

# **School Meal Program Performance: What Do We Know?**

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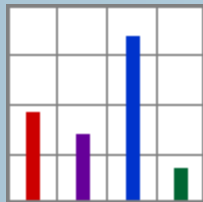
# What Do Policy Makers Care About?

- Program access and participation rates
- Compliance with nutrition standards
- Program integrity/erroneous payments
- Operational issues
- Finances



# Sources of Data

- Administrative Data/Reports
- Management Evaluations/CRE Reviews
- National Survey Data
- Special Research Studies



# Assessing Program Performance: Access and Coverage

## Participation Rates and Participant Characteristics:

- In SY 04/05, NSLP was operating in 94,622 public and private schools with enrollments of almost 49 million students
- Over 90 percent of all public schools operate NSLP
- 80 percent of the NSLP schools offer SBP
- Over 29 million lunches and 9 million breakfasts are served each day
- About half of all lunches and three-fourths of all breakfasts are served free



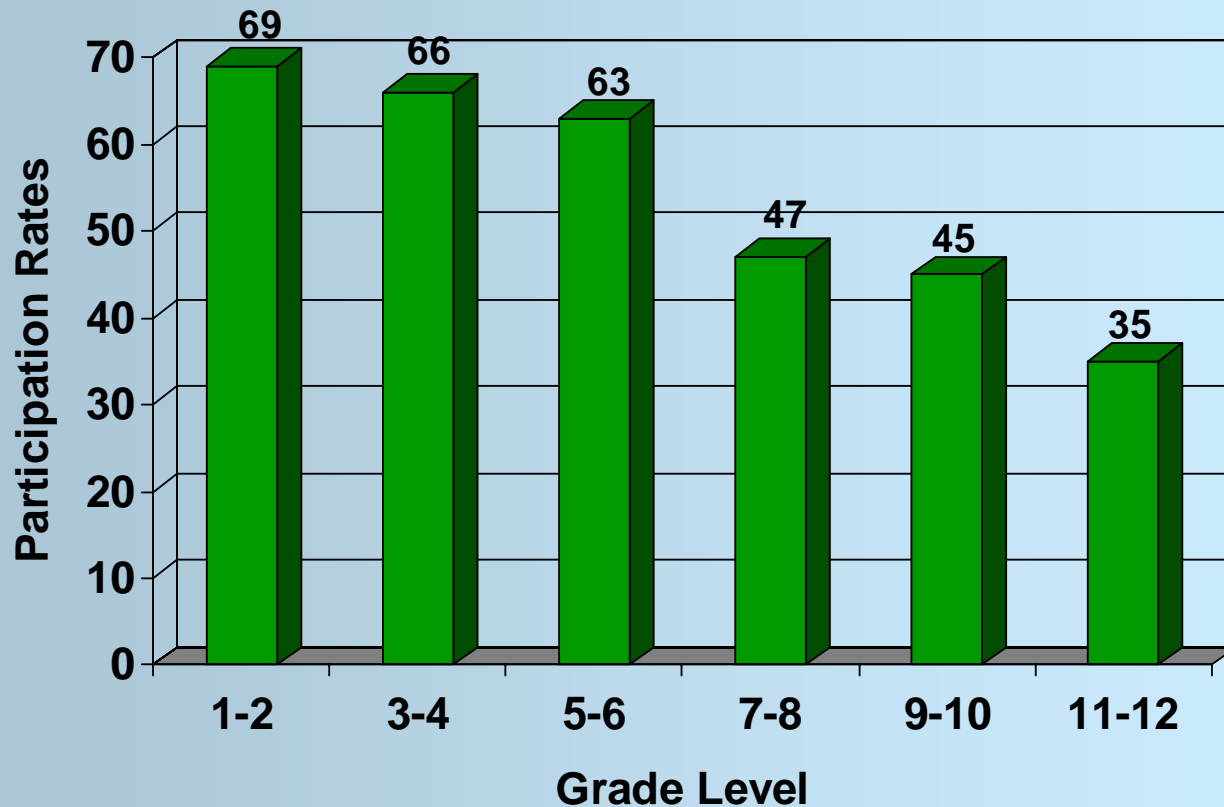
# Assessing Program Performance: Access and Coverage

