



## Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports to Reduce Child Hunger



### Illinois: Strengthening Connections to Nutrition Benefits for Children Through Improved Technology and Data Sharing

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Greater Chicago Food Depository are working together to modernize Illinois' student data infrastructure. Their goal is to enable Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer program (Summer EBT) eligibility determinations, improve data matching to support direct certification for the National School Lunch Program, and target outreach to students and families who are income-eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Illinois plans to leverage lessons learned from administration of the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer program (Pandemic EBT) to inform the implementation of the new Summer EBT program.

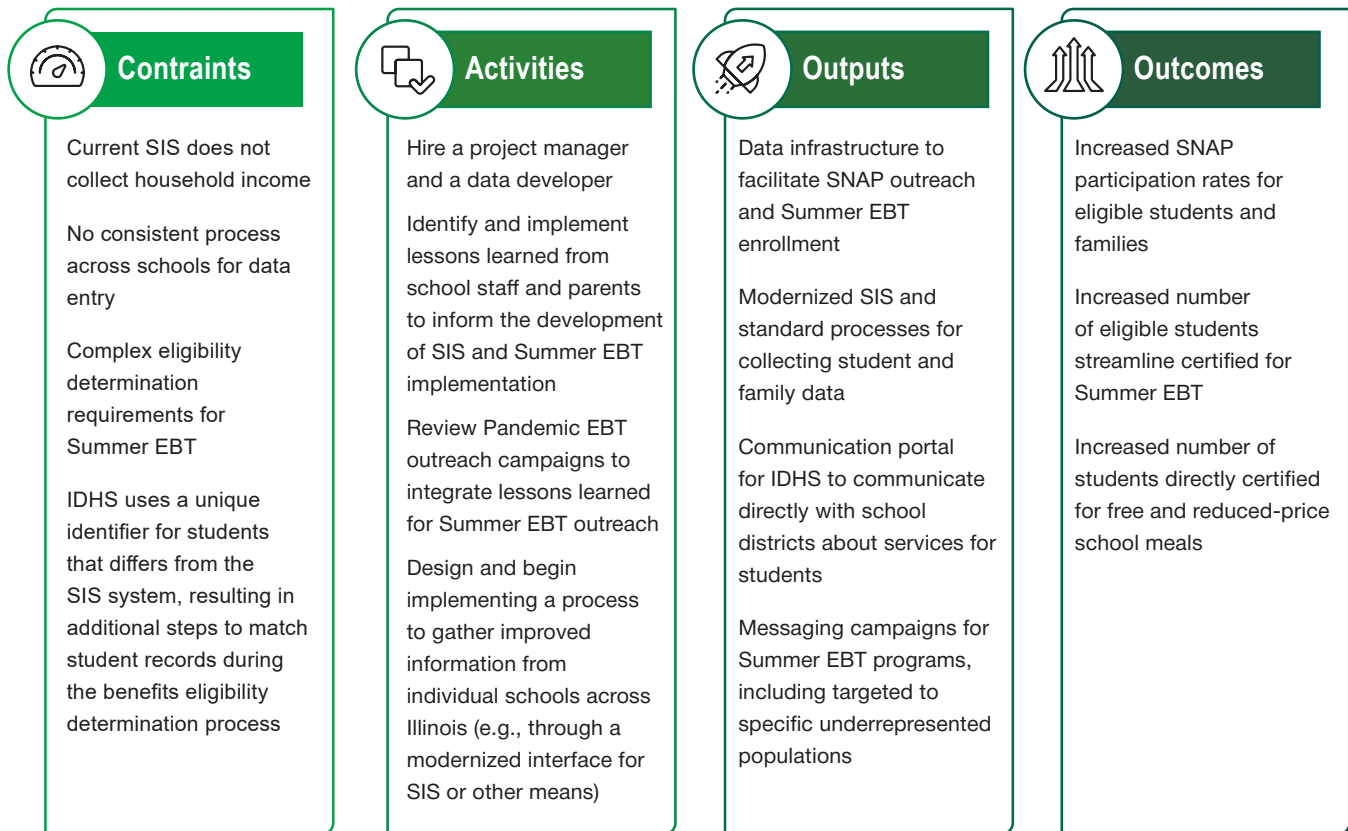
Currently, ISBE's existing Student Information System (SIS) does not collect certain key household information from schools that could potentially be shared with IDHS. This means that many children and families are missing out on benefits they are eligible for. Illinois will make improvements to SIS to streamline processes for schools to report students' household information and create an updated data sharing agreement between ISBE and IDHS that will connect families to SNAP and Summer EBT benefits.

