

Healthy School Meals for All

School meals play an important role in reducing childhood hunger, supporting good nutrition, and ensuring that students are hunger-free and ready to get the most out of their school day.

Support Healthy School Meals for All by cosponsoring the following bills in the Senate:

- The **Universal School Meals Program Act** (S. 1568), which would create Healthy School Meals for All nationwide. The bill has been reintroduced by Sen. Sanders (I-VT) along with Sens. Gillibrand (D-NY) and Heinrich (D-NM).
- The **School Hunger Elimination Act**, which is being introduced by Sens. Casey (D-PA) and Fetterman (D-PA). The bill would increase federal funding for community eligibility schools, create a statewide community eligibility option, improve direct certification, and provide retroactive reimbursement for meals served to children who are certified for free or reduced-price meals later in the school year.
- The **Nutrition Red Tape Reduction Act**, which is being introduced by Sens. Fetterman (D-PA) and Casey (D-PA). The bill would permanently lower the threshold for schools to participate in community eligibility to 25 percent Identified Student Percentage, ensuring that thousands of schools are eligible to participate.

In the House:

- The **Universal School Meals Program Act** (H.R. 3204), which would create Healthy School Meals for All nationwide. The bill has been reintroduced by Rep. Omar (D-MN), along with Reps. McGovern (D-MA) and Moore (D-WI).
- The **School Meals Expansion Act** (H.R. 2567) introduced by Rep. McGarvey (D-KY), which would increase federal funding for community eligibility schools and permanently lower the threshold for schools to participate in community eligibility to 25 percent Identified Student Percentage, ensuring that thousands of schools are eligible to participate.
- The **No Hungry Kids in School Act** (H.R. 3112) introduced by Reps. Porter (D-CA) and Aguilar (D-CA), which would create a statewide community eligibility option.
- The **Expanding Access to School Meals Act** (H.R. 3113) introduced by Rep. Porter (D-CA), which would increase eligibility for free meals to 200 percent, expand direct certification, make eligibility retroactive to the beginning of the school year, and increase funding for community eligibility schools.

Benefits of Offering Free Meals to All Students:



ENSURES ALL STUDENTS ARE HUNGER-FREE AND READY TO LEARN



REDUCES STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH EATING SCHOOL MEALS



ENDS THE PROBLEM OF UNPAID SCHOOL MEAL DEBT



EASES ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS FOR SCHOOLS



SUPPORTS SCHOOL NUTRITION FINANCES AND OPERATIONS

Benefits of Healthy School Meals for All

Research links participation in school meals to positive educational and health outcomes for our nation's children. School meals are just as important to academic success as textbooks, computers, and transportation, and all children should have access to them every school day.

As vital as the school nutrition programs are to ensuring children's access to healthy, nutritious meals, too many children in need miss out because of the programs' current structure. Many struggling families do not meet the eligibility threshold for free meals, which require a family of three to earn less than \$34,000 annually in the 2024-2025 school year.

Healthy School Meals for All means offering school breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge, so they

can learn and thrive. Serving school meals to all students at no cost on a permanent basis would be a game-changer for students, families, and schools. Providing school meals to all students is also critical for advancing racial equity and justice, helping to ensure that all students can access the key nutrition they need to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

Since before the pandemic, high-need schools could offer free meals to all of their students through the Community Eligibility Provision. Then, in response to the pandemic, Congress took immediate action to support access to school meals, and schools were able to offer free meals to all students. For more than two years, our country had the opportunity to pilot nationwide free school meals, and it was a resounding success.

[FreeSchoolMealsforAll.org](https://www.Frac.org)