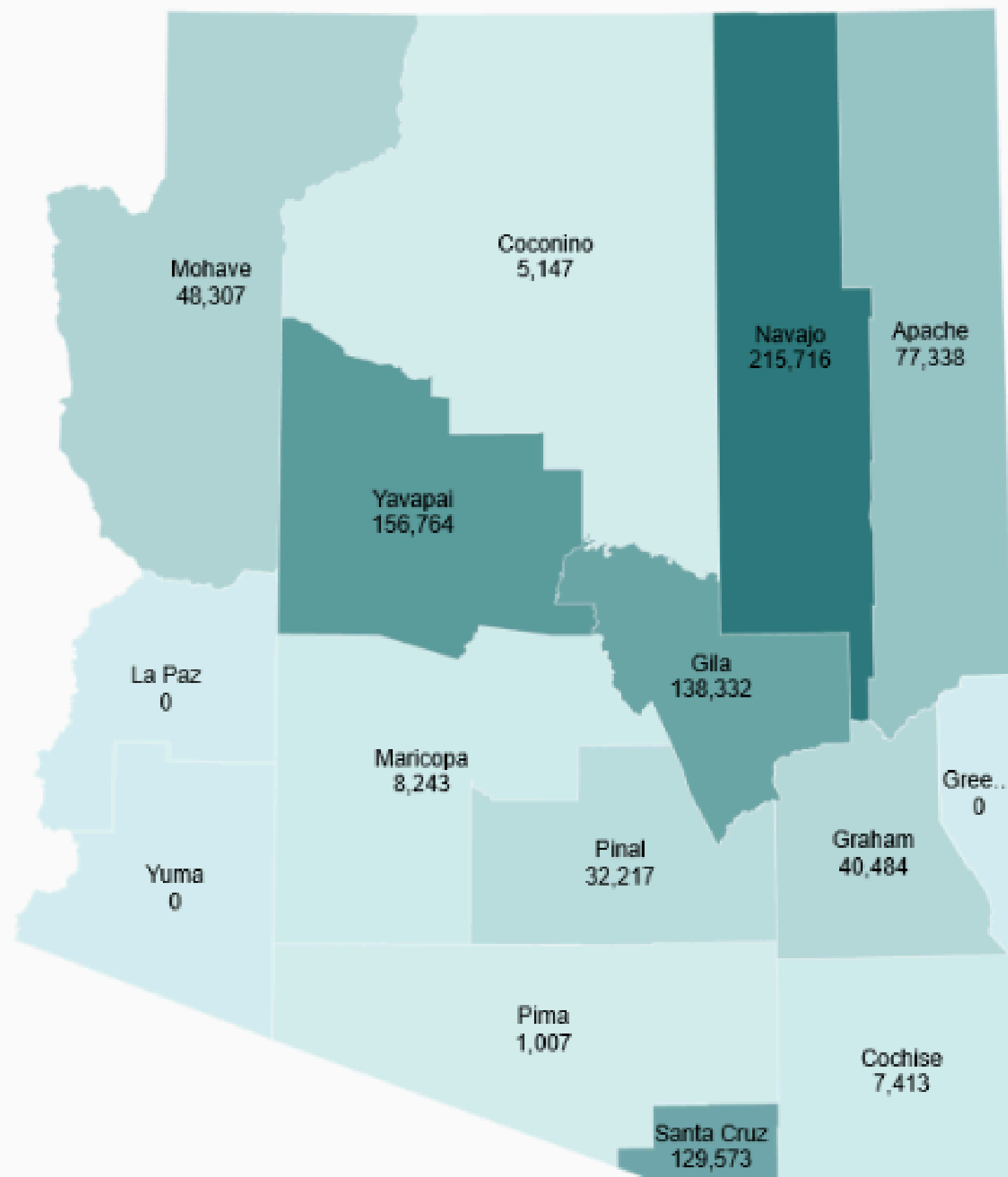
- Home delivery multi-day meal issuance
- Home delivery bulk distribution
- Meal pick-up multi-day meal issuance
- Meal pick-up bulk distribution
- Mobile meal multi-day meal issuance
- Mobile meal bulk distribution



SFSP Non-Congregate Meals by County

Summer 2024

County	Non-Congregate Meals
Apache	77,338
Cochise	7,413
Coconino	5,147
Gila	138,332
Graham	40,484
Greenlee	0
La Paz	0
Maricopa	8,243
Mohave	48,307
Navajo	215,716
Pima	1,007
Pinal	32,217
Santa Cruz	129,573
Yavapai	156,764
Yuma	0