### Objectives

- ③ Execute an updated data sharing agreement between ISBE and IDHS to support SNAP and Summer EBT outreach and enrollment
- ③ Modernize SIS to collect accurate household information, which will enable state agencies to determine eligibility for Summer EBT and SNAP and conduct more accurate data matching to directly certify students for school meals
- ③ Lay the foundation for streamlined certification for Summer EBT in 2025 and beyond

## Logic Model

Purpose: Update data infrastructure to enable IDHS and ISBE to identify children and families eligible for SNAP and Summer EBT.



## Background & Context





Illinois' CSNS project builds upon previous partnerships between IDHS, ISBE, and the Food Depository, including Pandemic EBT implementation. During the Covid-19 pandemic, IDHS and ISBE established data sharing agreements to share student information to issue Pandemic EBT benefits. Similarly, the Food Depository launched a messaging campaign to educate families on Pandemic EBT that included FAQs in six languages and radio commercials in English and Spanish. These collaborative efforts enabled Illinois to provide Pandemic EBT benefits to over one million children, and will inform the state's administration of Summer EBT.

## Problem Identification & Target Population

One in eight children in Illinois live in a household that regularly faces food insecurity. During the pandemic, food insecurity rates rose disproportionately in Black and Hispanic households—from about 19% to 22% in Black households and from about 16% to 17% in Hispanic households. Through their CSNS project, Illinois aims to connect more families to SNAP and Summer EBT who may face additional challenges to accessing benefits, such as language and technology barriers. The data infrastructure improvements will broadly impact students and families, with targeted outreach campaigns in Black and Hispanic communities.

## Project Implementation Plan

The Illinois CSNS project will pair improved data sharing systems with outreach campaigns to increase SNAP and Summer EBT participation among eligible children and families.

 <b>Plan</b>	 <b>Collaborate</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hire a project manager/business analyst to serve as the main contact between partner agencies</li><li>Hire a data developer/analyst to map current systems and processes, identify gaps, and create pathways for interagency data sharing</li><li>Establish communication flows between ISBE, IDHS, and the Food Depository</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Train schools on data entry processes</li><li>Funnel data from schools to ISBE at the state level and share with IDHS</li><li>Partner with schools and families to inform SIS improvements and Summer EBT processes</li></ul>
 <b>Implement</b>	 <b>Evaluate</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Execute an updated data sharing agreement between ISBE and IDHS</li><li>Modernize existing SIS</li><li>Launch a Summer EBT marketing and communications campaign</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of students enrolled in Summer EBT through streamlined certification or individual applications</li><li>Number of families identified as income-eligible for SNAP</li><li>Increased efficiency and reduced errors in the direct certification process for free and reduced-price school meals</li><li>Parent and school staff input</li></ul>

## Long-Term Goals

Through its CSNS project, Illinois strives to build a modernized system and process for sharing student and family data from schools to state agencies. This improved data sharing infrastructure will enable ISBE and IDHS to automatically enroll more kids in Summer EBT, increase direct certification for the National School Lunch Program, and provide targeted outreach to income-eligible families who are not already enrolled in SNAP. When successful, these collaborative efforts will streamline Summer EBT and SNAP eligibility determinations and result in reductions to administrative barriers for families to access public benefits and services.

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