<b>Certifications as a Percentage of Eligibles Based on SIPP Data</b>			
Two contiguous months, 5-18 years of age	<b>Ave. of July or Aug. and Aug. or Sept.</b>		
	1999	2001	2002
Children Certified for Free Lunch as a Percentage of Income Eligible Children	103%	102%	103%
Children Certified for Free Lunch as a Percentage of those Income and Categorically Eligible	98%	97%	98%
Two contiguous months, 5-18 years of age	<b>Ave. of July or Aug. and Aug. or Sept.</b>		
	1999	2001	2002
Children Certified for Reduced Price Lunch as a Percentage of those Income Eligible	48%	53%	54%



# Assessing Program Performance: Access and Coverage

Participation rates decrease as the student's grade level increases:



Source: Characteristics of National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program Participants (1996)



# Assessing Program Performance: Access and Coverage

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Students certified for free/reduce-price meals differ markedly from uncertified students in terms of age, race, and place of residence:

- Students certified for free/reduced-price meals tend to be younger and in lower grades.
- Black, Hispanic, and American Indian or Alaskan Natives are disproportionately represented in the free group.
- Most certified students live in urban or rural areas than in suburban areas, and they disproportionately resided in the Southeast and Southwest.



# Assessing Program Performance: Access and Coverage

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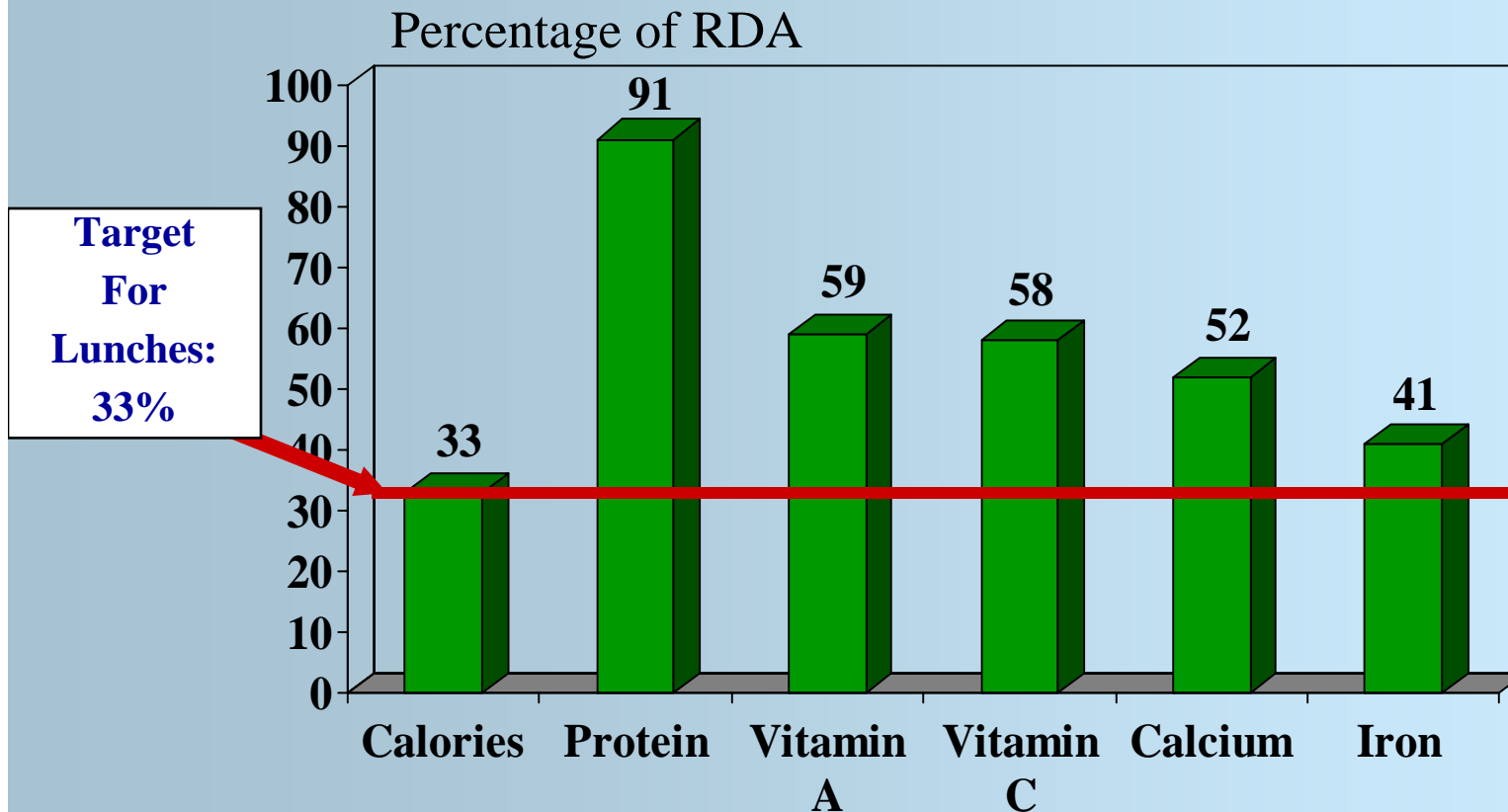
- In School Year 2004/05 an estimated 27 percent of all free approved children were directly certified.
- In School Year 2004/05, enrollment in Provision 2/3 schools accounted for about 5 percent of all free approved children.





