



SCHOOL NUTRITION MEALS SERVED AND REIMBURSEMENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



ABSTRACT

An analysis of USDA FNS data comparing number of meals served and reimbursements between School Year (SY) 2019-20 and SY 2020-21.

9/24/2021



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report compares meals served and reimbursements in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in the first school year during which the pandemic began (SY 2019-20) to the first full school year of the pandemic (SY 2020-21). The reasoning behind the focus on these specific time periods is to compare full school years to determine some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on school nutrition program participation and finances.

The data used is publicly available USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) data from the [June 2021](#) and [September 2020](#) Keydata Reports (see footer for references). The USDA summary pages of the Keydata reports note that, “This report data is based in part on preliminary data submitted by various reporting agencies. User should anticipate changes in future reports as reporting agencies finalize data.”

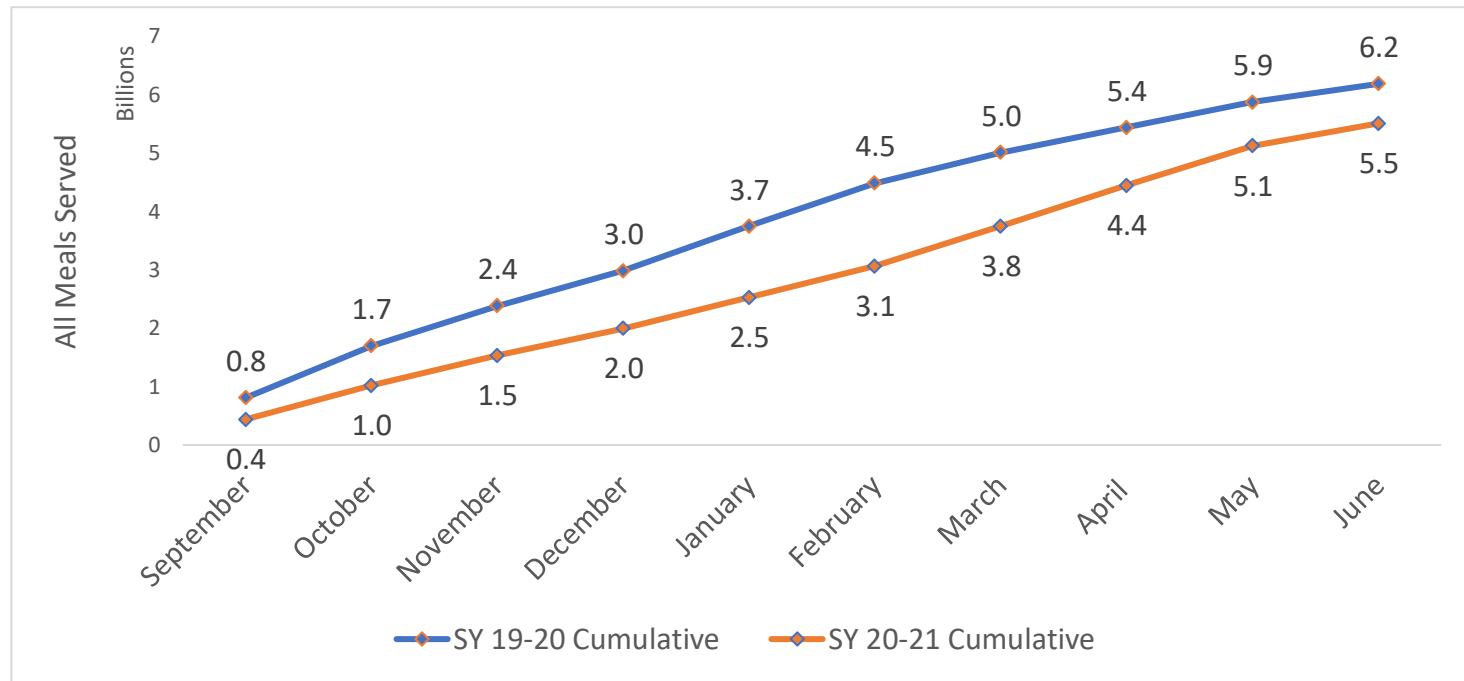
Sources: USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) June 2021 Keydata Report published September 10, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/June-2021-keydata-report>. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) September 2020 Keydata Report, published January 27, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/january-keydata-report-september-2020-data> 1

