

President Joseph R. Biden
Vice President Kamala D. Harris
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

June 23, 2021

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris,

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 Food Bank Association
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