# Assessing Program Performance: Nutrition Standards

## NSLP Lunches Provide 1/3 or More of Daily Nutrient Requirements

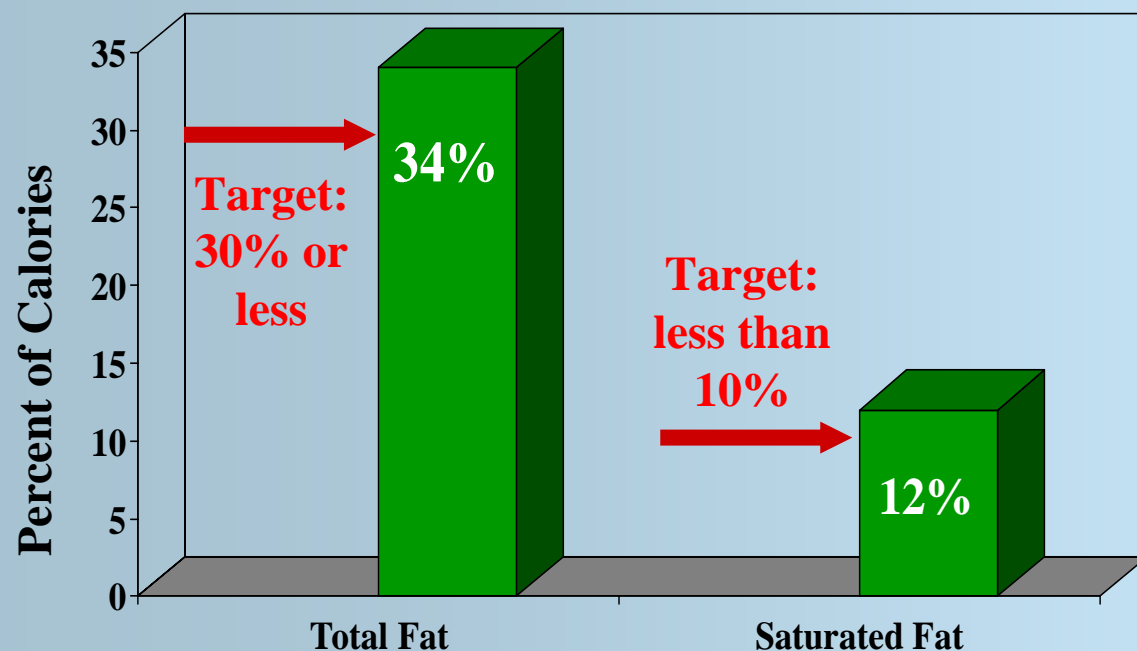


Source: School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study-II (School Year 1998-99)



# Assessing Program Performance: Nutrition Standards

## NSLP Lunches Served Near Objectives for Fat



**82% of elementary schools and 91% of secondary schools offered students the opportunity to choose low-fat lunches**

Source: School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study-II (School Year 1998-99)



# Assessing Program Performance: Nutrition Standards

## School Nutrition Dietary Assessment III

- Agency's periodic assessment of the nutritional effects of school meals.
- Study examines:
  - SFA characteristics/operations
  - Nutritional quality of meals offered/served
  - Participant characteristics
  - Student dietary intakes and the contribution of school meals to these intakes
- Data was collected during SY 2004/05 from 135 public SFAs, about 400 schools, and 2,400 students
- Final report expected in Fall 2006



# Assessing Program Performance: Nutrition Outcomes

Analysis of data from the 1994-1996 Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSFII) found that NSLP Participants:

- have higher intakes of food energy, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, thiamin, riboflavin, calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, and zinc, but also higher mean intakes of total fat, saturated fat and sodium, both at lunch and through the day.
- are more likely than nonparticipants to consume vegetables, milk and milk products, and meat and meat substitutes, both at lunch and through the day.
- consume less soda and fruit drinks and fruit flavored drinks at lunch than nonparticipants.
- have lower intakes of added sugars at lunch and through the day than nonparticipants.



