



Georgia Member Nutrition Training

March 2022

Childhood Obesity in Georgia

Children ages 2-4 participating
in WIC



Source: State of Childhood Obesity

Childhood Obesity in Georgia

Children ages 10-17



Source: State of Childhood Obesity

Childhood Obesity in Georgia

High School Students



Source: State of Childhood Obesity

Why It Matters

- 73 % of young Georgians between the ages of 17 and 24 are not qualified for military service
- Nationally, 1 in 3 young people is too overweight or obese to qualify for service
- Georgia has the 5th highest active duty military population in the nation, and we know that there is a higher propensity to serve amongst young people from military families
- Georgia has the 17th highest rate of adult obesity in the nation, and the 14th highest rate of adult diabetes and hypertension



The Solutions

- **National School Lunch Program**, which has seen increased fruit and vegetable consumption since Mission: Readiness helped to pass the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. *The program was originally created after World War II with strong support from military leaders to address malnutrition concerns that impacted our military readiness.*
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – provides parents and children with direct payments to purchase food at retailers, and serves as an essential tool in combating food insecurity in low-income families.
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** – provides funding for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.



School Meals Participation

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

1,173,209

Georgia Number of children participating in in 2019.



62.0% Percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch in 2016-17.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

80,055

Georgia Number of students participating in in 2019.

SNAP Participation

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) -- Children

721,000

Georgia Number of participating residents who are children in in 2018.



47.8% Percentage of participants who are children in 2018.

WIC Participation

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

202,914

Georgia Number of residents participating in in
2019.



48.2% Percentage of eligible residents participating
in 2016.

Mission: Readiness Policy Priorities

- Maintain strong nutrition standards for school meals, proactively addressing and pushing back on attempts to rollback standards
- Ensure schools have adequate resources to update their school meal infrastructure to foster use of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Increase federal meal reimbursement rates to remove barriers to school participation in breakfast and afterschool snack programs
- Expand summer meals programs to reach all children experiencing food insecurity in the summer months and who struggle to access healthy food on the weekend



Mission: Readiness Policy Priorities

- Support nutritional incentives to use SNAP benefits to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables and nutrient dense healthy foods
- Foster eligible families' enrollment in SNAP and WIC by reducing stigma and barriers around enrollment
- Allow for eligible families to maintain WIC certification through the early years of a child's life
- Increase diversity of food choices and purchasing options in WIC
- Expand WIC eligibility for children to their sixth birthday, or when they enter kindergarten, whichever comes first



Current Policy Landscape

- Congress is long overdue to reauthorize child nutrition programs
- Programs continue to operate without formal authorization, but at their previous levels and without modifications or innovations
- Last year, Congress held several hearings on childhood nutrition issues and how they could relate to a reauthorization bill
- We were hopeful that a Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) bill would be a top priority this year, and in late 2021 heard rumors confirming this
- Due to the conflict in the Ukraine, it is expected that CNR will be considered later than anticipated



Other Solutions

- **Increased physical activity** by strengthening physical education (PE) classes and supporting other opportunities to get kids moving.
- **Early childhood education:** Studies show that programs can help children develop healthy habits at a young age by serving nutritious meals and ensuring children get adequate exercise throughout the day.



Next Steps

- Conversations in your communities
- Upcoming virtual event - March 23rd



Resources

- [Mission: Readiness Nutrition Roadmap](#)
- [Mission: Readiness Podcast](#)



**If you have any questions about this
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