

On February 2, 2015, President Obama released his Fiscal Year 2016 (FY 2016) budget request, outlining his spending priorities for the coming year. By offering funding levels above federal budget caps as a result of sequestration, the budget shines a light on the challenges Congress faces if the caps remain in place. Choosing to allow funding levels above the federal budget caps allows room to invest significantly in children, and the President's budget does just that. This fact sheet takes a more detailed look at proposals in the budget that impact child nutrition.

Once again this year, the President's proposal increases funding in critical areas, such as nutrition assistance, while other programs are cut back. The office of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for administering nutrition assistance programs. The President proposed just over \$112 billion in total budget authority for the FNS department, an increase of \$2 billion, a significant portion of which benefits child nutrition programs.

Through the FY 2016 budget request, the President continues to prioritize improving access to nutritious food for children who need it most. The President's FY 2016 budget for child nutrition programs provides funds for anticipated changes in participation and food cost inflation for the major nutrition programs. In the coming years, rising employment and household income are projected to reduce the need for nutrition assistance through programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and lead to fewer program participants.

## Significant Investments in Child Nutrition

The President's budget continues to support the implementation of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which has strengthened child nutrition programs such as the school breakfast and lunch programs. The Child Nutrition Programs provide reimbursements to State agencies for cash and commodity meal subsidies through the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Summer Food Service Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program. Funding for these programs increase children's access to healthy meals and snacks in schools, in afterschool settings, and in child care. The President's FY 2016 Budget would support over 5.3 billion lunches for more than 30 million children in the National School Lunch Program and nearly 2.4 billion breakfasts served to 14.6 million children in the School Breakfast Program every day:

- The budget provides the School Breakfast Program with just over \$4.2 billion, an increase of over \$270 million over FY 2015 funding levels.
- The President's budget proposes \$11.7 billion for the National School Lunch Program, which is almost a \$200 million decrease over FY 2015.
- The Summer Food Service Program funding is proposed at \$535 million. This is a \$40 million dollar increase over FY 2015 levels. The Summer Food Service program provides nutrition assistance to low income children when school is not in session during the summer months. The budget provides an additional \$66 million to continue a USDA demonstration project that provides monthly food assistance to low-income children in the summer via an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card.

- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program funding is proposed at \$163 million in the President's FY 2016 budget. This program gives low-income elementary schools, funding to provide fresh fruits and vegetables at no charge to children during the school day.
- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) proposed funding is \$3.2 billion; about \$44 million more than the FY2015 enacted levels. CACFP improves the quality of day care, making it more affordable for low-income families by providing reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks.
- The budget provides \$6.62 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). This is level funding compared to the FY 2015 funding level. WIC provides a monthly food package to low-income women, infants, and children living at or below 185 percent of the poverty line. This funding level is expected to maintain projected caseload of 8.5 million participants. This funding level includes \$60 million for breastfeeding peer counselors, \$13.6 million for infrastructure, and \$55 million for management information services.
- Again this year the President's budget proposes \$35 million for School Meal Equipment Grants, which are competitive grants that go to schools across the country. These grants may be used to help schools upgrade their kitchen equipment to serve healthier meals, improve food safety, and to help support the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of the school breakfast program

### SNAP

Since it is an entitlement program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) receives funding to serve all eligible participants. The President's budget proposes roughly \$41.9 billion for SNAP benefits that go to children, which is a slight increase from FY 2015. The budget anticipates rising employment and household income, which is projected to reduce the need for nutrition assistance through SNAP and lead to fewer eligible program participants in the future. This funding includes \$411 million for nutrition education. The budget also requests \$5 billion in reserve funding in the event of an unexpected boost in participation.

The President's budget includes significant investments in the programs that children rely on for adequate nutrition. While the President's budget represents only the Administration's wish list of priorities and not the force of law, it is a blueprint for Congress to consider as it begins the process of allocating federal dollars for the coming fiscal year. With the current makeup of Congress, we expect their spending priorities will be different from the President's.

Every child deserves the opportunity to grow-up health, happy, and well educated. Congress should use the Administration's budget as a blueprint and fully invest in the initiatives that serve as lifelines to our nation's children, many who have not yet benefited from the burgeoning economic recovery. The future of the nation depends on adequate investments in children today, and the President's budget shows that deficit reduction need not be at the expense of our children's well being.