



# What Military Families Should Know:

## FEDERAL FOOD PROGRAMS

Did you know there are programs to help provide healthy meals to your military family?

If you or someone you know is having a hard time putting food on the table, you are not alone. Explore what's available through the USDA and visit [mfan.org/thenetwork](https://mfan.org/thenetwork) for resources and support.

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP helps qualifying families purchase nutritious food using an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card that works like a debit or credit card. SNAP benefits can be used at stores nationwide and even at farmers' markets.

#### What military families should know:

SNAP income guidelines include BAH, BAS, and other special pay and allowances. However, combat pay, Hostile Fire pay, and Imminent Danger Pay are not counted as income.

### Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Free breakfasts and/or lunches are provided to children while school is on summer break through the SFSP. The meal programs have no income guidelines and are open to children 18 or younger.

#### What military families should know:

SFSP sites operate nationwide on and around military installations. In addition to meals, these sites often offer a variety of enrichment activities for participating children. To find a location near you, visit [fns.usda.gov/meals4kids](https://fns.usda.gov/meals4kids).

### Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women and children from birth to age five.

#### What military families should know:

Military families are strongly encouraged to visit their local WIC offices to learn more about how eligibility guidelines apply to their unique situation. While payments like clothing allowances, BAS, and reenlistment bonuses are counted as income, BAH is not, which makes accessing WIC benefits easier for many military families.

### National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)

The NSLP provides balanced, free, or low-cost meals and snacks to school-age children while schools are in session. Students can qualify for the program based on categorical eligibility, household income guidelines, and through community eligibility programs.

#### What military families should know:

To apply for NSLP and SBP, visit your child's school and complete an application. Income guidelines include most military pays, including BAS, clothing allowances, and BAH payments made to families living off base. Combat related pays and BAH for families living in privatized military housing are not included in income calculations.

Visit [USDA Food and Nutrition for Military and Veteran Families](https://www.usda.gov/food-and-nutrition-for-military-and-veteran-families) to learn more about the benefits your family may qualify for. [Military OneSource](https://mfan.org) also provides military families with information on [Food Security Resources and Support Programs](https://mfan.org/food-security-resources). Find these resources and more at [mfan.org](https://mfan.org).