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Meals Served

There were **676,899,359 fewer meals (breakfasts and lunches)** served in SY 2020-21 as compared to SY 2019-20. This amounts to a **10.94% loss** in meals served.

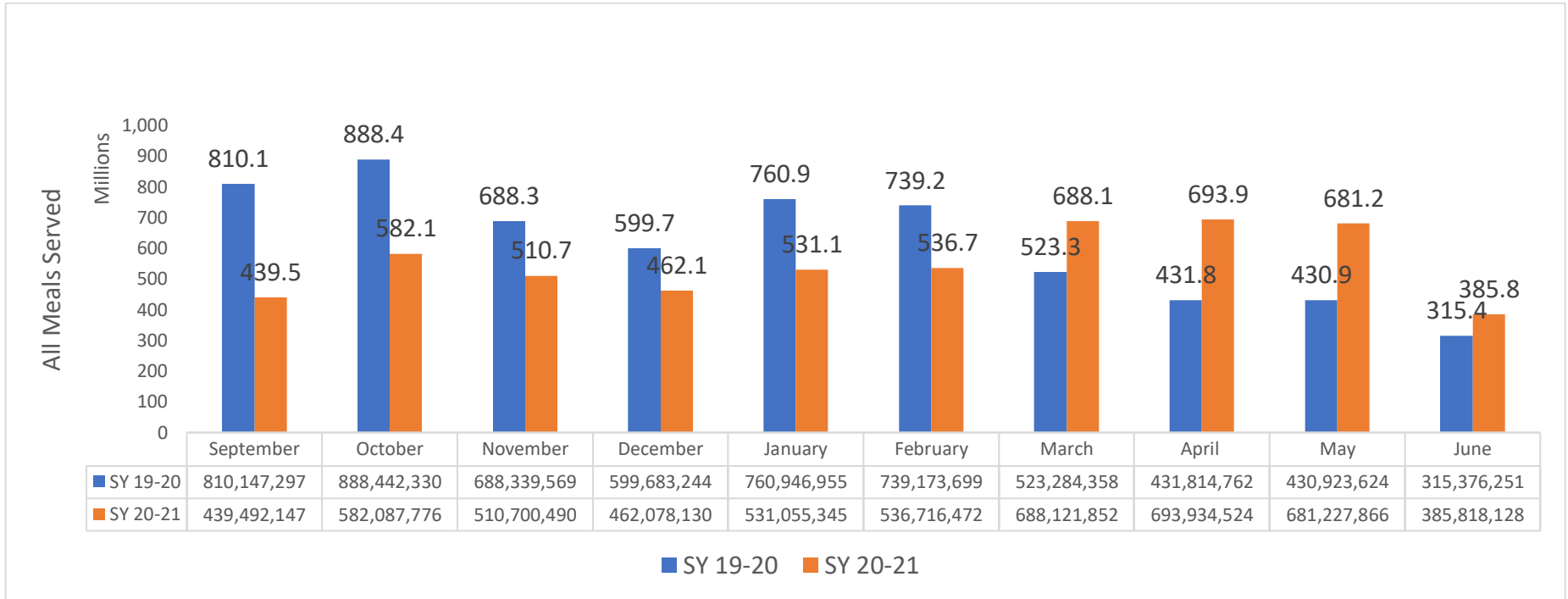
Figure 1. Total Meals Served (NSLP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP Meals): SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21



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Figure 2. Total Meals Served (NSLP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP Meals) by Month: SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21



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Table 1. Total Meals Served (NSLP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP Meals): SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21