Finding Summer Meals Sites



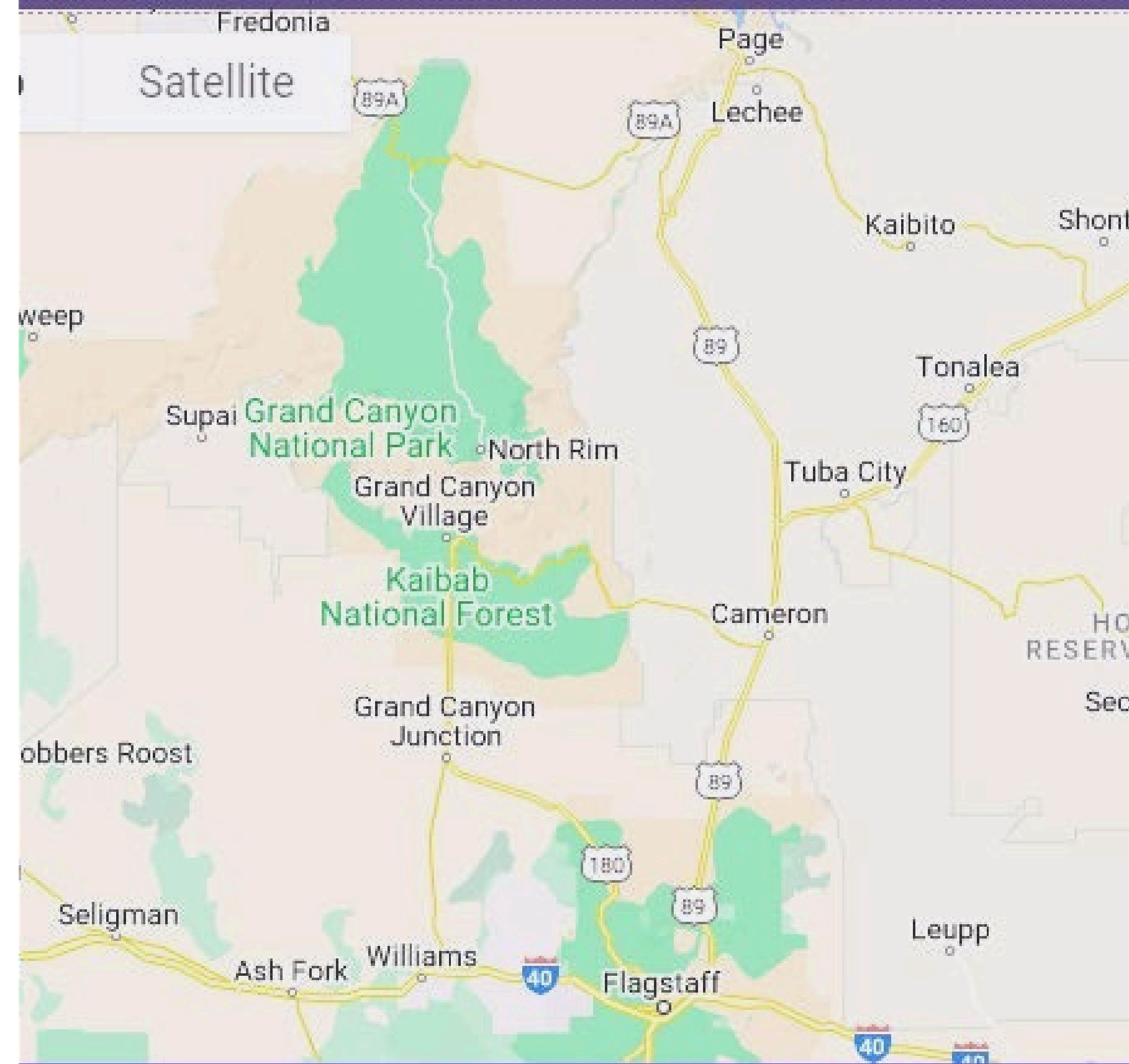
Spread the word - Summer Meal Service sites in Arizona can be found at:

www.azhealthzone.org/freesummermeals/

- Families can enter a zip code and the map tool will populate meal service site locations and details.