# Assessing Program Performance: Nutrition Outcomes

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Analysis of data from the 1994-1996 Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSFII) found that SBP Participants:

- have higher intakes of food energy, calcium, phosphorous, and vitamin C at breakfast and through the day.
- are more likely than nonparticipants to consume fruit and milk both at breakfast and through the day.



# Assessing Program Performance: Program Integrity/Erroneous Payments

## Certification Accuracy Research Conclusions:

- Certification of ineligible children is a problem – 18% of all students certified for free meals were found ineligible in the Pilot Project.
- The NSLP verification process selects about 93,000 students who appropriately should have their benefits reduced or terminated – 25% of the total group verified.
- Errors are found throughout the administrative process in these small studies (SY2001/02)
  - Initial certification (6% error)
  - Verification (8% error)
  - Change in meal ticket status (17% of verified applications in error)
  - Certification of reapplying non-responders (5% re-applications in error)



# Assessing Program Performance: Program Integrity/Erroneous Payments

## NSLP/SBP Access, Participation, Eligibility and Certification Study (APEC) – (MPR/FNS)

- The Improper Payments Act of 2002 requires USDA to identify and reduce erroneous payments in NSLP, SBP, etc.
- This nationally-representative study will examine erroneous payments attributable to misclassification of students (administrative error, household misreporting) and meal counting and claiming errors.
- On-site data collection will occur in SY 2005/06
- A final report is expected in 2007



# Assessing Program Performance: Program Integrity/Erroneous Payments

## Regional Office Review of Applications (RORA)

- Objective: to estimate the rate of administrative error in SFA eligibility determinations for free/reduce-price meal benefits.
- Nationally representative sample of 56 SFAs (8 SFAs per FNS region)
- Random sample of about 50 applications per SFA collected by Regional staff in SY 2004/05
- Report expected in December 2005.
- Similar data collection to continue in future years



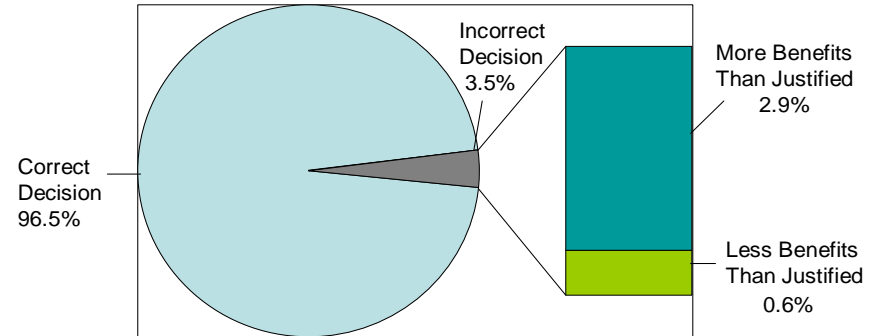


# Assessing Program Performance: Program Integrity/Erroneous Payments

## Preliminary RORA 2005 Results

- SFAs made incorrect eligibility determinations on 3.5% of approved/denied applications at the time of certification.
- The percentage of applications in error was slightly higher (4.2%) for income-based applications only.
- 83 percent of the incorrectly certified applications resulted in students being certified for more benefits than were justified.

Accuracy of SFA Eligibility Certification Determinations  
Among Approved and Denied Applicants SY 2004/05



