

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2021

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

We, the 447 undersigned national, state, and local organizations and associations, write urging Congress and the Administration to work together to build on the impressive work already being accomplished during the pandemic to offer healthy school meals to every child at no cost and maintain this approach to provide Healthy School Meals for All beyond the 2021-2022 school year.

The Biden Administration's proposed American Families Plan (AFP) takes a strong step in this direction by expanding the community eligibility provision to more high poverty schools and dramatically expanding electronic benefits transfer options when schools are closed. We believe this country has an historic opportunity to take an additional step towards ending childhood hunger and advancing economic, racial, and food justice by providing healthy school meals to all students.

This would ensure that every child in the U.S. has access to the nutritious school breakfasts and lunches that can help support their academic success. School meals reduce childhood hunger, decrease childhood overweight and obesity, improve child nutrition and wellness, advance racial equity, enhance child development, and support learning, attendance, and behavior.

Healthy School Meals for All would allow school breakfast and lunch to be offered at no charge to all children. Currently, only students from homes with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line are eligible for free school meals. Many struggling families do not qualify for free school meals, and school meals fees create a barrier to participation. Offering free meals to all students eliminates the cost barrier for families who do not qualify, but who still struggle to make ends meet. It also helps reduce racial disparities in health and education for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous children, who experience hunger at disproportionate rates and face systemic barriers to food access both at school and in their communities. And by having every student participate in school meals, it helps address the stigma some children fear of being labeled "poor" by their classmates.

Offering meals at no charge also would be a tremendous support to schools across the country. Schools would no longer have the cost of collecting and processing school meals applications

and completing other paperwork. Further, school meals actually cost schools *less* per student when *more* students participate in a free meal program.

Schools would no longer struggle with collecting unpaid school meal fees from families or foot the bill for meals served when children do not have money to pay. No longer would school nutrition staff be asked to undertake the heart-wrenching task of taking food away from a child. Removing this dynamic between families and schools allows school nutrition staff to focus on preparing and serving healthy meals to children, and it eliminates a significant financial burden for school districts and families.

Recent studies reaffirm that access to nutritious meals in school increases the health and educational outcomes for our nation's children. Investing in these programs to ensure all children — regardless of income — can access healthy meals year-round would help ensure that every child is ready to learn and thrive.

The Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021 (S. 1530/HR 3115) introduced by Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representatives Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Gwen Moore (D-WI), creates a model for Healthy School Meals for All and addressing the well-being of our nation's children, particularly those from low-income households.

Healthy School Meals for All can and should be an important educational and health support as the nation recovers from the pandemic. Providing school meals to all students is also critical for advancing racial equity and justice, as it would ensure that Black, Indigenous, and Latinx students are able to access the key nutrition they need to thrive in the classroom and beyond. Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to working with you to ensure that every child in this country receives the nutritious food they need to learn and grow. Again, we ask that Congress and the Administration work together to include Healthy School Meals for All in the American Families Plan or any other forthcoming legislative vehicle.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
African American Health Alliance  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Commodity Distribution Association  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Heart Association  
Association of SNAP Nutrition Education Administrators (ASNNA)  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Bread For the World  
CACFP Roundtable  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research (CLEAR)  
Center for Science in the Public Interest

Chef Ann Foundation  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition for Healthy School Food  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Common Threads  
Congressional Hunger Center  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
FoodCorps  
Food Research & Action Center  
Friends of the Earth  
Girls Inc.  
Hunger Free America  
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
Life Time Foundation  
MomsRising  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Education Association  
National PTA  
National Women's Law Center  
Restaurant Opportunities Centers UNITED  
School Nutrition Association  
TomKat Ranch  
UConn Rudd Center  
unBox  
UnidosUS  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Fresh Produce Association  
Urban School Food Alliance

**Alabama**

Alabama Association of Food Banks  
Alabama Dietetic Association  
Alabama School Nutrition Association (ASNA)

**Alaska**

Food Bank of Alaska

**Arizona**

Arizona Center for Economic Progress  
Arizona Food Bank Network  
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona (LAMA)  
Pinnacle Prevention  
Pivot Produce

**Arkansas**

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

**California**

Abrazar Inc

AFT Guild, Local 1931

Alameda County Community Food Bank

Alum Rock Union Elementary School District

ATCAA Food Bank – Tuolumne County

California Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

California Association of Food Banks

Californians for Disability Rights Inc.

