



# THE SOLUTION TO SUMMER HUNGER FOR CHILDREN

CHILDREN WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO EXISTING SUMMER NUTRITION PROGRAMS NEED THE SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN (SEBTC) PROGRAM TO BE ENACTED NATIONWIDE.

Photo: <sup>15</sup>



## NUMEROUS CHILDREN ARE MISSED BY CURRENT SUMMER FOOD PROGRAMS

During the summer months, **low-income children cannot meet their basic food and nutrition needs** through the school lunch (NSLP) and breakfast (SBP) programs and often go hungry. The Summer Food Service Program provides free summer meals and snacks to children who receive NSLP or SBP; however, **these programs are limited or non-existent in many areas of the United States.** Only 15% of children who participate in these programs during the school year have access to similar programs in the summer.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

The SEBTC program is an alternative way to make sure children who do not have access to a meal site can eat during the summer. SEBTC was piloted in the summers of 2011-2013, using existing nutrition assistance program distribution systems, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps).<sup>4</sup> School-aged children who were eligible for free or reduced-priced meals in the demonstration area could participate in the pilot program.<sup>5</sup> **Selected families received \$30 - \$60 per child on electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards** and were compared to children who were not selected to receive funds.<sup>1</sup> The EBT funds could only be used to purchase qualifying foods and beverages, including **fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, breads, and grains.**<sup>6</sup>

Over the three-year period, pilot programs were carried out in 10 states and tribal nations.<sup>4</sup> The pilot programs found that **the SEBTC program provided summer food for up to 75% of eligible children and reduced the prevalence of very low food insecurity by 33%.**<sup>5</sup>

2.7 million American households include children experiencing food insecurity.<sup>7</sup>

# SUCCESS IN OREGON

Families in Oregon participating in the SEBTC program showed an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption and improved physical health. Nourishing meals made possible through the SEBTC program prevented the health slide many low-income children experience in the summertime. Families felt they were able to keep up with the increased energy requirements of most outdoor summer activities. Being able to maintain the nutrient level their children were receiving in school allowed them to encourage physical activity in the summertime without worrying about future meals.<sup>8</sup>

*“They chose to eat healthy and continued it longer than I thought they would. It was successful! They lost weight and now want fruit all the time. They chose to have vegetables too, and they’re not even a vegetable person! So, when they ask me, ‘Can I have some lettuce, spinach leaves, or broccoli?’ who wants to say ‘no I can’t afford that!’” - Oregon SEBTC Program Mother<sup>8</sup>*



Photo: 14

## THE SEBTC PROGRAM IS BEST EXECUTED USING THE SNAP MODEL

### SUPPORTS BUSINESSES

MAXIMIZES FREEDOM OF CHOICE

### STIMULATES ECONOMY

COST-EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT

### DECREASES CHILDHOOD HUNGER

INCREASES FRUIT, VEGETABLE, AND WHOLE GRAIN CONSUMPTION

### HIGHER USAGE RATE

LOWER ADMINISTRATIVE COST

### CIRCULATES GOVERNMENT FUNDS BACK INTO THE ECONOMY

NO RISK OF OVERSPENDING OR WASTED RESOURCES<sup>13</sup>

*“I hope that they [her kids] don’t take things for granted – that they know they have to work for what they need and not just rely on programs like these. But, I hope that they know if something happens programs like [SEBTC] would be there to catch them.” - Amythist, Lebanon Co., Oregon<sup>8</sup>*

# INVESTING IN THE HEALTH AND NUTRITION OF CHILDREN WILL BENEFIT ALL AMERICANS



The SEBTC program is a temporary support that can develop healthy, strong communities by investing in children. This program has the capacity to eliminate health barriers and raise the bar for all children, giving them a fair chance to live a healthy life. Using the existing SNAP model for the SEBTC program would 1) improve nutrition and decrease hunger, 2) put money back into local economies, and 3) ensure financial responsibility.

## 1 IMPROVES NUTRITION AND DECREASES HUNGER

Hunger has negative physical, social, and academic effects on children. The SEBTC program has been shown to decrease childhood food insecurity and increase diet quality. Children who are food insecure are more likely to experience:

- LOWER PHYSICAL FUNCTION
- REPEATING A GRADE
- LOWER READING AND MATH SCORES
- TROUBLE GETTING ALONG WITH OTHER CHILDREN
- ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
- HYPERACTIVITY
- ANGER PROBLEMS
- WEIGHT GAIN OVER TIME
- IMPAIRED SOCIAL SKILLS
- ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL<sup>9,10,11,12</sup>



## 2 PUTS MONEY BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY

The SEBTC program supports businesses and stimulates the economy. Oregon SEBTC pilot program families voiced care for those in their community who made this program possible and wanted to pay them back. They did so by shopping at local farmers markets and bringing snacks into classrooms of schools that needed the extra help.<sup>8,13</sup>

**SNAP not only allows families to purchase the food they need, but increases spending on other essential items. In fact, every dollar redeemed from SNAP ends up adding \$1.70 to the economy.**

**The 50 billion dollars of redeemed SNAP benefits in 2009 boosted local economies by 85 billion dollars.**<sup>13</sup>

## 3 ENSURES FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

The SNAP model SEBTC program is financially responsible, returning unused funds to the budget from which they came. Compared to other summer meal solutions, it has a much higher usage rate, much lower administrative cost, and has no risk of overspending or wasted resources.

Summer meal sites or mobile units are costly, using extra funds to transport food and hire staff at these locations. Families have no choice but to accept the food options provided, leading to wasted food. SEBTC cards are sent directly to eligible families, who would choose shopping locations and times, leading to more efficient usage of funds<sup>1,5</sup>.

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**Implementing the SEBTC program nationwide would assist numerous children and allow them to have more opportunity for success as the future of America.**



Photo: 16

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