Month	Total Lunches: SY 19-20	Total Lunches: SY 20-21	Difference in Total Lunches: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	% Difference in Total Lunches: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	Total Bfst: SY 19-20	Total Bfst: SY 20-21	Difference in Total Bfst: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	% Difference in Total Bfst: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	All Meals Served: SY 19-20	All Meals Served: SY 20-21	Difference in Total Meals Served	% Difference in Total Meals Served
September	537,708,383	256,721,563	-280,986,820	-52.26	272,438,914	365,509,577	93,070,663	34.16	810,147,297	439,492,147	-370,655,150	-45.75
October	587,487,894	339,189,572	-248,298,322	-42.26	300,954,436	242,898,204	-58,056,232	-19.29	888,442,330	582,087,776	-306,354,554	-34.48
November	453,954,083	292,956,777	-160,997,306	-35.47	234,385,486	217,743,713	-16,641,773	-7.10	688,339,569	510,700,490	-177,639,079	-25.81
December	398,292,745	260,917,214	-137,375,531	-34.49	201,390,499	201,160,916	-229,583	-0.11	599,683,244	462,078,130	-137,605,114	-22.95
January	506,739,815	308,865,358	-197,874,457	-39.05	254,207,140	222,189,987	-32,017,153	-12.59	760,946,955	531,055,345	-229,891,610	-30.21
February	489,755,647	314,562,529	-175,193,118	-35.77	249,418,052	222,153,943	-27,264,109	-10.93	739,173,699	536,716,472	-202,457,227	-27.39
March	325,268,713	405,275,137	80,006,424	24.60	198,015,645	282,846,715	84,831,070	42.84	523,284,358	688,121,852	164,837,494	31.50
April	220,885,284	414,625,287	193,740,003	87.71	210,929,478	279,309,237	68,379,759	32.42	431,814,762	693,934,524	262,119,762	60.70
May	219,716,766	405,774,872	186,058,106	84.68	211,206,858	275,452,994	64,246,136	30.42	430,923,624	681,227,866	250,304,242	58.09
June	162,462,749	210,408,668	47,945,919	29.51	152,913,502	175,409,460	22,495,958	14.71	315,376,251	385,818,128	70,441,877	22.34
Total	3,902,272,079	3,209,296,977	-692,975,102	-17.76	2,285,860,010	2,301,935,753	198,814,736	8.70	6,188,132,089	5,511,232,730	-676,899,359	-10.94
	Note: Includes NSLP Lunches and SFSP Lunches				Note: Includes BSP Breakfasts and SFSP Breakfasts				Note: Includes NSLP Lunches, SFSP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP breakfasts			