Capistrano Unified School District

Center for Ecoliteracy

Central California Food Bank

Ceres Community Project

City of San Jose

Community Action Agency of Butte County – North State Food Bank

Community Action of Napa Valley Food Bank

Community Action Partnership OC/Orange County Food Bank

Community Action Partnership of Kern

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

Community Food Bank of San Benito County

County of Santa Clara Social Services

CRLA Foundation

Dignity Health Connected Living

Emergency Food Bank

Feeding America Riverside San Bernardino Counties

Feeding San Diego

FIND - Food In Need of Distribution

Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

Food for People

FOOD Share of Ventura County

Foodbank of Santa Barbara

FoodLink for Tulare County

GLIDE

Healthier Kids Foundation

Hunger Advocacy Network

Imperial Valley Food Bank

Interfaith Council of Amador

Kings Community Action Organization

Larkin Street Youth Services

Latino Coalition for Healthy California

Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

Mendocino Food & Nutrition Program - The Fort Bragg Food Bank

Merced County Food Bank  
Morgan Hill Unified School District  
Nourish California  
Placer Food Bank  
Redwood Empire Food Bank  
Roots of Change  
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services  
San Diego Food Bank  
San Diego Hunger Coalition  
San Francisco-Marín Food Bank  
Santa Clara County, Social Services Agency -DEBS  
Second Harvest Food Bank Orange County  
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County  
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley  
Second Harvest of the Greater Valley  
Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits  
Slow Food California  
Social Services Agency  
Stanford Medicine's Pediatric Advocacy Program  
The Gubbio Project  
The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank  
The Resource Connection Food Bank  
The Women's Building  
Westside Food Bank  
Yolo Food Bank  
Yuba-Sutter Food Bank

### **Colorado**

AFT Colorado  
Feeding Colorado  
Hunger Free Colorado

### **Connecticut**

Connecticut Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
CT Farm to School Collaborative  
Connecticut Food Bank/Foodshare  
End Hunger Connecticut!  
Hartford Federation of Paraeducators 2221

### **District of Columbia**

DC Greens  
Capital Area Food Bank  
DC Hunger Solutions

### **Delaware**

Colonial School District

Delaware Department of Agriculture  
Delaware School Nutrition Association

### **Florida**

Alachua County Education Association  
Brevard Federation of Teachers  
Broward Teachers Union  
DeSoto County Educators Association  
Gadsden County Classroom Teachers Association  
Hendry Educational Support Personnel Assoc  
Hillsborough School Employees Federation (HSEF 4154)  
Lake County Education Association  
Leon Classroom Teachers Association  
NIPSCO Union  
Orange Education Support Professionals Association  
Pinellas Educational Support Professionals Association(PESPA)  
Polk Education Association  
SCSBDA Union  
Seminole Uniserv  
South Florida Hunger Coalition  
Teachers Association of Lee County  
The Nassau Educational Support Personnel Association

### **Hawaii**

DOE Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs  
Hawaii Appleseed  
Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!

### **Idaho**

Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force

### **Illinois**

Arab American Family Services  
DePaul University  
East St. Louis Federation of Teachers Local 1220  
Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
Illinois Federation of Teachers  
Illinois Hunger Coalition  
Indo American Center  
Northern Illinois Food Bank  
Respond Now  
The Harbour  
United African Organization

### **Indiana**

Indiana School Nutrition Association  
New Castle Community School Corp Child Nutrition Department

**Iowa**

Iowa Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Iowa State Education Association  
Northeast Iowa Community Action

**Kansas**

Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice  
Kansas National Education Association

**Kentucky**

Bowling Green City Schools  
Kentucky Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

**Louisiana**

Feeding Louisiana  
Greater Mount Carmel Baptist Church of Scotlandville  
Jefferson Federation of Teachers  
Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans  
Louisiana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Louisiana Budget Project  
Market Umbrella  
Recirculating Farms