Search by Address or Zip Code



Resources for Rural Non-Congregate Meals



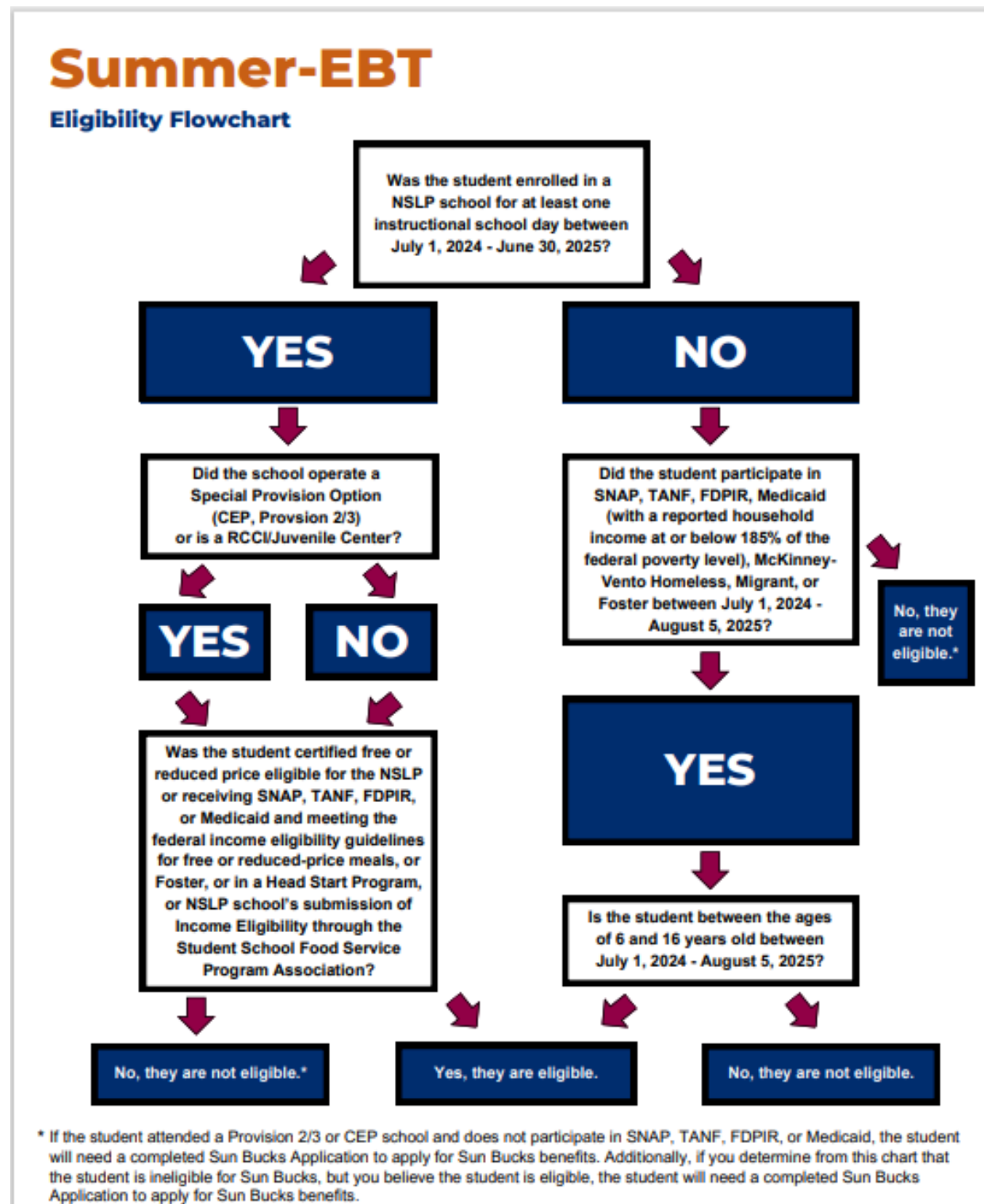
- [Quick Guide: Offering a Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service](#)
- [Operating Both Congregate and Non-Congregate at the Same Site](#)
- [Six Reasons to Offer Rural Non-Congregate Summer Meals](#)
- [Rural Designation Map](#)
- [Arizona Summer Food Service Site Planner](#)



Overview



SUN Bucks: Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer-EBT)



Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) in partnership with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has been approved to administer the Summer 2025 Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer-EBT).

This program provides grocery-buying benefit of \$120 to low-income families with school-aged children who lose access to free or reduced-price school meals when schools are closed for the summer.

School-age children 6 to 16 are eligible based on the [eligibility flowchart](#).



- SUN Bucks spends like SNAP with the same restrictions but isn't considered SNAP
- Provides families with school-aged children with money to be used on groceries over the summer.
- \$120 Benefit to those who qualify.
- Benefits expire/expunge 122 from the date they are made available

What is the school's role?



1. **Reporting student data and eligibility:** student level enrollment and free and reduced-price eligibility to ADE
2. **Promoting SUN Bucks:** Direct families to the SUN Bucks Household application if their child is not automatically certified as eligible for the SUN Bucks benefit but who would otherwise qualify.

[Training: What You Need to Know About SUN Bucks](#)

[Resource: How to Report Students for Summer-EBT](#)

SUN Bucks and SPO Operators

Those sites that operate a Special Provision Option (SPO) like the Community Eligibility Program, or Provision 2 or 3 that do not collect school meal applications will only be able to report the following students:

- Match results from the CNP Direct Certification system

How will the other students who are eligible receive SUN Bucks benefits?