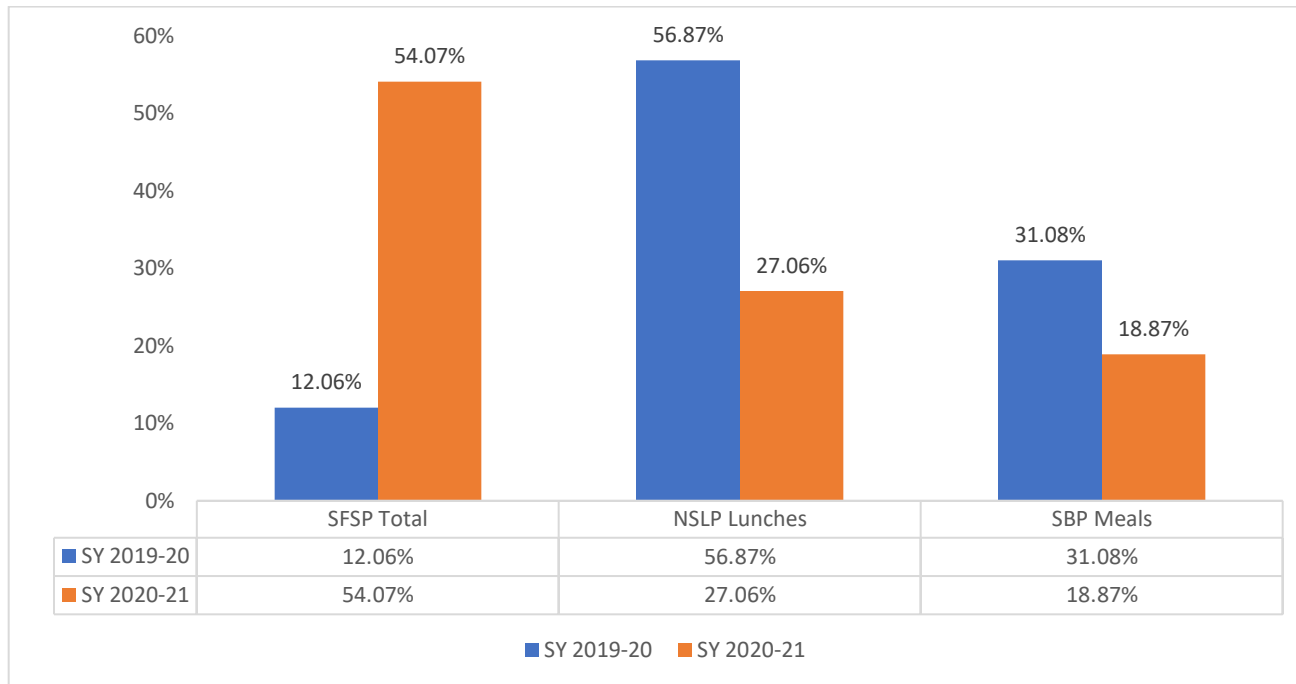
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In SY 2019-20, SFSP meals accounted for 12.06 percent of total meals served. In SY 2020-21, SFSP meals accounted for 54.07 percent of total meals served, an increase of 42.01% of all meals served.

Figure 3. Meal Type as Share of Total Meals: SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21



