



HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL

The Time is Now for Healthy School Meals for All Colorado Children

Children need nutritious food to learn and thrive. Currently, all schools are able to provide school meals to any child who needs them as part of COVID-19 federal aid. Please join the coalition to help pass legislation for healthy school meals for all Colorado children in schools participating in the National School Lunch Program.

Why School Meals for All



It's an investment in public education of children. Children need healthy food to learn in school and School Meals for All would ensure our investment is paying off.



It removes Stigma. When schools can serve every child the same food there are fewer divisions between students based on income. The stigma low-income students face is something they carry with them in many ways, and it should not start in the school lunch line.



More students will get the food they need. School districts who have implemented School Meals for All in the past, and districts in Colorado who have implemented it this year, have seen a 20 percent increase in participation when school meals are available to all students.



Creates Community. When children eat together, they learn together. School Meals for All can mean less time in the lunch line and more time for children to eat together, socializing and creating community.



Less Administrative Costs. When all children can get school meals, school nutrition departments can spend more time developing delicious meals, and less time collecting school meal applications, taking money in the lunch line, and tracking down school meal debts from families.



No more lunch debt. As families struggle to cover the costs of living in our state, School Meals for All would eliminate their lunch debts so they can focus on their families' other needs like housing, utilities, and more.



More Resources for Schools and Staff. When schools have adequate reimbursements for all meals served, they can spend less money on administrative costs and spend funds on staffing, healthy meals, and scratch cooking.

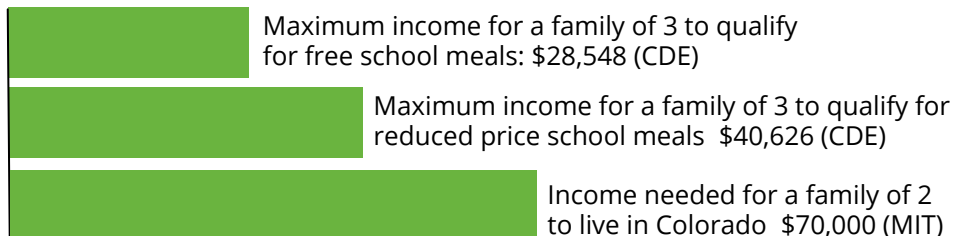


Healthier and Thriving Students. According to studies, when children are given healthy food they do better in school and stay healthier overall. Healthy food is as important as any other tool for children to learn, grow and thrive.



Too many children are left out of our current school meals programs. The free and reduced-price meals program income threshold is too low to truly account for children and families facing food insecurity. (see chart below)

***HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS HELP COLORADO FAMILIES FACING FOOD INSECURITY**





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Components of SB22-087 Healthy School Meals for All



Creation of a Healthy School Meals for All Program for Colorado School Districts. All Colorado students in districts that participate would have school meals available to them free of cost. Participating school districts would be guaranteed 100% reimbursements for all meals served to students (at the federal reimbursement level).



Increased Reimbursement for Districts to Purchase Locally Sourced Food. School districts that choose to participate in a local procurement grant program would receive funds to purchase food from local farms and ranches to make healthy meals. This will help strengthen Colorado's food systems, the economy, and student health.



School Workforce Investments. Colorado school districts can choose to participate in a grant program to increase their pay for the staff who serve and prepare meals for students. This will help districts with staffing shortages, as well as support front-line workers and their families.



Funding for Preparing Healthy Meals with Locally Procured Food. School districts can get funding for equipment and training to provide their students healthier meals.



Parent and Student Input on School Meals. School districts that receive grant funding to purchase locally sourced foods will form Student and Parent Healthy School Meals for All Advisory Committees to bring community voice to their school meal programs.

Please sign up here (<https://bit.ly/COHealthySchoolMeals>) to support Healthy School Meals for All. If you have questions please email Karla at karla@hungerfreecolorado.org or Ashley at ashley@hungerfreecolorado.org

*CDE is Colorado Department of Education, MIT is Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator