



To the Honorable Governor J. Kevin Stitt:

We the undersigned strongly encourage you to ensure our state declares its intent to participate in the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program for summer 2025 by the August 15, 2024, deadline. Implementing this program will provide a powerful tool to eliminate the persistent problem of childhood hunger during the summer months when school-based meal programs are unavailable.

One in five Oklahoma children experience food insecurity. Our schools play a vital role in providing nutritious meals during the academic year, but the summer break poses an immense challenge for Oklahoma families. While existing summer meals programs do provide meaningful relief for some low-income families working to provide consistent, adequate nutrition for their children, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution, especially for working families and families in rural Oklahoma.

Over 400,000 Oklahoma children are eligible for Summer EBT. If Oklahoma participates in the program it will result in over \$48 million of our tax dollars returning to support Oklahoma families and businesses. Summer EBT has proven wildly successful in assisting eligible families in purchasing essential groceries throughout the summer and ensuring that Oklahoma children can excel in school and life. Operating Summer EBT is investing in:

- **Child Well-Being.** Childhood hunger during the summer months can have negative effects on a child's physical and mental health.
- **Health Outcomes.** Addressing child hunger is a preventative measure that can reduce costs associated with chronic health problems linked to malnutrition and food insecurity.
- **Oklahoma's Economy.** 2025 Summer EBT has a projected economic impact of between \$72-87 million in Oklahoma. Every dollar invested in Summer EBT generates between \$1.50-\$1.80 in local economic activity.
- **Enhanced Academic Outcomes.** When children have consistent access to nutritious meals, they are better prepared to learn and excel in school.
- **Rural Families.** Summer EBT provides access to nutrition support for families residing in rural areas that would otherwise have trouble accessing summer meal sites due to limited transportation or with work schedules.

We collectively urge you to ensure Oklahoma participates in the Summer EBT program beginning in summer 2025. Your leadership on this critical issue can make a substantial difference in the lives of countless children and families across our great state.

Sincerely,

72 organizations and 701 individuals across 46 counties and counting.