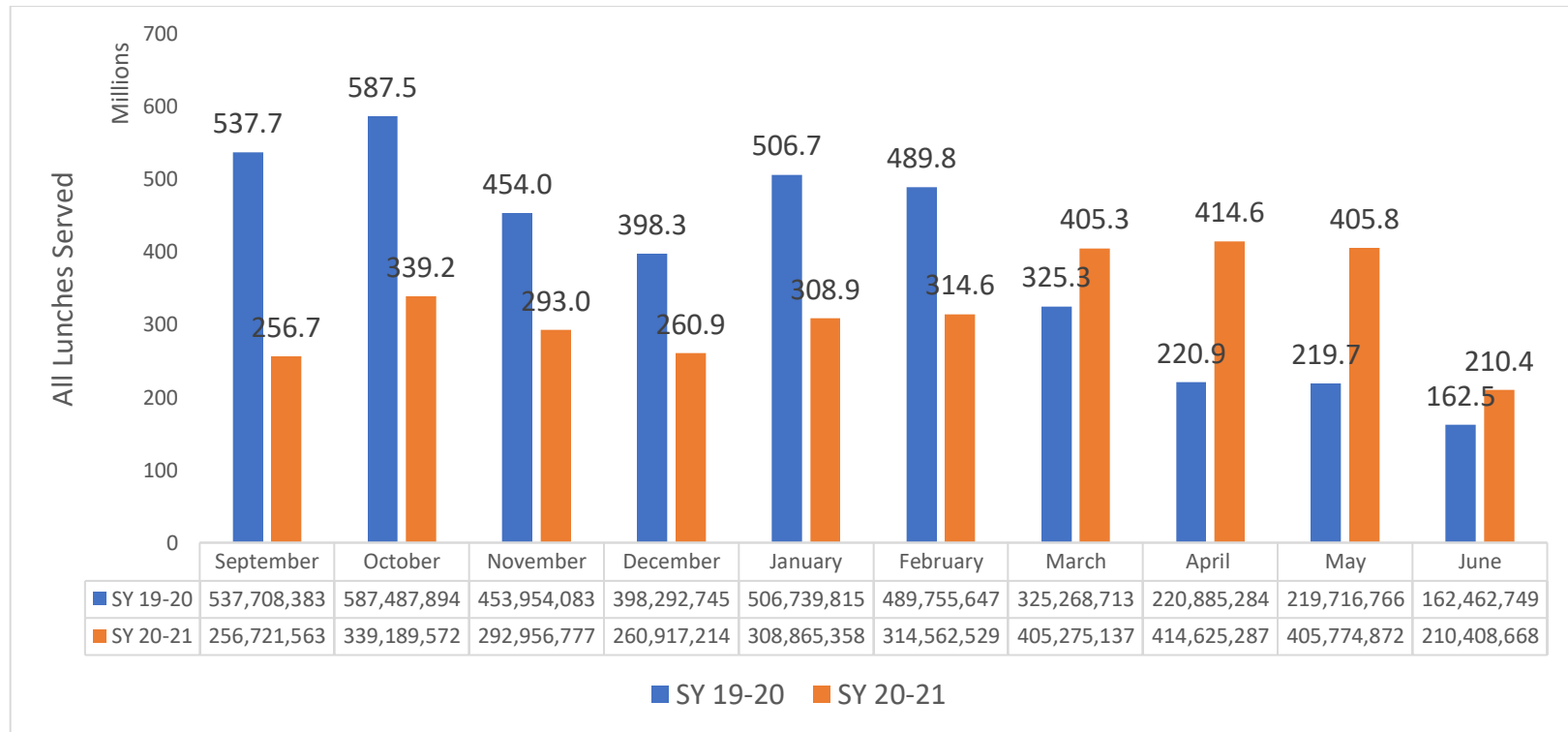
Note: 'SFSP Total' includes both SFSP Lunches and Breakfasts.

Sources: USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) June 2021 Keydata Report published September 10, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/June-2021-keydata-report>. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) September 2020 Keydata Report, published January 27, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/january-keydata-report-september-2020-data>

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The number of total lunches served in SY 2020-21 was **down 17.76%, or 692,975,102 lunches**, compared to SY 2019-20.

Figure 4. Total Lunches Served by Month: SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21