# Assessing Program Performance: Program Integrity/Erroneous Payments

## SFA Verification Summary Report (FNS-742)

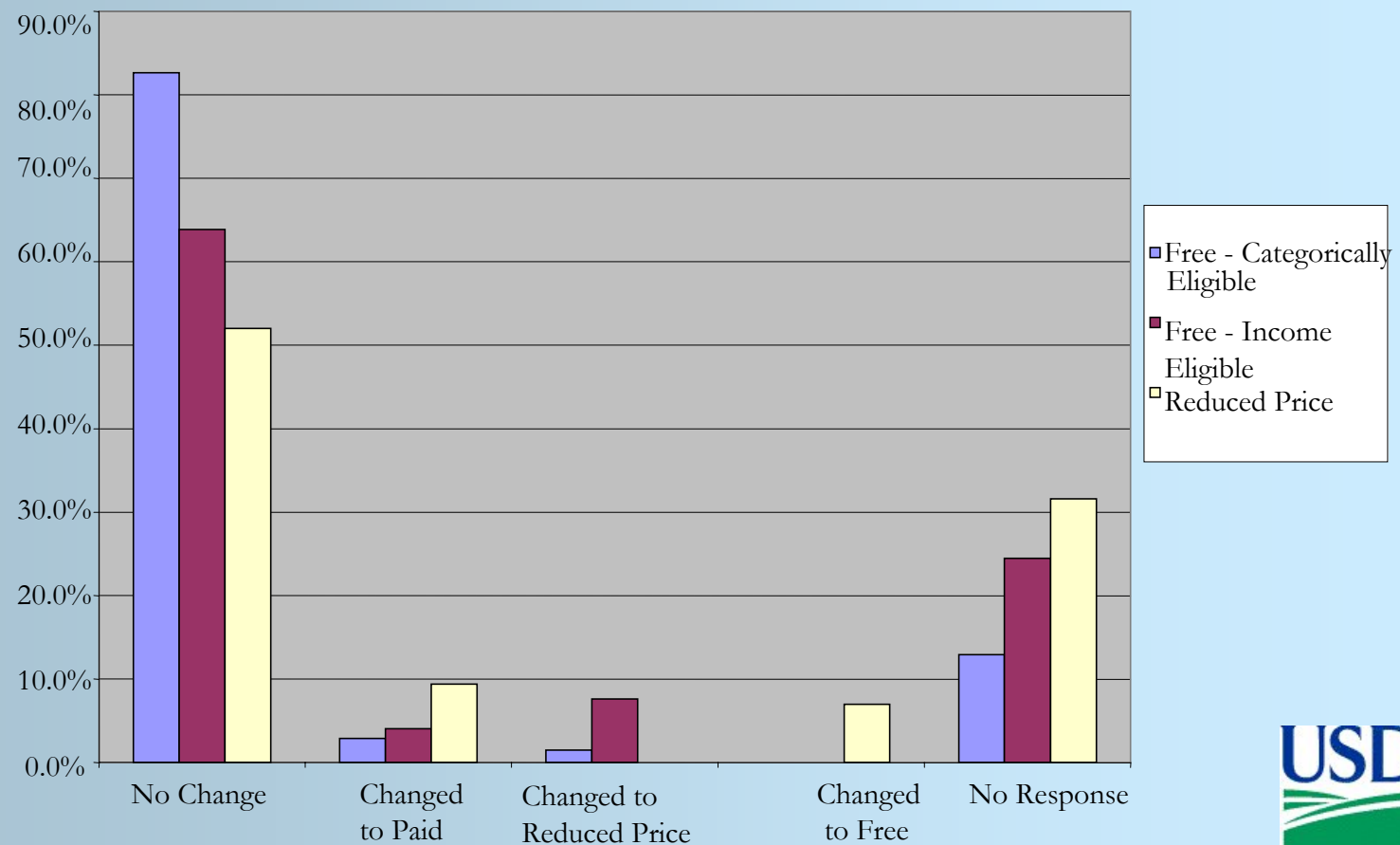
- State Agencies must submit an annual report to FNS on the results of verification activities for each SFA under its jurisdiction by April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- FNS-742 data elements include enrollment, application and eligibility information as well as results of verification by application type (categorical application, income/household size application)
- Preliminary data analysis conducted on SY 2004/05 data received from 47 of 57 Child Nutrition State Agencies.



# Preliminary SFA Verification Summary Results

## School Year 2004/05

Verification Outcomes



# Preliminary SFA Verification Summary Results

## School Year 2004/05

Summary of Verification Outcomes by Sampling Method Used

Verification Outcomes	All Districts	Districts That Used Random Sampling	Districts That Used Focused Sampling	Districts That Used All Applications
No Change	67.2%	70.0%	41.1%	87.0%
Changed to Reduced Price	4.5%	3.8%	9.4%	2.0%
Changed to Paid	5.4%	4.8%	9.4%	3.1%
Changed to Free	1.5%	1.5%	1.8%	0.7%
No Response	21.5%	19.9%	38.2%	7.2%



# Assessing Program Performance: Operational Issues- Competitive Foods

## School Venues Where Food is Sold or Offered:

- School dining room
- Vending machines and school stores
- Parties and classroom snacks
- Concession stands
- After school programs
- Fundraising activities
- Staff and parent meetings



# Assessing Program Performance: Operational Issues

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## **Direct Certification:**

- In School Year 2003-04, an estimated 75 percent of public SFAs used direct certification.

