

**SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN (SEBTC) DEMONSTRATION:
SUMMARY REPORT 2011-2014 (SUMMARY)**

Overview

The 2010 Agriculture Appropriations Act (P.L. 111-80) authorized and provided funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement and rigorously evaluate demonstrations to reduce summer food insecurity for children. The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBTC) demonstration distributed a monthly benefit during the summer on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) EBT cards to children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. The first two summers (2011 and 2012) tested a \$60 benefit amount. Summer 2013 compared the impacts of a \$30 benefit to a \$60 benefit, and summer 2014 examined implementation strategies and benefit use patterns.

This comprehensive report presents results from the analysis of pooled data from all summer demonstrations. A detailed review of each summer's implementation is available in the prior years' reports.

Findings

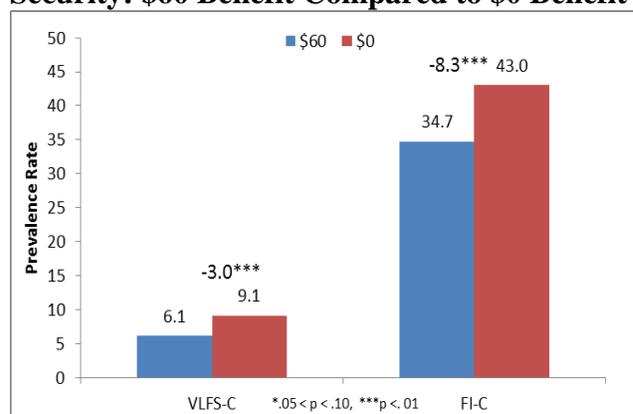
Food Security

The SEBTC evaluations assessed the impact of different levels of monthly summer benefits (\$60 compared to \$0, and \$60 compared to \$30) on food security.

The benefit of \$60 per month per child reduced the most severe category of food insecurity among children during the summer by one-third. A \$60 benefit reduced very low food security among children (VLFS-C) by 33 percent compared to a \$0 benefit. Without SEBTC, 9 percent of households experienced VLFS-C; in contrast, 6 percent of those receiving the \$60 benefit experienced VLFS-C (**Figure 1**).

SEBTC also reduced the prevalence of food insecurity among children (FI-C) by nearly a fifth, with 43 percent of households with no benefits having food-insecure children versus 35 percent of households receiving \$60.

Figure 1. Impact on Prevalence of Food Security: \$60 Benefit Compared to \$0 Benefit



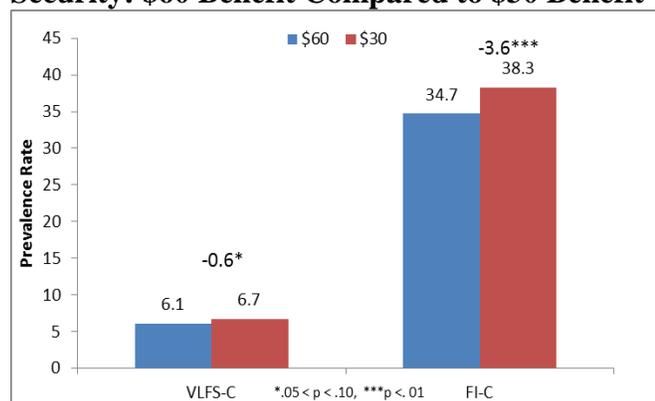
Pooled 2011 and 2012 data.

The \$30 benefit was as effective in reducing the most severe category of food insecurity among children during the summer as the \$60 benefit. However, the \$60 benefit reduced less severe FI-C by about 10 percent compared to the \$30 benefit. Results were similar across SNAP and WIC sites.

Analysis of pooled data from 2011 to 2013 revealed that there was weak but significant evidence that the \$60 benefit reduced VLFS-C more than the \$30 benefit (6.7 versus 6.1 percent) (**Figure 2**). This result is slightly different from the 2013 evaluation finding that the difference in impact of \$60 versus \$30 on VLFS-C was not statistically significant. The weak statistical significance reported here reflects the larger sample size from the pooled data. In fact, the 3-percentage-point difference in prevalence in VLFS-C is the same as found in the 2013 report (\$60 versus \$30 evaluation).

Similar to the results from the 2013 evaluation, the pooled data show that a \$60 benefit conclusively reduced food insecurity better among children and the other measures of food security for adults and households compared to a \$30 benefit. For example, the prevalence of FI-C is about 38 percent for those receiving \$30 compared to almost 35 percent for the \$60 group, a significant difference of approximately 4 percent.

Figure 2. Impact on Prevalence of Food Security: \$60 Benefit Compared to \$30 Benefit



Pooled 2011-2013 data

Although the evaluations did not directly examine the impact of a \$30 benefit compared to no benefit, exploratory analysis using data from 2012 and 2013 indicates that for most food security outcomes examined, the impact of a \$30 benefit (versus no benefit) is approximately half the impact of a \$60 benefit (versus no benefit). The exception was for VLFS-C, where the difference in impact was smaller: the estimated impact of a \$60 benefit versus \$0 on VLFS-C was 3.0 percentage points compared to a 2.4-percentage-point difference for \$30 versus \$0.

Benefit Use

Households in the \$30 and \$60 groups redeemed their benefits at similar rates.

Between 89-91 percent of households that received the \$30 and the \$60 benefits used it at least once during summer. Households receiving the \$60 benefit redeemed 76 percent of their benefits compared to 72 percent in the \$30 group. In the \$60 benefit group, 45 percent of

households exhausted their monthly benefits at least once compared to 46 percent of the households in the \$30 group. Households using a SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) model redeemed benefits at higher rates than households using a WIC EBT model across both the \$60 (98 versus 73 percent) and \$30 groups (96 versus 66 percent).

Nutritional Outcomes

Receiving either a \$30 or \$60 monthly benefit led to positive changes in children's nutritional outcomes compared to receiving no benefits.

Children in households receiving the \$60 benefit ate slightly more nutritious foods than children in the \$30 group, and substantially better than children with no benefit. For example, children in households receiving the \$60 benefit consumed 12 percent more fruits and vegetables and 23 percent more whole grains than those in households that did not receive any benefit. Children in the \$60 group ate 4 percent more fruits and vegetables and 9 percent more whole grains than those in the \$30 group.

Across the different food categories, the impact on children's nutrition in the households using the WIC model was generally twice that of the households using the SNAP model, though there was a positive impact on nutrition for children in both groups. For fruits and vegetables, the difference between the \$60 group and the \$0 group for the WIC-model households was about 0.5 cups compared to 0.2 cups for the SNAP-model households.

For More Information

Collins et al. (2015). *Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Demonstration: Summary Report 2011-2014*. Prepared by Abt Associates, Mathematica Policy Research, and Maximus. Alexandria, VA: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service. Project Officer: Chan Chanhatasilpa.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/research-and-analysis>.