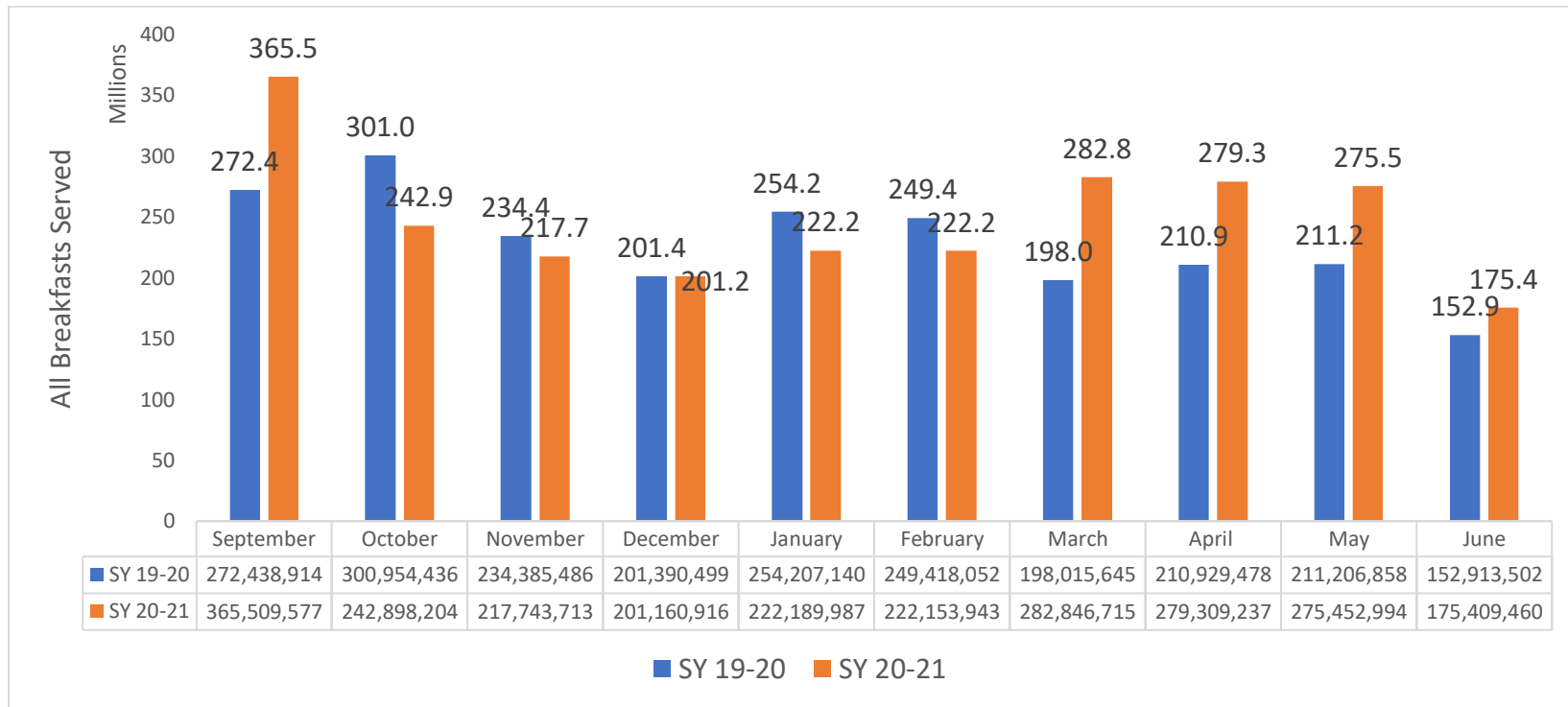


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The number of total breakfasts served in SY 2020-21 increased **8.70%**, or **198,814,736 breakfasts**, compared to SY 2019-20.