## **Provision 2/3:**

- In School Year 2003-04, less than 10 percent of public SFAs had Provision 2 or 3 schools;



# Assessing Program Performance: Operational Issues

## Universal School Breakfast:

- Availability of universal-free school breakfast significantly increased school breakfast participation but had little impact on other outcomes measures over the course of the evaluation including academic achievement test scores, attendance, tardiness, health, and discipline.
- Offering free school breakfast to all elementary school students would not, on average, be expected to improve academic or behavior outcomes beyond what occurs in schools already offering SBP.



# Assessing Program Performance: Operational Issues

## Nutrition Education:

- Team Nutrition Training Grants were awarded to 21 States in 2005.
- 54 Gold and 3 Silver Awards given in the first year of the HealthierUS School Challenge
- Food Stamp Nutrition Education often coordinated with NSLP/SBP and TN
  - Public schools are the primary site location for direct nutrition education





# Assessing Program Performance: Finances

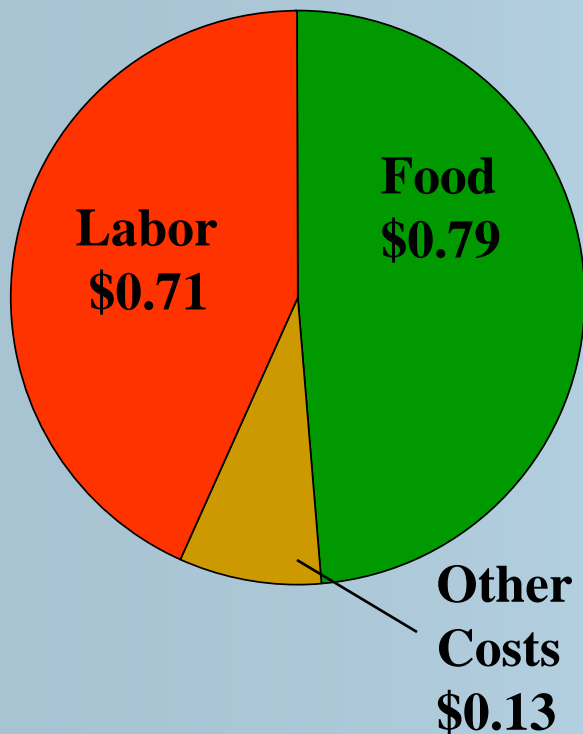
- Last study to examine the cost to produce reimbursable meals in NSLP/SBP was conducted in SY 1992/93
- Major findings of the School Lunch and Breakfast Meal Cost Study include:
  - On average, SFAs operate at the break-even level, with total revenues about equal to total reported costs.
  - Revenues from reimbursable meals exceed the cost of producing those meals. Reimbursable lunches generate a revenue surplus that is used to offset losses from reimbursable breakfasts
  - SFAs also subsidize non-program food service (e.g. a la carte) with surplus revenues from reimbursable lunches.
  - Revenues from reimbursable meals (including government subsidies and student payments) accounted for an average of 85 percent of total SFA revenues.