**Maine**

Cumberland County Food Security Council  
Falmouth Public Schools Food Service  
Full Plates Full Potential  
Good Shepherd Food Bank  
Healthy Communities of the Capital Area  
Maine Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND)  
Maine Education Association  
Maine Farm to Institution  
Maine Farm to School Network  
Maine Principals' Association  
Maine School Nutrition Association  
Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative  
RSU 2

**Maryland**

Baltimore Hunger Project  
Baltimore Jewish Council  
Baltimore Teachers Union  
Maryland Hunger Solutions

Maryland Out of School Time Network  
Montgomery County Maryland Community Action Board  
Prince George's County Food Equity Council  
Public Justice Center  
Qiydaar Academy, Inc.  
Student Support Network  
Suitland Elementary

**Massachusetts**

AIDS Project Worcester  
American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts  
Groundwork Lawrence  
JF&CS Greater Boston  
Lynn Teachers Union, Local 1037  
Mass Law Reform Institute  
Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Project Bread-The Walk for Hunger  
Somerville Food Security Coalition  
Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals  
The Greater Boston Food Bank  
The Open Door  
Veterans Legal Services  
Worcester County Food Bank, Inc.  
Yes We Care, Inc.

**Michigan**

LJL DONIVER Consultants  
United Way for Southeastern Michigan

**Minnesota**

Education Minnesota  
Hunger Solutions Minnesota  
Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, Local 59  
Minnesota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND)  
West Central Initiative  
Winona School District–Nutrition

**Mississippi**

Mississippi School Nutrition Association

**Missouri**

Jewish Family Services of Greater Kansas City  
Marillac Indigent Care Fund  
Missouri Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Missouri School Nutrition Association  
Operation Food Search



University Academy Charter School

**Montana**

Montana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Montana Food Bank Network

**Nebraska**

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest  
No More Empty Pots

**Nevada**

Food Bank of Northern Nevada

**New Hampshire**

Nashua Teachers' Union  
New Hampshire Hunger Solutions  
School Nutrition Association of New Hampshire

**New Jersey**

Abundant Life Community Develop Corp  
AFT Local 1904--Montclair State University  
AFT New Jersey  
Hunger Free New Jersey  
New Jersey Education Association (NJEA)  
Perth Amboy Federation 857

**New Mexico**

Albuquerque Federation of Classified Professionals  
New Mexico Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
New Mexico School Nutrition Association

**New York**

Bolivar-Richburg CSD  
Bronx Impact Food Access Collective  
Buffalo Educational Support Team  
Bushwick Food Cooperative  
Christ Jesus Baptist Church, Inc. (NahYah Food Pantry)  
Community Food Advocates  
Cuba Cultural Center, Inc.  
East End Farm to School Project  
Eastern NY Pride at Work  
Equity Advocates  
Family Enrichment Network  
Feeding Westchester  
Food Bank of the Southern Tier  
GardenShare

Health and Welfare Council of Long Island  
Hunger Solutions New York  
Island Harvest Food Bank  
Jasper-Troupsburg CSD  
Lawyers For Children  
Liverpool Central School District  
Macedon Public Library  
Mechanicville City School District  
Montour Falls Memorial Library  
New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Northport - East Northport School District  
NYSUT  
Red Hook/Rhinebeck/Pine Plains Central School Districts  
Rochester Association of Paraprofessionals  
Rockaway Youth Task Force  
Schenectady City School District  
Suffolk County Food Policy Council  
Syracuse Teachers Association  
The Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, New York  
UFT  
United Neighborhood Houses of New York  
United Way of New York City  
West Canada Valley CSD  
West Side Campaign Against Hunger  
Yonkers Federation of Teachers  
Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, Inc

### **North Carolina**

ASAP  
Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy  
End Hunger Durham  
Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC  
Loaves & Fishes/Friendship Trays, Inc.  
MANNA FoodBank  
More Than A Meal Foundation  
North Carolina Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
North Carolina Alliance for Health  
School Nutrition Association of North Carolina  
The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina  
Weaver Foundation