Figure 5. Total Breakfasts Served by Month: SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21



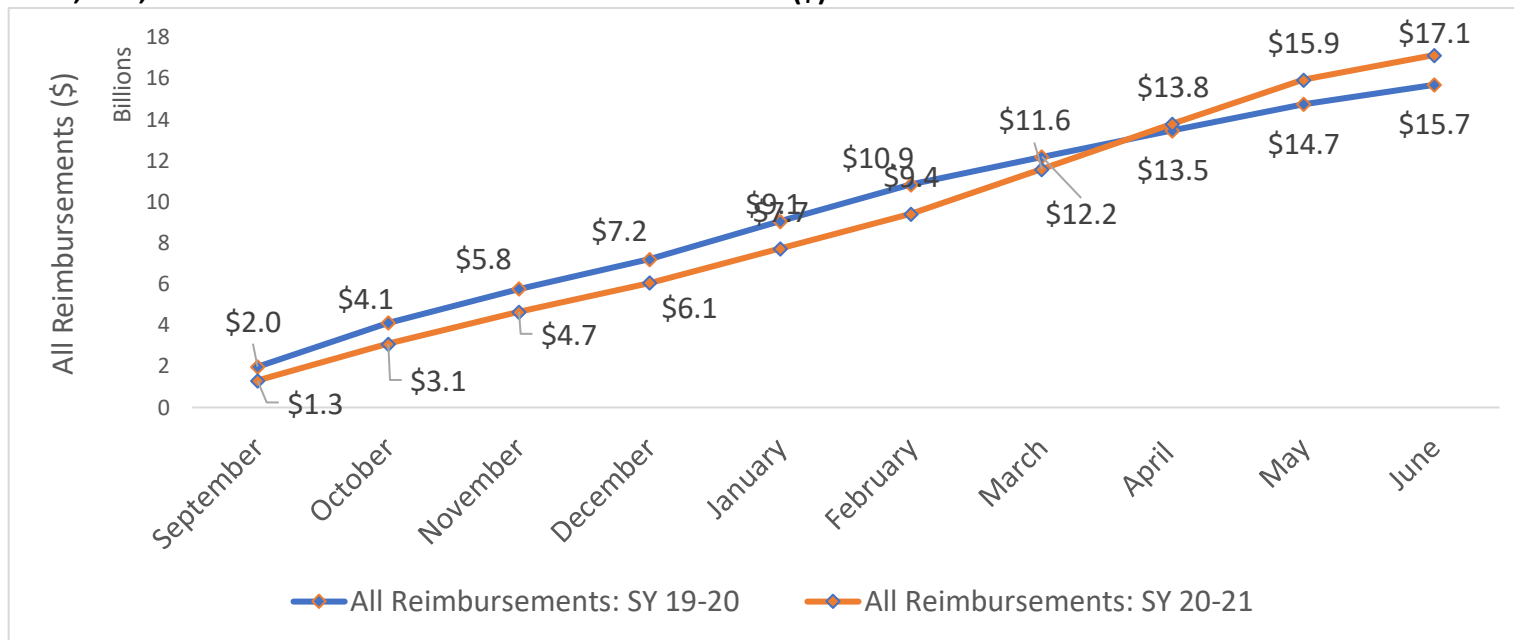
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Reimbursement

