

# States Can Secure Healthy School Meals for All Students



American Heart Association.

American Heart Association.



**Federal child nutrition waivers passed during the pandemic decreased child hunger and poverty, allowing all students to have access to free school meals. That funding has expired, and now children who depended on it are going hungry again.**

States are stepping up to fill in the gap and ensure that all children, regardless of family income, can obtain healthy meals throughout the year and have the best chance to learn and thrive in school. California, Colorado, Maine, and Vermont have already passed legislation to ensure no child goes hungry. We can be next!



## Healthy School Meals for All



### COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY

Food insufficiency dropped by 14% among students who participated in the National School Lunch Program's free or reduced-priced lunch meals.<sup>1</sup>



### PROMOTE GOOD NUTRITION

Students who eat school lunches tend to take in more whole grains, vegetables, and dairy and fewer refined sugars and empty calories than those who bring their lunches from home.<sup>2</sup>



### ENSURE ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Students who have more nutritious diets tend to perform better and pay more attention in school.<sup>3</sup>



### STRENGTHEN SCHOOL BUDGETS

Participation by all students in school meal programs increases when meals are provided for free, resulting in increased revenue by way of federal reimbursements.<sup>4</sup>

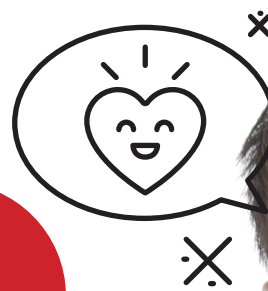


### STREAMLINE SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Healthy School Meals for All will eliminate issues of unpaid school meal debt and reduce administrative paperwork, freeing up school nutrition staff to focus on feeding kids.<sup>4</sup>

## Take Action

**All children deserve access to healthy school meals. Let's make sure schools can provide them with all the tools they need to be successful in class. Act now to ensure Healthy School Meals for All.**



### SOURCES

1. Huang J, Barnidge E. Low-income children's participation in the National School Lunch Program and household food insufficiency. *Soc Sci Med.* 2016; 150:8-14. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.12.020.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture; Food and Nutrition Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture; Food and Nutrition Services. School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study. April 2019. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-nutrition-and-meal-cost-study>. Accessed April 13, 2020.
3. Lott M, Miller L, Arm K, Story M. Rapid Health Impact Assessment on USDA Proposed Changes to School Nutrition Standards. March 2020. <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/research/rapid-health-impact-assessment-on-usdaproposed-changes-to-school-nutrition-standards>. Accessed April 6, 2020.
4. <https://fullplates.org/schoolmealsforall>