

**FEED KIDS.  
SOLVE HUNGER.**

**SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL.**

# ENDING STUDENT HUNGER IS ON THE TABLE



## School Meals for All is the Solution.

When kids are hungry at school, they cannot learn. Hungry kids cannot concentrate, have lower academic achievement, suffer cognitive and developmental impairments, exhibit more behavioral problems, have more absences, visit the nurse more often, and are at higher risk of obesity.

Food insecurity is a crisis with health, educational, and economic consequences, leaving children particularly vulnerable to the long-term impact. Rates of food insecurity among children in Massachusetts were already too high in our state prior to the COVID-19 pandemic at 1 in 10. Now more than 1 in 5 households with children report difficulty affording enough to eat, with Black and Latinx families disproportionately impacted.

**School meals for all is a necessary step toward ending hunger in our state and ensuring all our children can thrive.**

**27%** of food insecure children are not eligible for free or reduced-price school meals

**School Meals for All would increase participation in school meals by up to **50,000 students****

# FAQS

## How can we address this problem for kids?

We can ensure that, while at school, every child is fed and ready to learn by passing legislation for school meals for all.

Before the pandemic, less than half of low-income students ate both breakfast and lunch daily. Because cost and stigma are two of the major barriers to students accessing the meals they need at school, state legislation requiring universal free school meals in Massachusetts would allow every student to access the nutrition they need during the school day. Schools that have utilized federal programs to provide universal school meals have seen higher participation by removing these barriers and guaranteeing every child has greater access to school meals.

## What does school meals for all mean?

School meals for all, or universal school meals, would allow every student in Massachusetts who wants or needs a school breakfast or lunch to receive it – at no cost to their family and with no requirement to sign up or provide income or other information. Just as no student is required to pay fees at public schools when they enter the classroom, there should be no financial barrier in the school cafeteria.

## Why now?

As a result of flexibilities granted in response to the pandemic, every student in Massachusetts has access to free school meals. The focus has turned from income verifications and paperwork to simply ensuring

that every child has the nutrition that they need. This barrier was temporarily removed at the federal level because this crisis put a spotlight on the need to ensure the right to the most basic of necessities – food – for all kids.

As we work toward recovery from this crisis and beyond, we cannot let this barrier go back up. We have an opportunity to ensure that all students continue to receive the nutrition they need while they are in school – ending stigma, supporting school nutrition programs, and encouraging success for Massachusetts students.

## How would school meals for all work?

All eligible schools would be required to enroll in available federal programs that provide funding for school meals. The Commonwealth would cover the remaining cost so that schools can offer meals to all without requiring families to contribute a copay.

## How can I get involved?

To pass School Meals for All, we need to need to build a grassroots movement, raise awareness, and grow political will. We can't do that without you. Your voice and unique perspective have immense power to influence state level legislation. Join our coalition. Write and call your legislators and tell them to prioritize School Meals for All. Tell your friends to join. Get the word out by posting on social media and emailing your network. When we all take action together, we can make Massachusetts a better place for our kids.

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Learn more at [feedkidsma.org](https://feedkidsma.org) or email [ActionTeam@projectbread.org](mailto:ActionTeam@projectbread.org)

**Coalition Members:** Project Bread | Action for Boston Community Development | Alliance for Business Leadership | Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs | American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts Chapter | American Heart Association | Backyard Growers | Bay State Milling | Boston Food Access Council | Boston Mayor's Office of Food Access | Boston Public Schools, Food & Nutrition Services | Brookline Food Pantry | Catholic Charities Worcester County | Children's HealthWatch | City Fresh Foods | Commonwealth Kitchen | Cradles to Crayons | Daily Table | East Boston Neighborhood Health Center | East Boston Social Centers | El Buen Samaritano | Food Bank of Western Mass | Family Health Center of Worcester | Food for Free | Food Research and Action Center, DC | FoodCorps | Friendly House | Genuine Foods | Greater Boston Food Bank | Groundwork Lawrence | Hope Church Sharon | Island Grown Initiative | ISpyWithMyLittleEye | Jewish Family & Children's Service | Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action | Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry | Massachusetts Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs Inc | Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law & Justice | Massachusetts Association of Health and Hospitals | Massachusetts Farm to School | Massachusetts Food System Collaborative | Massachusetts Healthy School Lunch Coalition | Massachusetts Law Reform Institute | MassGeneral Hospital for Children | Mei Mei Restaurant | Merrimack Valley Food Bank | Metropolitan Area Planning Council | Milford Public Schools | Mill City Grows | Mutual Aid Brookline | National Association of Social Workers Massachusetts Chapter | Partners in Health | Pioneer Valley Regional School District | Provincetown Schools | Revere on the Move | Salem Public Schools | School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts | Share Our Strength | Sharon Interfaith Action | State Street Bank | Strategies for Children | Sutton Public Schools | Temple Beth David | Temple Beth Shalom | Temple Hillel B'nai Torah | Temple Sinai of Sharon | The Family Pantry of Cape Cod | The Food Project | The Open Door, Gloucester | United South End Settlements | United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley | Worcester County Food Bank