Total reimbursements for NSLP lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP meals in SY 2020-21 were **up 9.25%, or \$1,450,522,640**, compared to SY 2019-20.*

Figure 6. Total NSLP, SBP, and SFSP Lunch and Breakfast Reimbursements (\$): SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21



*Note: The share of SFSP meals increased from 12.06% to 54.07% from SY 2019-20 to SY 2020-21. SFSP meals are reimbursed at a higher rate than NSLP/SBP meals. Click here for [SFSP reimbursement rates](#) and [NSLP/SBP reimbursement rates](#).

Sources: USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) June 2021 Keydata Report published September 10, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/June-2021-keydata-report>. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) September 2020 Keydata Report, published January 27, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/january-keydata-report-september-2020-data> 8

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Table 2. Total Reimbursements for NSLP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP Meals (\$): SY 2019-20 vs. SY 2020-21

Month	Total Cash - NSLP Lunches: SY 19-20	Total Cash - NSLP Lunches: SY 20-21	Difference in Total Cash - NSLP Lunches: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	% Difference in Total Cash - NSLP Lunches: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	Total Program Costs - SBP Bkfst: SY 19-20	Total Program Costs - SBP Bkfst: SY 20-21	Difference in Total SBP Meals: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	% Difference in Total SBP Meals: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	Meal Cost - SFSP Meals: SY 19-20	Meal Cost - SFSP Meals: SY 20-21	Difference in Total SFSP Meal Cost: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	% Difference in Total SFSP Meal cost: SY 19-20 vs. SY 20-21	All Reimbursements: SY 19-20	All Reimbursements: SY 20-21	Difference in All Reimbursements	% Difference in All Reimbursements
September	\$1,464,240,075.47	\$451,760,433.47	-\$1,012,479,642.00	-69.15	\$516,895,690.73	\$194,720,364.45	-\$322,175,326.28	-62.33	\$141,878.86	\$668,841,499.22	\$668,699,620.36	471317.31	\$1,981,277,645.06	\$1,315,322,297.14	-\$665,955,347.92	-33.61
October	\$1,575,687,232.18	\$562,574,897.65	-\$1,013,112,334.53	-64.30	\$564,229,431.96	\$241,925,968.95	-\$322,303,463.01	-57.12	\$519,768.84	\$971,974,737.31	\$971,454,968.47	186901.35	\$2,140,436,432.98	\$1,776,475,603.91	-\$363,960,829.07	-17.00
November	\$1,211,219,585.11	\$489,473,776.71	-\$721,745,808.40	-59.59	\$439,142,745.89	\$217,046,256.96	-\$222,096,488.93	-50.58	\$9,976.99	\$854,036,628.23	\$854,026,651.24	8559962.99	\$1,650,372,307.99	\$1,560,556,661.90	-\$89,815,646.09	-5.44
December	\$1,068,248,747.91	\$427,019,829.19	-\$641,228,918.72	-60.03	\$379,177,082.08	\$194,308,171.31	-\$184,868,910.77	-48.76	\$38,312.95	\$788,116,958.93	\$788,078,645.98	2056951.10	\$1,447,464,142.94	\$1,409,444,959.43	-\$38,019,183.51	-2.63
January	\$1,359,223,779.61	\$506,961,235.09	-\$852,262,544.52	-62.70	\$478,098,028.27	\$217,052,446.03	-\$261,045,582.24	-54.60	\$43,761.70	\$942,753,780.87	\$942,710,019.17	2154189.67	\$1,837,365,569.58	\$1,666,767,461.99	-\$170,598,107.59	-9.28
February	\$1,322,838,339.07	\$510,194,432.75	-\$812,643,906.32	-61.43	\$470,355,333.50	\$218,360,719.97	-\$251,994,613.53	-53.58	\$6,973.29	\$963,811,384.45	\$963,804,411.16	13821372.85	\$1,793,200,645.86	\$1,692,366,537.17	-\$100,834,108.69	-5.62
March	\$806,032,485.33	\$664,514,600.82	-\$141,517,884.51	-17.56	\$314,268,111.15	\$278,941,602.77	-\$35,326,508.38	-11.24	\$226,119,528.78	\$1,227,580,319.56	\$1,001,460,790.78	442.89	\$1,346,420,125.26	\$2,171,036,523.15	\$824,616,397.89	61.25
April	\$354,057,884.96	\$680,898,179.56	\$326,840,294.60	92.31	\$207,783,233.55	\$277,859,150.37	\$70,075,916.82	33.73	\$714,513,201.71	\$1,240,009,457.07	\$525,496,255.36	73.55	\$1,276,354,320.22	\$2,198,766,787.00	\$922,412,466.78	72.27
May	\$335,199,010.13	\$695,657,540.67	\$360,458,530.54	107.54	\$199,711,067.13	\$286,609,357.57	\$86,898,290.44	43.51	\$739,794,301.04	\$1,165,032,216.73	\$425,237,915.69	57.48	\$1,274,704,378.30	\$2,147,299,114.97	\$872,594,736.67	68.45
June	\$220,626,714.95	\$331,641,625.09	\$111,014,910.14	50.32	\$132,167,403.89	\$162,601,258.97	\$30,433,855.08	23.03	\$587,550,902.81	\$706,184,399.17	\$118,633,496.36	20.19	\$940,345,021.65	\$1,200,427,283.23	\$260,082,261.58	27.66
Total	\$9,717,373,854.72	\$5,320,696,551.00	-\$4,396,677,303.72	-45.25	\$3,701,828,128.15	\$2,289,425,297.35	-\$1,412,402,830.80	-38.15	\$2,268,738,606.97	\$9,528,341,381.54	\$7,259,602,774.57	319.98	\$15,687,940,589.84	\$17,138,463,229.89	\$1,450,522,640.05	9.25
	Source: Tab NSLP - S, column I, 'Total Cash', FY 2019 & FY 2020				Source: Tab SBP - S, column I, 'Total Program Costs, FY 2019 & FY 2020				Source: Tab SFSP - S, 'Meal Cost', column B, FY 2019 & FY 2020				Includes all reimbursements for NSLP lunches, SBP Breakfasts, and SFSP Meal cost reimbursements			

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