

Universal Free School Meal (UFSM) programs provide up to two free, nutritious meals to all students in a qualifying school, regardless of their ability to pay. UFSM is designed to improve access to, and increase participation in, school meal programs, especially for students with lower incomes.

UFSM augments the traditional income-based eligibility system and removes known barriers to participation, including economic, administrative, language, and social challenges.

Program funding mechanisms vary from state to state, with many states utilizing General Fund appropriations or voter-approved tax measures on the wealthy specifically designed to fund their programs. **The Hawai'i legislature is currently considering House Bill 1775 which would fund a UFSM program in Hawai'i.**

Estimated Program Costs to the State

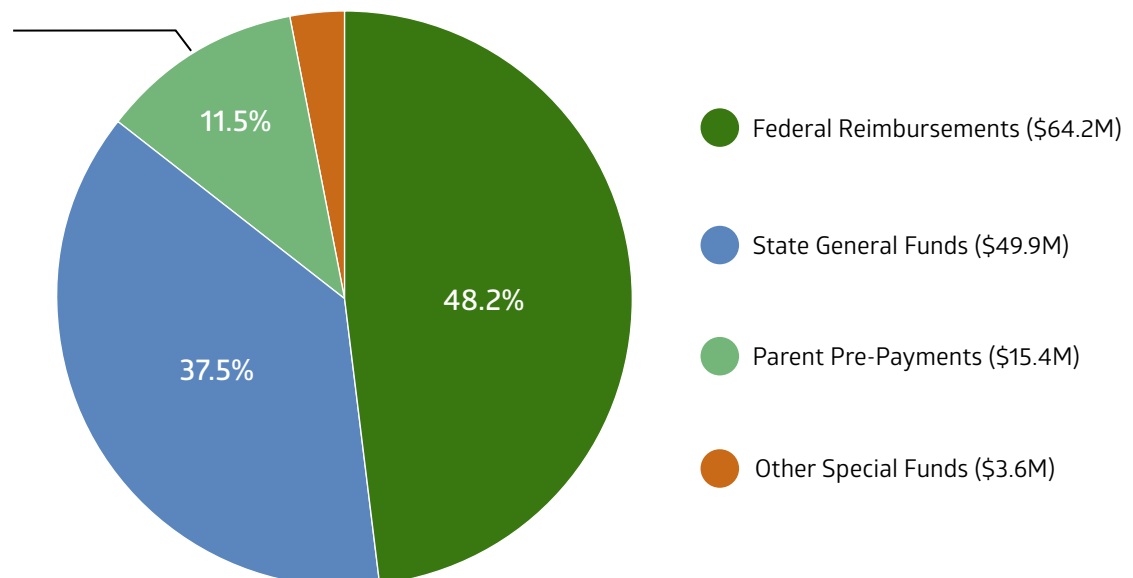
	2022–23 Participation Rates	Projected Participation Rates ¹
Breakfast Only	\$1,254,006.40	\$3,980,789.11
Lunch Only	\$14,122,603.25	\$21,900,033.35
Breakfast & Lunch	\$15,376,609.65	\$25,301,479.85

1. Assumes a 6.8% increase for lunch and 12.1% increase for breakfast over SY22–23 average daily participation rates for reduced price, and paid students (USDA estimates).

Note: These cost estimates represent 0.8% to 1.3% of the overall DOE budget.

Figure 1. DOE School Food Services Branch Revenues by Funding Source, School Year 2022–23

HB1775 would cover only the cost of parent pre-payments for school meals, an estimated \$15.4M in 2022–23.



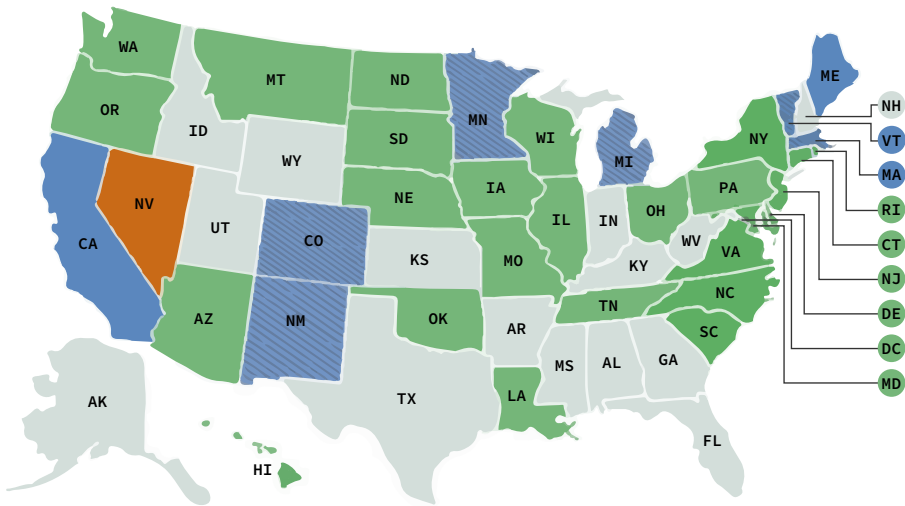


Image courtesy of the Food Research & Action Center.

- Policies Passed, Starting 2022–2023 School Year
- Policies Passed, Starting 2023–2024 School Year
- Policies in Place for 2022–2023, 2023–2024 School Year
- HSMFA Bills Introduced and/or Coalitions Formed

EIGHT STATES HAVE ALREADY PASSED POLICIES TO OFFER FREE MEALS, AND MANY OTHERS ARE PREPARED TO FOLLOW SUIT.

How Have Other States Funded Universal Free School Meals?	
General Funds (Education Fund Appropriation)	California, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico
Voter-passed tax measure that reduces income tax deductions available to households earning \$300,000 or more	Colorado
Voter-approved 4% tax on incomes over \$1 million	Massachusetts
\$.03 property tax rate increase.	Vermont

Read the full report, “Equity on the Menu” at hiappleseed.org/publications/equity-on-the-menu