# Assessing Program Performance: Finances

## Food and Labor Account for Most Program Costs

Mean Cost  
Per Lunch - \$1.63



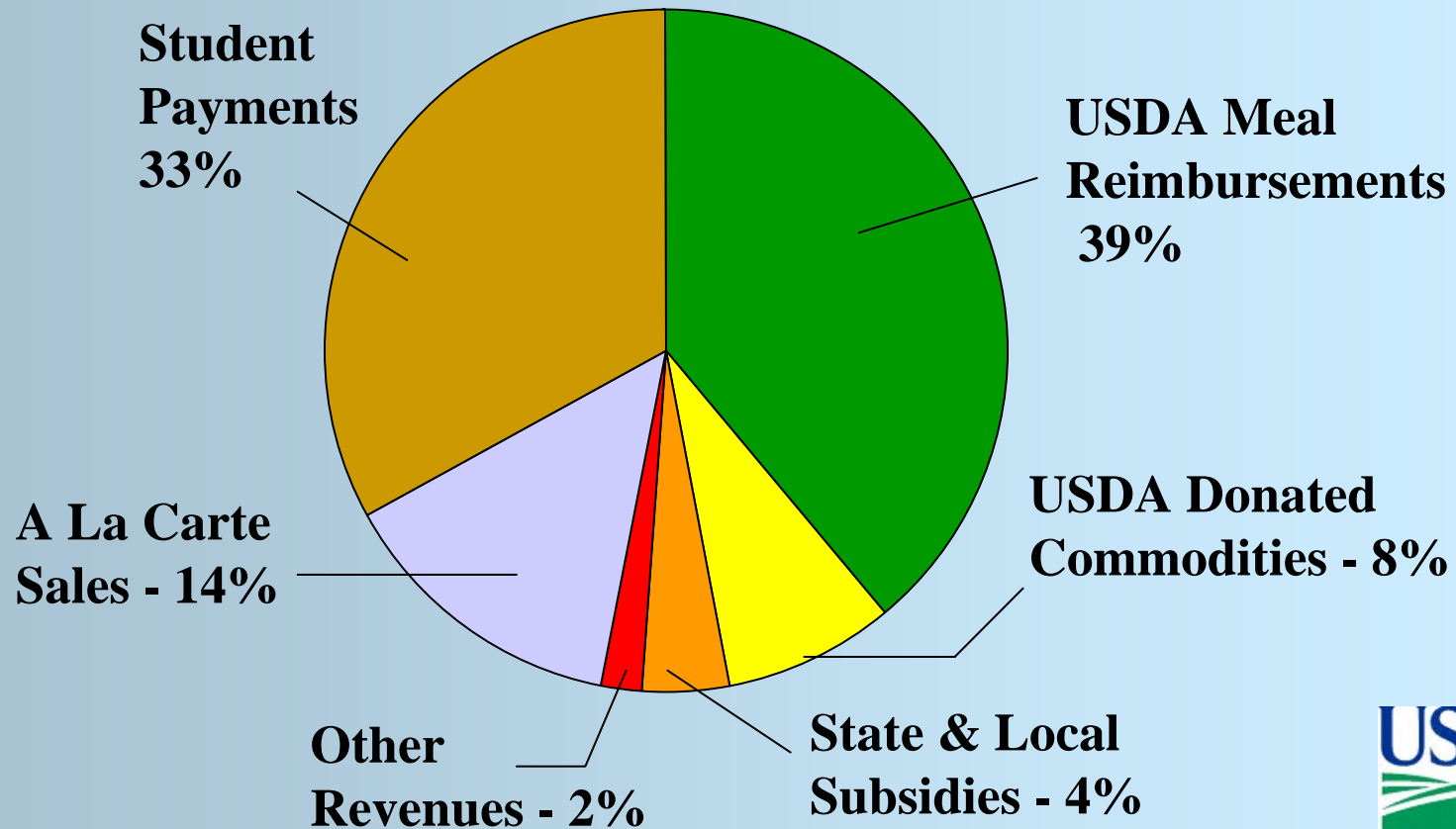
- **Food Costs**
  - Local Food Purchase
  - USDA Donated Commodities
- **Labor Costs**
  - Production and Food Service Labor
  - Administrative Labor
- **Other Costs**
  - Supplies
  - Capital Expenditures/Depreciation
  - Contracted Services
  - Indirect Charges

Source: School Lunch and Breakfast Cost Study, October 1994



# Assessing Program Performance: Finances

## Student Payments and USDA Subsidies Make Up Most Program Revenue



# Assessing Program Performance: Finances

## School Lunch and Breakfast Meal Cost Study - II

- FNS is in the process of awarding a contract to update the School Lunch and Breakfast Meal Cost Study using the same methodology used in the 1992/93 Study.
- Data collection is expected to be conducted in Spring 2006 and Fall 2006.
- A final report is expected in 2007