- These families will need to fill out a SUN Bucks Application
 - Use the [No Meal Application, No Problem Infographic](#)

No Meal Application, No Problem...

How to receive SUN Bucks for students who attend schools that do not collect Household Applications for Meal Benefits



The information collected on meal applications for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) can qualify students for SUN Bucks. However, if your school doesn't collect meal applications, you may fill out a **SUN Bucks application** to see if your child is eligible for this grocery buying benefit.

COMPLETE THE SUN BUCKS SCREENER TO
Apply for SUN Bucks Today!

SUN Bucks Eligibility Screener

Scan the QR code to be directed to the screening tool that will ensure households that are pre-qualified do not complete a 2025 SUN Bucks Household Application when it is not required. For those deemed necessary to complete a 2025 SUN Bucks Household Application, the link to the application will be made available within the screener.

For Spanish visit: <https://www.azed.gov/SUNBucks>



January 2025 | Arizona Department of Education | This institution is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

SUN Bucks Household Application

SUNBUCKS APPLICATION IS NOW OPEN

School Food Authorities (SFAs) are required to:

- Ensure the application is available to households that believe they qualify for the SUN Bucks benefit but were not identified as eligible by the SFA.
- Report to ADE all students who attended schools participating in a Special Provision Option, who were not directly certified but may be eligible.

Families are encouraged to:

- Visit the [SUN Bucks website](#) and Complete the SUN Bucks Eligibility Screener Guide. Click “How do I apply for SUN Bucks?” This is the first step to determine if your child will automatically receive SUN Bucks in Summer 2025 or if an application is needed.

Eligible households may:

- Complete and submit the 2025 SUN Bucks Application to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) by August 5, 2025.
- Expect ADE to process the application and subsequently notify the household of approval/denial of benefits.



[Parents](#) [Educators & Administrators](#) [Programs](#) [About ADE](#) [Data & Systems](#) [ADEConnect](#) [Q](#)

[Home](#) / [Health and Nutrition Services](#) / [SUN Bucks: Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer \(Summer-EBT\)](#)

SUN Bucks: Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer-EBT)



Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (Summer-EBT/SUN Bucks) provides grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children who lose access to free or reduced-price school meals when schools are closed for the summer.

▶ Will my child automatically receive SUN Bucks in 2025?

▶ How do I apply for SUN Bucks?

▶ How will I be receiving my benefits?

▶ How do I use my SUN Bucks benefits?

▶ What if I don't want my benefits or if I'd like to opt out?

▶ What to do if my benefits were stolen?

▶ Who do I contact if I have further questions?

Food Distribution
Program on Indian
Reservations (FDPIR)

And



EFFORTS TO STREAMLINE ELIGIBILITY

Arizona Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) Direct Certification Outreach

- The goal is to automatically grant child nutrition benefits to eligible FDPIR participants.
- Indian Tribal Organizations (ITO) and state agencies will collaborate, ensuring automatic qualification for free school meals for students in FDPIR.

Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized Tribal Nations and hosts 8 FDPIR locations.

- Colorado River Indian Tribes
- Gila River Indian Community
- Navajo Nation
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Quechan Tribe
- San Carlos Apache Tribe
- Tohono O'odham Nation
- White Mountain Apache Tribe



SUN BUCKS

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), has received approval to administer the Summer 2025 Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer-EBT) program.

- This initiative provides eligible families with school-aged children financial assistance to purchase groceries during the summer months.

