

Hungry kids can't learn

it's time to fund healthy school meals for all

to ensure that more Illinois schools are hunger-free, and to support our kids to grow, learn, and thrive.

HB 2365 / SB 1419



In 2023, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed into law, the **Healthy School Meals for All** program (Public Act 103-0532), which reimburses schools that provide all students with free, healthy meals. **Amidst federal threats and rising costs for working families, funding the program is more urgent than ever.**



\$67.2 million annually:

Covers schools with at least 40% students from families with low incomes

- This funding level would continue the reality of school meal stigma and food and nutrition disparities in ~29% of Illinois schools
- \$216 million would be needed to support all Illinois schools to provide free meals to all students



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\$500M+ FROM WASHINGTON

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NEARLY ONE MILLION MORE IL KIDS WON'T GO HUNGRY!

At a time when affordability is a growing concern, free school meals remain a dependable way to ensure every child has a nutritious meal.

Free school meals are more than a response to the gaps in access to food created by cuts to programs like SNAP and other federal programs. They are **an immediate solution to hunger**, a component of child wellness, and in turn, an investment in our future.



“HUNGER DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE,

Our busiest days are Fridays and Mondays, because our food-insecure students are making sure they get food before and after the weekend. Let that sink in. Our kids need and deserve this funding.”

-Shelly Wuellner,

School Food Service Director in Illinois



Free school meals support Illinois by saving families money.

- Free school meals are estimated to **save families \$850 - \$1,200 per child, per year.**
- 32% of Illinois children facing food insecurity do not qualify** for free or reduced-priced meals.



Black and Latine/x children are twice as likely to experience food insecurity as white children. Free school meals for all can reduce disparities.



Students’ food security, health, well-being, and academic performance can all be improved through access to free school meals.

Our Network of Partners:

- ACT Now
- Action for Healthy Kids
- Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago
- American Diabetes Association
- American Heart Association
- Bread for the World
- Center for Science in the Public Interest
- Chef Ann Foundation
- Chicago Food Policy Action Council
- Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)
- Cook County Department of Public Health
- Feeding Illinois
- Greater Chicago Food Depository
- Healthy Schools Campaign
- Illinois Alliance to Promote Opportunities for Health
- Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA)
- Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
- Illinois Education Association (IEA)
- Illinois Farm to School Network/Seven Generations Ahead
- Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT)
- Illinois Public Health Institute
- Illinois School Nutrition Association
- Illinois State Alliance of YMCAs
- Illinois Stewardship Alliance
- Legal Action Chicago
- Loyola Medicine
- Mission Readiness, Illinois
- Northern Illinois Food Bank
- POWER-PAC IL
- Society of Latinx Nurses
- The Montessori School of Englewood



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ILLINOIS ALLIANCE TO
**PROMOTE
 OPPORTUNITIES
 FOR HEALTH**

The Illinois Alliance to Promote Opportunities for Health is convened by Illinois Public Health Institute.

Sources: <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SchoolMealsForAll.pdf> | <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/bbsm-fact-sheet.pdf> | https://cdc.gov/school-nutrition/school-meals/?CDC_AAref_Val= | <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IEG-26.pdf> | <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/child/illinois> | <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047272725000891?via%3Dihub> | <https://www.wvlp.com/news/state-politics/rep-free-school-meals-saving-families-1200-a-year> | <https://frac.org/blog/healthy-school-meals-for-all-advances-racial-equity> | <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/child-hunger-facts> | [https://www.thecentersquare.com/illinois/article_454a202b-0fd0-4ffc-b41c-17c36019658e.html#:~:text=\(The%20Center%20Square\)%20%E2%80%93%20State,to%20qualify%20in%20that%2040%25](https://www.thecentersquare.com/illinois/article_454a202b-0fd0-4ffc-b41c-17c36019658e.html#:~:text=(The%20Center%20Square)%20%E2%80%93%20State,to%20qualify%20in%20that%2040%25)