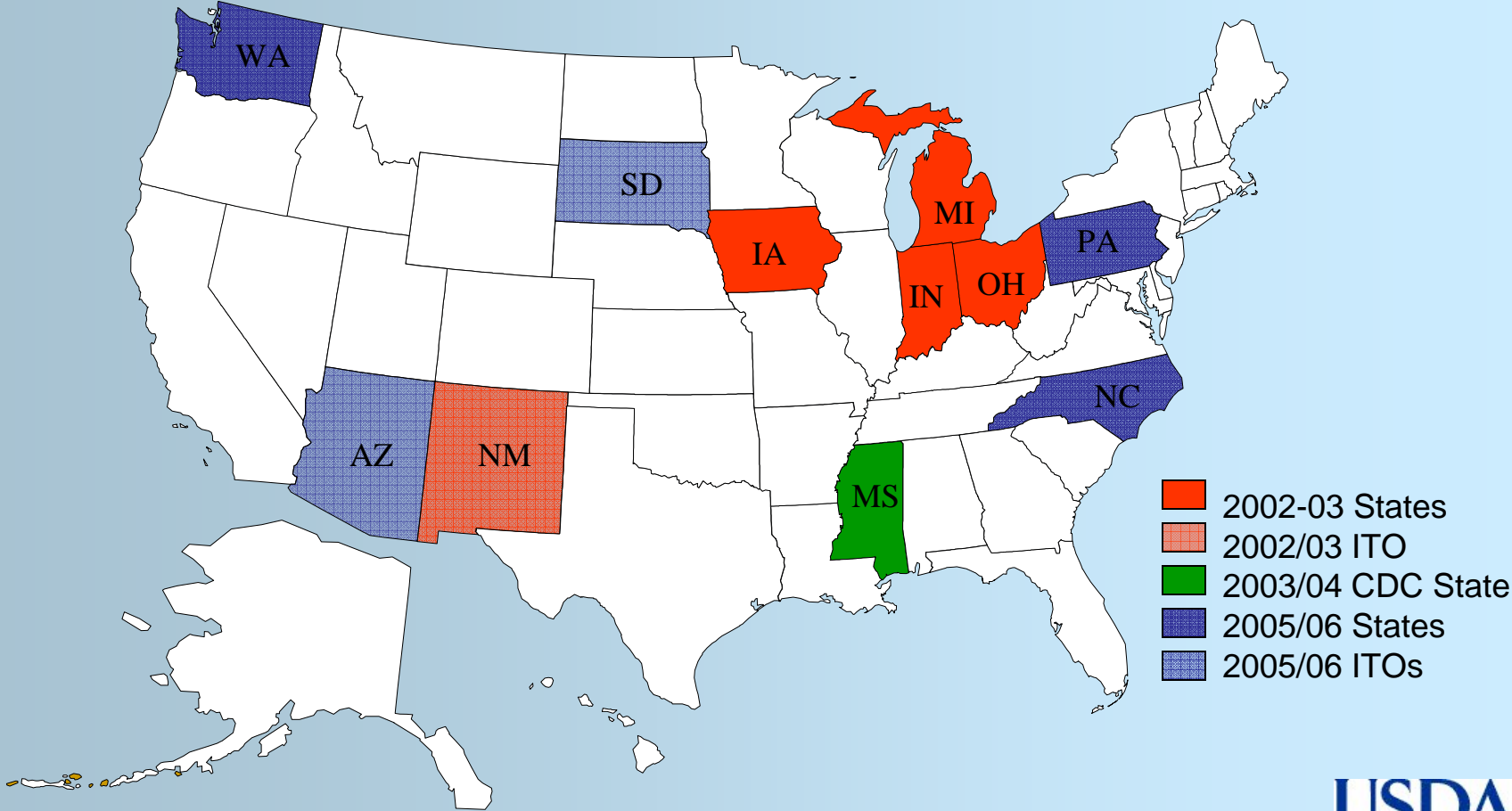
# Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

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- Became a permanent program through the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.
- \$9 million authorized each year
- 25 schools in each of 8 States and 25 schools among 3 ITOs – 225 schools total
- In FY 2005/06 schools allocated \$81 per student (smaller schools received \$100 per student)



# States and ITOs Participating in the Fruit and Vegetable Program



# Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

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- Interim reports submitted to Congress in each of fiscal years 2005 through 2008.
- Reports describe activities carried out during the fiscal year (acceptability, delivery methods, timing of service delivery, educational activities, most popular fruits and vegetables, etc.)
- CDC's evaluation of Mississippi's fruit and vegetable pilot program examined the impact of the program on fruit and vegetable consumption.



# Assessing Program Performance: Participation in Research Studies



USDA NEEDS **YOU**





## Assessing Program Performance:



- What are the burning questions for you?
- What information would help you run a better program?



# Questions and Comments