FDPIR Agreement Impact

Students' current
process **without**
FDPIR agreement

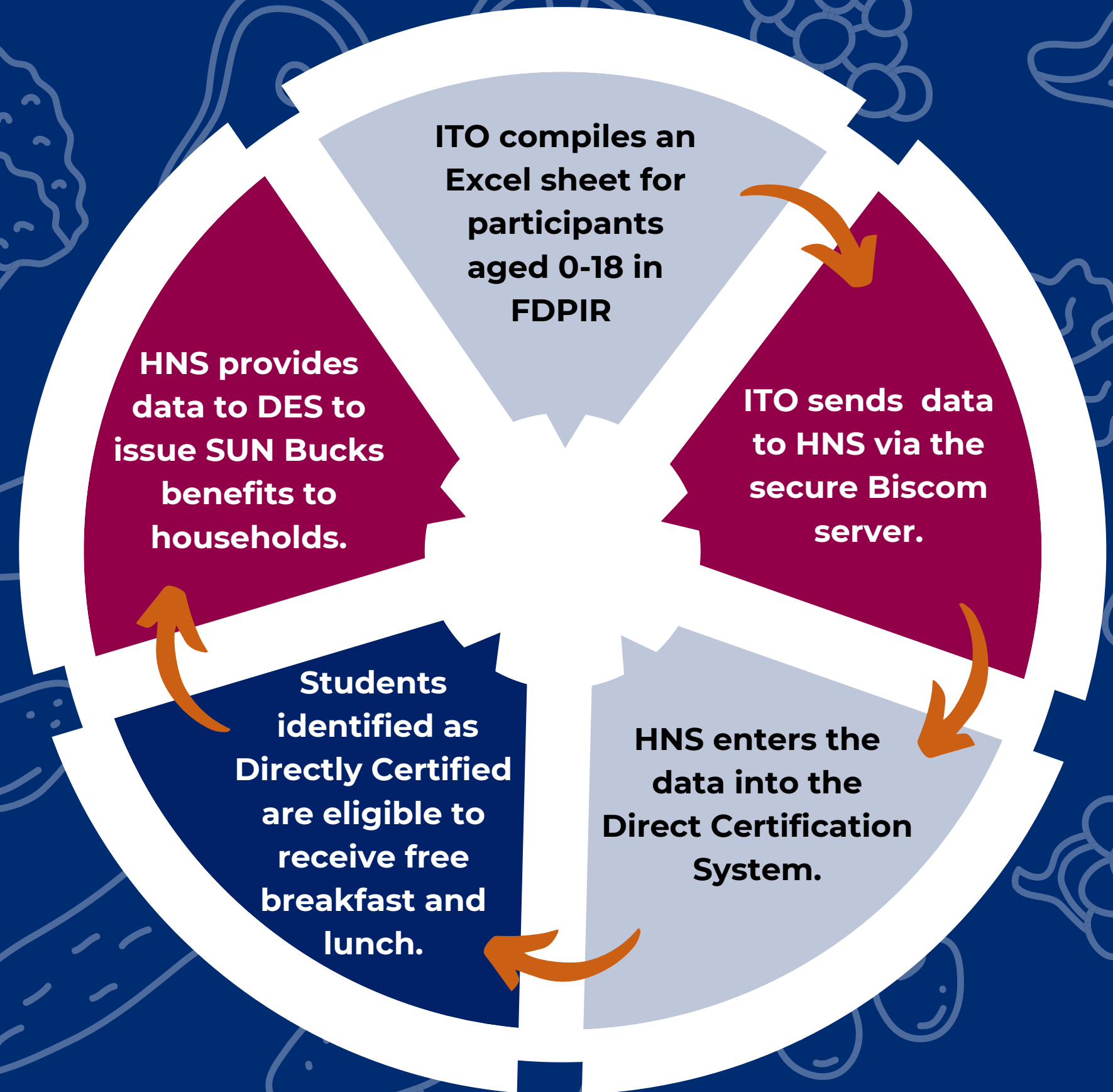


Students process
with FDPIR
agreement



How can we achieve this? Through a data sharing agreement..

- There are children participating in the FDPIR who could greatly benefit from direct certification.
- The FDPIR possesses readily available data that can facilitate matching.
- Suggest an existing method to automatically qualify children for Arizona's child nutrition programs.
- Emphasizes the SUN Bucks grocery benefit as a significant program that positively impacts communities.





Support from Partners:

- For Families: <https://www.azed.gov/SUNBucks>
- For school administrators: <https://www.azed.gov/hns/s-ebt-sun-bucks-information-administrators-and-school-leaders>
- Questions from schools about SUN Bucks: sunbucks@azed.gov
- Questions from parents:
 - Summer EBT hotline/phone number: 833-648-4406 (ex: Where is my card? Do we qualify? Need help with SUN Bucks Application?)
- Communicate to families - who needs to apply



Remember: Most kids are streamline certified, only some will need to complete the application.

Try it Local

**UPDATE ON LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS FUNDING,
INCLUDING ARIZONA TRY IT LOCAL REIMBURSEMENTS**



Try it Local!

Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement (ADE+AMS)



Cooperative Agreement with the Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA since March 2023. Funds were awarded to increase purchasing of local and region food for use in school meal programs.

Original award: \$4,380,245

Remaining amount: \$2,935,410

What you can do to access these funds:

- Talk to your food service director
- Complete an Interest Form (Schools or Producers)
- Learn more about the geographic preference to use during procurement of food
- Get input from students, families, community
- Join the AZ Farm to School Network



LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS

Arizona's funding from USDA for Try it Local

LFS

\$ 4,380,245

March 2023 - June 30, 2026*

*or sooner based on funding utilization and requests for reimbursement

LFSCC

~~\$ 13,094,310~~

~~January 2025 - 2028~~

Terminated on
3/7/25



Farm to School

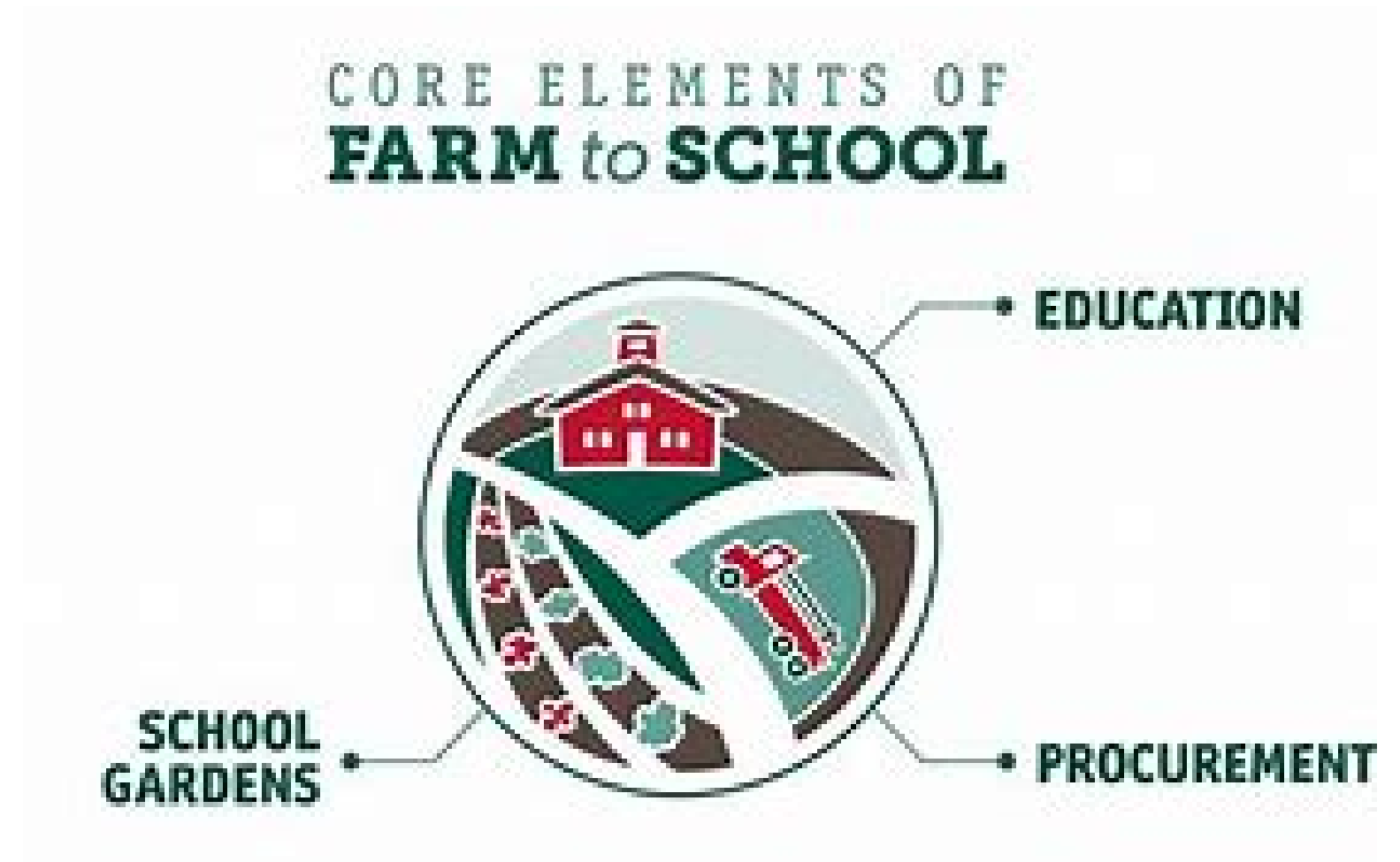
Activities

Why Care?

Farm to School supports the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers, and the ways children engage in learning about food and agriculture.