### **North Dakota**

Ehrens Consulting  
North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
North Dakota School Nutrition Association

**Ohio**

ACTION OHIO Coalition for Battered Women  
Children's Hunger Alliance  
Cleveland Teachers Union, AFT Local 279  
Local Matters  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. Central Ohio Chapter  
Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Ohio Association of Foodbanks  
Ohio Education Association  
Ohio Federation of Teachers  
Ohio National Organization for Women  
Ohio NOW Education and Legal Fund  
Ohio School Nutrition Association  
OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership in Ohio  
Parma City Schools  
School Nutrition Association of Ohio  
The Center for Community Solutions  
YMCA of Central Ohio

**Oklahoma**

AFT Local 4574  
Oklahoma Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

**Oregon**

Central School District 13 J  
Oregon Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Oregon Alliance of YMCAs  
Oregon Farm to School & School Garden Network  
Oregon Hunger Solutions

**Pennsylvania**

Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger  
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture  
Pittsburgh Food Policy Council

**Rhode Island**

Highlander Charter School  
NEARI  
Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance

**South Carolina**

SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
South Carolina Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

**Tennessee**

National Society of Leadership & Success DeVry Southeast Chapter  
Tennessee Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Tennessee Justice Center  
Second Harvest Food Bank of NETN

**Texas**

Alliance of Dallas Educators (Alliance/AFT)  
Feeding Texas  
Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Texas Association for School Nutrition

**Utah**

Community Action Partnership of Utah  
Community Action Services and Food Bank  
Crossroads Urban Center  
Family Connection Center dba Open Doors Social Services  
Housing Connect  
School Nutrition Association of Utah  
Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments  
United Way of Salt Lake  
Utahns Against Hunger  
Voices for Utah Children  
Weber School District

**Vermont**

Brattleboro Food Co-op  
Capstone Community Action  
Champlain Islands Foodshelf  
Downstreet Housing & Community Development  
Early Care and Learning Partnership  
Essex CHIPS  
Food Connects  
Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services, Inc (GBICS)  
Green Mountain Farm-to-School  
Green Mountain United Way  
Hartland Food Shelf  
Hunger Free Vermont  
John Graham Housing & Services  
Lamoille Community Food Share  
Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont  
Our Community Cares Camp (OCCC) Inc.  
ShareMRV  
United Way of Addison County  
United Ways of Vermont

Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance  
Vermont FEED

**Virginia**

Fairfax County Federation of Teachers (AFT Local 2401)  
Norfolk Federation of Teachers  
Virginia Hunger Solutions  
Virginia Poverty Law Center

**Washington**

Bellingham Food Bank  
Building Changes  
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (WA State)  
Concerned Citizens  
Equity in Education Coalition  
Faith Action Network - Washington State  
Feeding Washington  
FEEST  
Food Lifeline  
Highline Public Schools, Nutrition Services  
Hunger Intervention Program (HIP)  
Northwest Harvest  
Nutrition First  
Nutrition Services Walla Walla Public Schools  
Orting Food Bank  
Skillman Consulting  
Sunrise Outreach Center of Yakima  
The Council on Aging & Human Services  
United Way of Pierce County  
University District Food Bank  
Washington Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition  
Washington Education Association  
Washington Food Coalition  
Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Washington State PTA  
Washington State School Directors' Association  
West Seattle Food Bank  
Yield to the King Ministry

**West Virginia**

AFT-Fayette  
American Friends Service Committee, West Virginia  
Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation  
West Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
West Virginia University - Food Justice Lab

**Wisconsin**

Ashwaubenon School District  
Blessings Community Food Pantry  
Community Action Partnership  
Community Thrift Store of Portage County  
CORE Community Resources  
Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin  
Feeding Wisconsin  
Hunger Task Force  
Lakeland Pantry / Howard Young Foundation  
Loaves & Fishes of the Fox Valley, Inc.  
Menominee Food Distribution Program  
School District of Holmen  
School District of Superior  
School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin  
Shawano Area Food Pantry and Resource Center  
St. Patrick's Pantry  
The Good Will Place  
The Salvation Army of Manitowoc  
Westfield School District  
Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice  
Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance