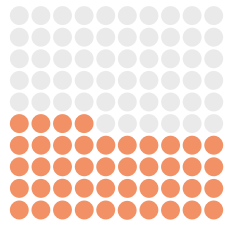


Children participating in the free & reduced price school meals program



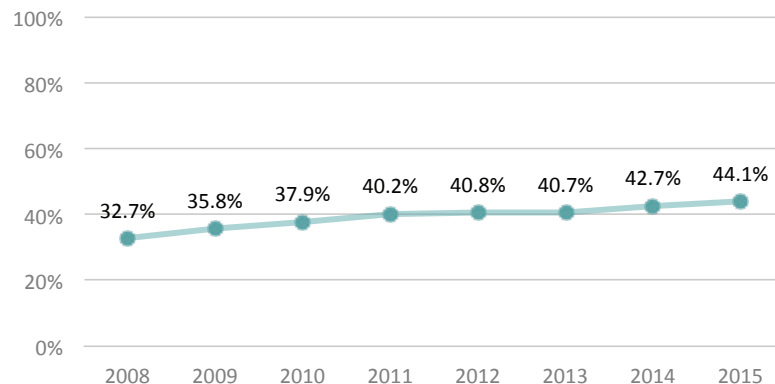
44% in Vermont
38,100 kids¹

What the data show

This is the percentage of children enrolled in school who participate in Vermont's free and reduced price school meals program. Data are snapshots of October enrollment.

No cost meals at school support the health and learning of tens of thousands of children in Vermont. Increases are due to need, but also to successful initiatives to expand access. High participation rates, especially in some counties, indicate a likelihood that kids' nutrition may be suffering when not able to access school meals: on the weekends, after school hours, and during the summer.

School meals participation rates have increased in Vermont³



What would it take...

...to ensure kids are never hungry when they're trying to learn? In addition to school lunch, key pieces to ensuring access to adequate nutrition include: meals offered after school, in summer, at breakfast time, and in childcare settings. These all support access to this necessary foundation for learning—and health. Without this basic investment, other educational investments are compromised.

Existing federal reimbursement programs support all of these important initiatives, and Vermont can continue to support their expansion, implementation, and increased accessibility. For example, we can make it just as easy for kids in need to access school breakfast as lunch (as is the goal with Hunger Free Vermont's "Breakfast After the Bell" initiative) and can support the out-of-school time programs and mobile meals that provide critical nutrition when school isn't in session.²

Income eligibility guidelines for the 2016-2017 school year, annual income⁵

Household size	"free"	"reduced"
1	\$15,444	\$21,978
2	\$20,826	\$29,637
3	\$26,208	\$37,296
4	\$31,590	\$44,955
5	\$36,972	\$52,614
6	\$42,354	\$60,273
7	\$47,749	\$67,951
8	\$53,157	\$75,647

Community Eligibility, which streamlines the ability to offer no cost meals universally, is available to schools in areas of higher need.⁴

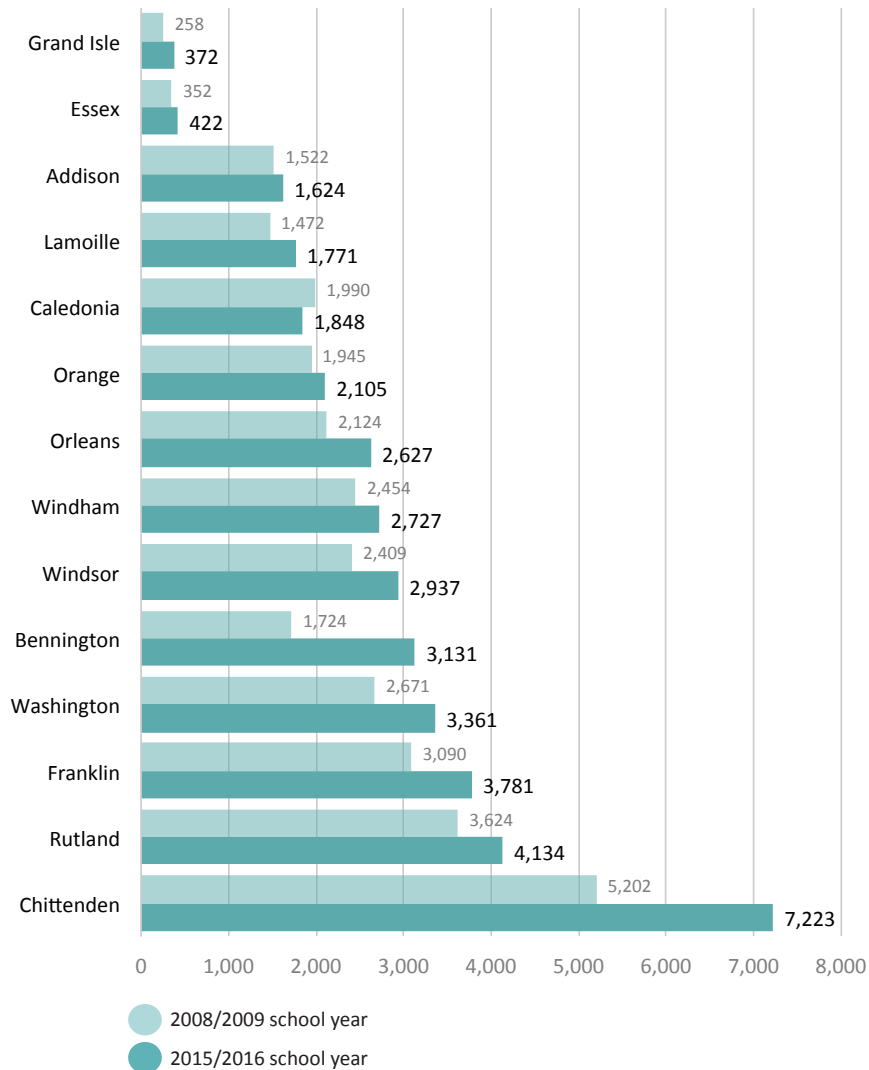
Meals in both the "free" category and the "reduced" category are served at no cost to students and families, as Vermont has committed resources to reimburse school meals programs for reduced price meals served.

Vermont's free and reduced price school meals program also confers "categorical eligibility" to kids who fall into certain categories, like children in foster care and homeless, runaway, or migrant children and youth.⁶

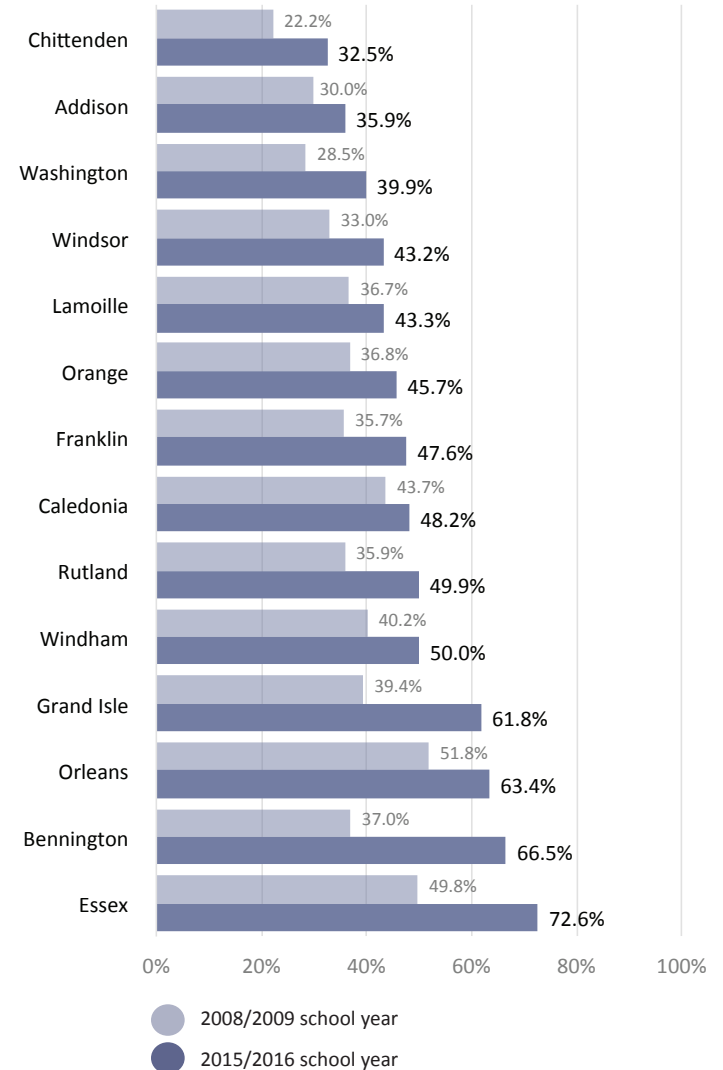
Notes & Resources

1. Hunger Free Vermont. Rounded to the nearest 100.
2. No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices, School Breakfast Program Policy, <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast/school-breakfast-policy-0>.
3. Hunger Free Vermont, 2008-2009 through 2015-2016 data.
4. Vermont Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Community Eligibility Provision, <http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/nutrition/school-programs/community-eligibility-program>.
5. Excerpted from Vermont Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Income Eligibility Guidelines, <http://education.vermont.gov/documents/nutrition-income-eligibility-guidelines>.
6. Vermont Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Free and Reduced Meals, <http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/nutrition/school-programs/free-and-reduced-meals>.

38,063 Vermont kids participated in school meals in the 2015-2016 school year, an increase of 7,226 kids since 2008-2009⁵



The percent of children benefiting from school meals has increased in every county⁵



Notes & Resources

6. Hunger Free Vermont, 2008-2009 through 2015-2016 data.