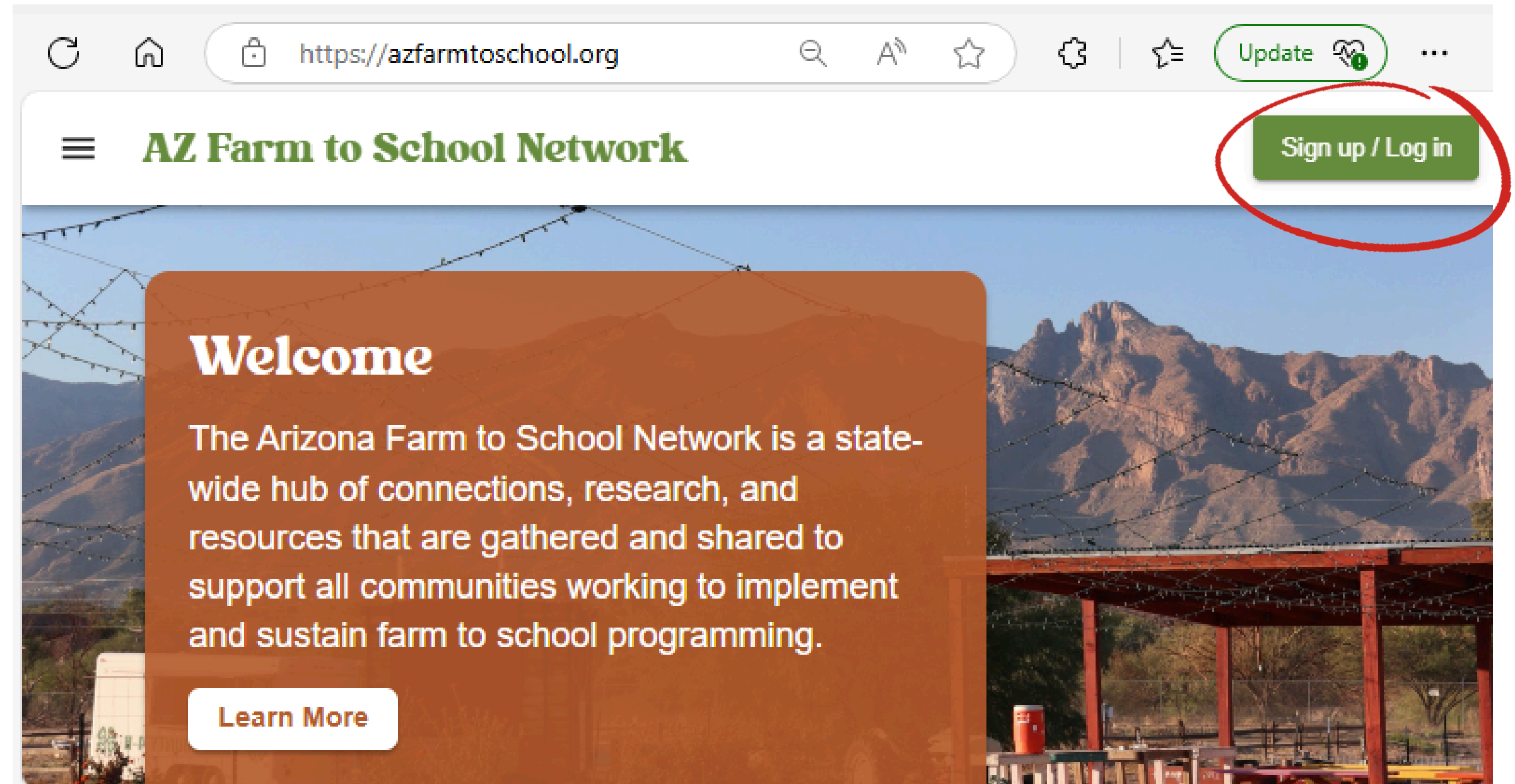
Children are empowered to make healthy food choices, develop taste preferences, and lifelong healthy habits.

Farm to school impacts the food system, the environment, and economic development.



Arizona's F2S Network

<https://AZFarmtoschool.org>



CONSIDER JOINING THE NETWORK AND SIGNING UP TO RECEIVE WEEKLY EMAILS CONTAINING RESOURCES, LINKS TO WEBINARS, RECIPES, & MORE!

For further assistance, please contact Stacy at
Contact@azfarmtoschoolnetwork.org

What you can do now

- 1** **CONNECT WITH YOUR CHILD NUTRITION/FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR TO EXCHANGE IDEAS ABOUT LOCAL FOOD, SUMMER MEALS, AND CEP**
- 2** **HELP SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT ACCESSING MEALS AND FOOD BENEFITS THIS SUMMER**
- 3** **SIGN UP TO GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ARIZONA FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK, AND ATTEND FUTURE UPLIFT WEBINARS**



Section 3

Proposed Changes to the School Meals Programs -
Community Eligibility Provision and Verification Processes



Proposed Changes - School Meal Programs

Senate Committees (10-year savings forecasted)

1

**CHANGE THE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION
MINIMUM ISP TO 60%**

(Identified Student Percentage)

