

Nebraska State Legislature



December 19, 2023

Interim Director Tony Green  
Division of Children and Family Services  
Department of Health and Human Services  
301 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Interim Director Green:

We are writing today with regard to our state's opportunity to opt into the federal Summer EBT Program. As you are well aware, Nebraska must notify USDA of their intention to participate in the Summer EBT program two weeks from today. The notification is non-binding and there is no penalty if Nebraska ultimately is unable to execute the program. For the reasons outlined below, we strongly urge the Department to act swiftly and share their support for our state's involvement in the program.

Per the USDA's October 2023 report on household food security, Nebraskans suffer from food insecurity at higher rates than the national average and surrounding states. The numbers shared in this report, which I've included for your reference, highlight the harsh reality faced by nearly 150,000 children in our state. An investment in this program not only ensures that we are addressing the needs of vulnerable children, but would benefit our state economically as well. Based on the number of children eligible for EBT this summer, Nebraska could expect an economic impact of between \$31.5M and \$37.8M.

As legislators, consistent access to nutritious food is something we feel we should be able to promise our constituents no matter their socioeconomic status. Again, we ask that you reconsider your stance on participating in this program which would ensure that children who rely on school meals do not go hungry in the summer months.

We appreciate your consideration and prompt response to the concerns outlined here.

Sincerely,

Senator Machaela Cavanaugh

Senator John Fredrickson

Senator Megan Hunt

Senator Danielle Conrad

Senator Jen Day

Senator Tony Vargas

Senator Jana Hughes

Senator Lynne Walz

Senator Terrell McKinney

Senator John Cavanaugh

Senator Eliot Bostar

Senator Rick Holdcroft

Senator Carol Blood

Senator Carolyn Bosh

Senator Jane Raybould

Senator George Dungan