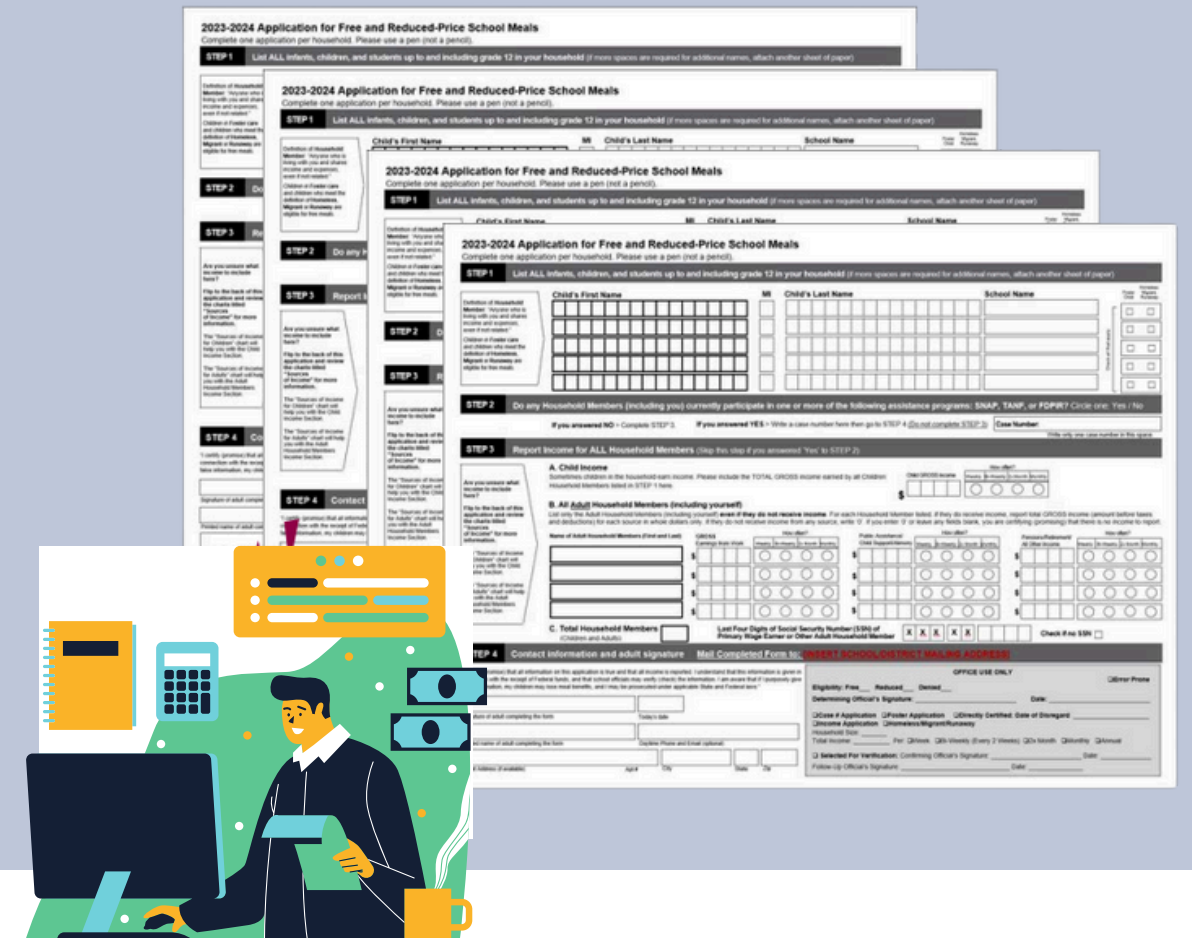
2

**REQUIRE INCOME VERIFICATION FOR SCHOOL
BREAKFAST AND NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH
PROGRAMS**

WHY THIS MATTERS

SHIFTING THE ISP TO 60% (FROM 25%)

1. Impacted schools will have to return to collecting household applications for Free and Reduced-price meal benefits
2. Verification of information on applications (3% currently)
3. Meal charges, turns to debt
4. Impacts to participation, revenue



The proposed cuts to school meals would increase hardships for children and families across ARIZONA:



schools in **ARIZONA** would no longer be able to provide free school meals through CEP and would have to reinstate meal applications.



school districts in **ARIZONA**, listed on the reverse page, would be affected.



ARIZONA children attend schools that would no longer be able to offer meals at no charge to all students through CEP.¹

¹ & Action Center. (2024). Eligibility for Community Eligibility Provision Database. <https://frac.org/community-elig>

Resources from ADE and Partners



VERIFICATION FOR NSLP

[Online Course: Verification Review](#)



COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION

[Planning and Implementation Guidance](#)

[Applying to Operate CEP: Information for LEAs/SFAs](#)

[CEP Monthly Reimbursement Calculator Tool](#)

[Identified Student Percentage Slider Tool](#)



MEAL CHARGES & DEBT

[Unpaid Meals Charges, Collection of Debt Guidance](#)



TRY IT LOCAL

[How to Request Reimbursements for Local Food Purchases](#)

[School Interest Form](#)



FARM TO SCHOOL

[Arizona Farm to School Network](#)

[Cuts That Bite: Navigating the Federal Landscape for School Meals and Farm to School March 25, 2025 Webinar](#) by the National Farm to School Network

THANK YOU!

