



**SCHOOL
NUTRITION
ASSOCIATION**

School Nutrition Advocacy Efforts

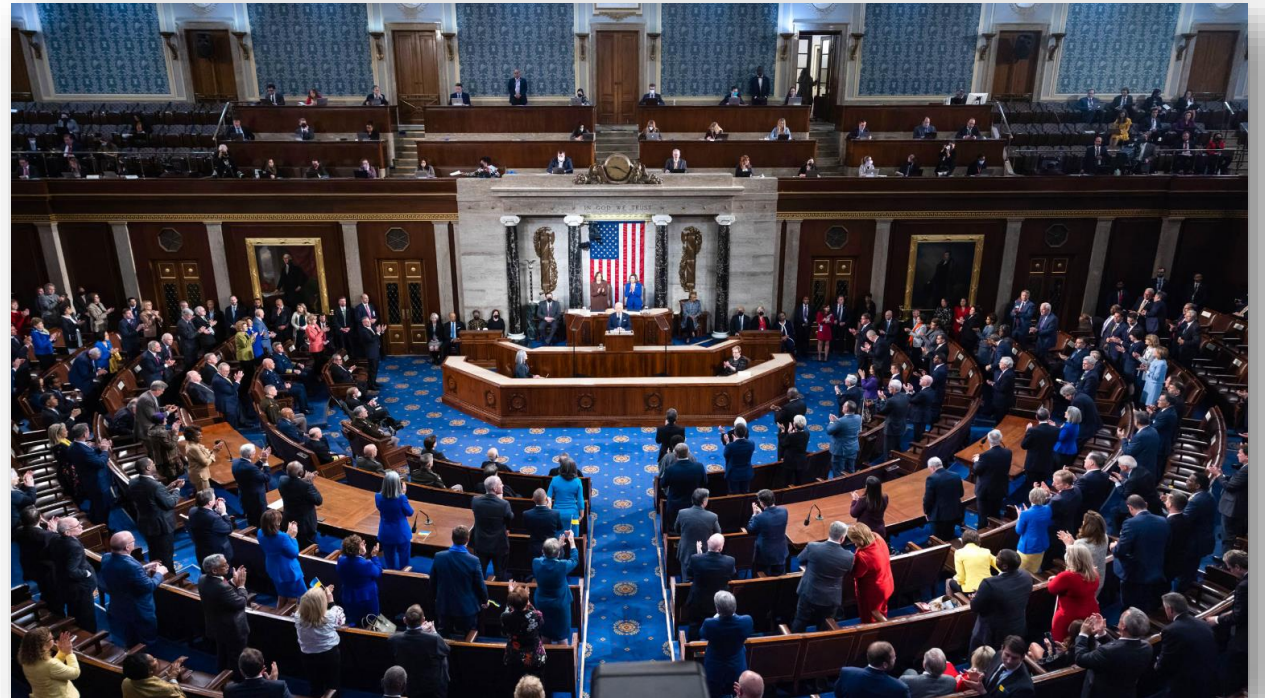


118th Congress

Congressional Expectations

Focus:

- Appropriations
- Cyber-safety
- Energy policy and infrastructure
- National security





2024 Presidential Elections

Republicans



Binkley



Desantis



Haley



Trump

Democrats



Biden



Phillips



Uygur



Williamson

Third party



Kennedy



Stein



West

Dropped out



Burgum



Christie



Elder



Hurd



Hutchinson



Johnson



Pence



Ramaswamy



Scott



Suarez

118th Congress Bills

HR 1424

HR 1269

HR 2567

HR 1168

S 1684

S 568/HR 3204

Subject Areas:

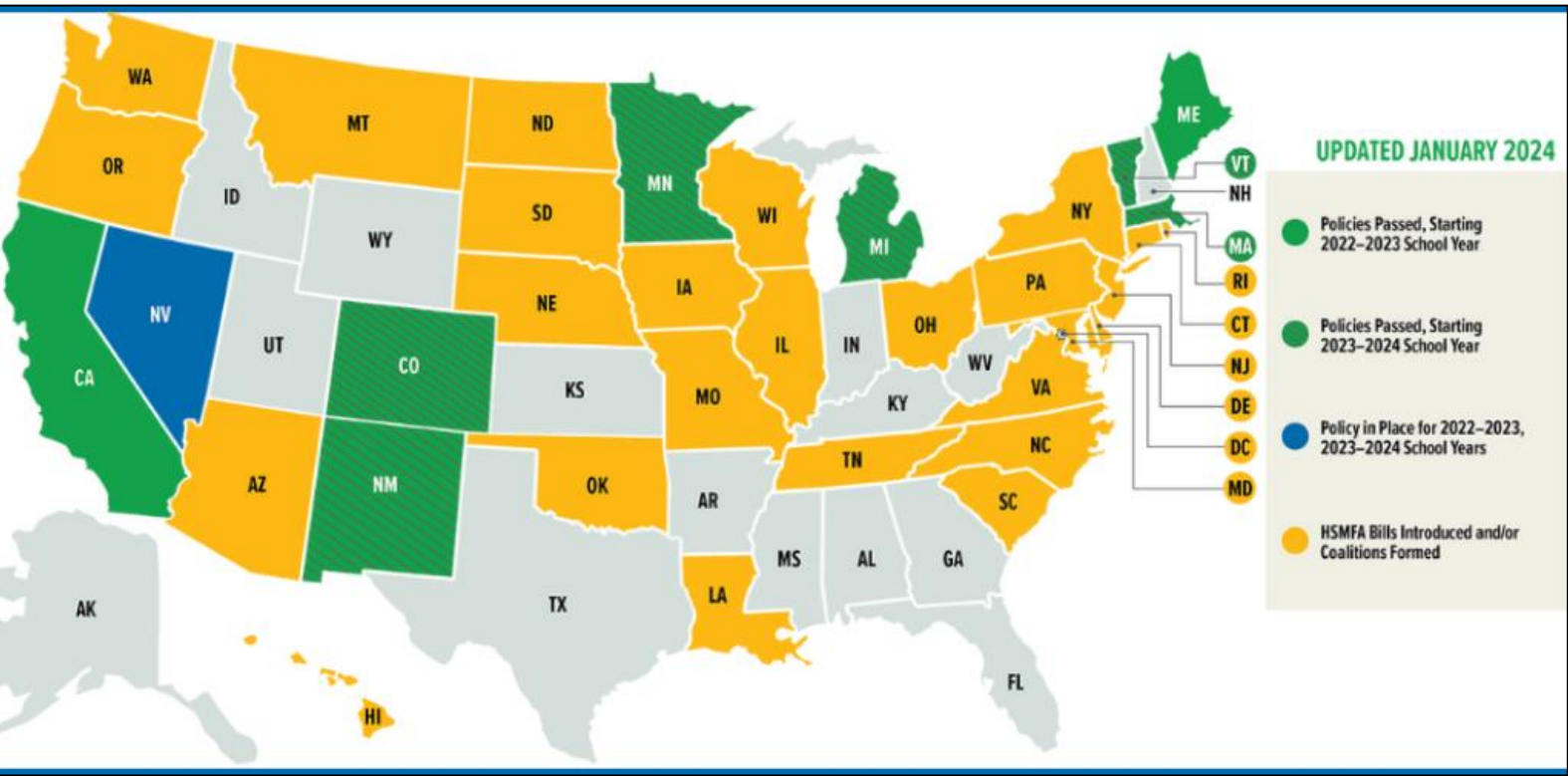
Increased reimbursements

Universal Meals

Expanding CEP

Paid Lunch Equity

\$ for purchase of delivery
vehicles



Healthy School Meals for All: Successful State Strategies ⓘ

Overview

DESCRIPTION

WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS®

May 24, 2023

Since federal waivers for meals at no cost have expired, many states have taken legislative and non-legislative measures to ensure children continue to benefit from healthy school meals. Every state is different and the strategies that succeed in one may not work in another. In this session, 5 seasoned school nutrition advocates from California, Colorado, Maine, Maryland and Pennsylvania will share lessons learned in their communities. They will discuss how to design an effective advocacy strategy, relationship and coalition building, how to craft legislative language and how to leverage your advocacy efforts when the response is not what you expected.

States Push for Meals at No Cost

NEWS

SNA Survey Finds School Meal Programs at a Perilous Juncture

📅 January 9, 2024



Virtually all respondents (99.3%) reported challenges with increasing costs (83.9% indicated costs are a significant challenge).



The survey also revealed persistent procurement problems in the K-12 market. These findings are particularly worrying given [proposed federal nutrition standards](#).



Survey data shows that offering free school meals can help boost meal participation and benefit students.



www.schoolnutrition.org/PositionPaper



SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION 2024 Position Paper

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

2024 POSITION PAPER

School meals are an essential investment in the future of America's children. They are [crucial](#) to boost academic achievement, improve student behavior and health, and combat food insecurity and obesity. School meal programs are at a perilous juncture since Congress has allowed critical federal assistance to lapse while financial, operational and complex regulatory challenges escalate. To ensure the long-term sustainability of school meal programs, the non-profit School Nutrition Association (SNA) urges Congress to:

- **Permanently increase federal reimbursement rates for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program (NSLP/SBP) by 40 cents per lunch and 15 cents per breakfast.** In a recent [SNA survey](#) of school meal program directors, virtually all (99.3%) reported challenges with increasing costs and fewer than 1 in 5 indicated the current reimbursement rate is sufficient to cover the cost of producing a lunch. Critical assistance for historically underfunded school meal programs is expiring; the loss of [New York State](#) reimbursements in July 2023, combined with the end of [Special Child Assistance Funds](#) in September 2024, will force many districts to tap education funds to cover meal program losses. When asked about the financial sustainability of their programs in just three years, 91.6% of directors flagged concerns. Increased reimbursements are crucial to cover costs, enhance menus and support hiring and retention, as 90.5% of programs report challenges with staffing shortages.
- **Ensure USDA maintains the current, successful school nutrition standards, rather than implementing additional rules.** [Research](#) shows students eat their healthiest meals at school, thanks to current [nutrition standards](#) which already limit calories, fat and sodium and require fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat milk in meals. In School Year 2023-24, schools made additional sodium reductions and most [increased](#) scratch preparation (32.6%) and locally grown foods (35.6%) on menus. Regardless of these efforts and despite a lack of any nutrition mandates for dining or retail foods, USDA has [proposed](#) even more restrictive, long-term school mandates that fail to account for known challenges, including palatability and student acceptance, as well as availability and pricing of prescriptive foods formulated solely for schools. Confronted with skilled labor shortages, insufficient reimbursements and increasingly complex rules, many schools will be forced to rely on highly processed foods to meet additional mandates. Over 93% of school nutrition program directors have [expressed](#) concerns about proposed further sodium cuts and new milk and added sugar mandates. To keep students eating healthy school meals, USDA must support school nutrition professionals in their continued efforts to maintain the current, successful standards.
- **Expand NSLP/SBP to offer healthy school meals for all students at no charge.** School districts that offer free meals to all, through state initiatives or the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), have [reported](#) a variety of successes, including decreased stigma for low-income students as well as increased school meal participation and operational efficiencies. Of school meal programs that must now charge students for meals following the end of pandemic waivers, 92.8% report challenges with unpaid meal debt. Congress should ensure every student has equal access to nutritious school meals that support their academic achievement. SNA also supports federal and state proposals to advance this goal, including eliminating the reduced-price category and increasing the CEP multiplier.

Resources

Review and utilize the following resources to maximize your conference experience and make the most of your time in the nation's capital. Check back later for other valuable tools coming soon!

[SNA 2024 Position Paper](#)

Utilize the following resources to advocate for SNA's [2024 Position Paper](#) requests!

- [Reimbursement fact sheet](#)
- [Standards fact sheet](#)
- [Meals for all fact sheet](#)
- [Talking points](#)
- [Infographic \(coming soon\)](#)
- [Customizable social posts \(coming soon\)](#)

[District Profile Worksheet \(Coming soon!\)](#)

Download, print and complete a district profile sheet for each of your schools so that you have your relevant information ready to share with your lawmakers!

[SNA Advocacy Toolkit](#)



Permanently increase federal school meal reimbursements by 40 cents/lunch and 15 cents/breakfast:

- Higher food and labor costs are squeezing school meal program budgets.
- Additional funds from Congress and USDA helped our program during the pandemic, but this support is ending, and financial pressures show no signs of easing.
- Congress must increase reimbursements to account for the uniquely high cost of operating K-12 programs and procuring specialty foods.
- Our programs require more expensive low-sodium and whole grain foods, and given staff shortages, we need to increase wages to compete with local restaurants and other businesses.
- School meal program losses will cut into education budgets, limiting funds for learning, and jeopardize our ongoing efforts to improve menus.

Ensure USDA maintains current, successful nutrition standards, rather than implementing additional, unachievable rules:



- Research shows children eat their healthiest meals at school, since school meals offer fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat milk.
- In April, USDA will release even more restrictive, long-term school nutrition rules, despite a lack of any nutrition mandates for dining or retail foods.
- USDA's proposed rules don't account for challenges with the cost and availability of highly specialized K-12 menu options and our capacity to meet additional nutrition rules.
- We also know that some food-insecure children will choose not to eat at all if the meal is not familiar or appetizing to them.
- To keep students eating healthy school meals, USDA & Congress should help us maintain current standards.

Offer healthy school meals for all students at no charge:



If your program must charge for meals:

- Since the end of pandemic waivers that allowed us to serve all our students free meals, we've seen too many students go without.
- Many families that don't qualify for free school meals are still struggling to make ends meet.
- Application forms only collect income data and don't account for expenses like medical bills or rent increases.
- Eliminating the free and reduced-price meal application process ensures no child goes hungry at school or feels ashamed to take a healthy meal.

If your program offers free meals to all:

- Our district is fortunate to be able to offer free meals to all our students and we have seen numerous benefits.
- Hungry children live in every community across the country and all students deserve equal access to free school meals.
- *If asked about the cost of universal:*
 - The Congressional Budget Office has not provided a cost estimate, but ensuring America's children are nourished and ready to learn is invaluable.

HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL COALITION

The time for nationwide Healthy School Meals for All is now.



Take Action

www.schoolnutrition.org/takeaction



Urge Congress to Authorize Universal School Meals!

Urge Congress to support S.1568 and H.R.3204! The Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023 has been introduced in both Chambers of Congress by Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN-05). SNA has advocated for key provisions in this bill, including...



Share Your Story: Loss of Federal Funds

The loss of federal funding in the amount of 40 cents for each lunch served and 15 cents for each breakfast, has left school meal programs facing a brewing financial crisis. Labor shortages,...



Support Critical Funding for School Meals

Urge Congress to support H.R. 1269, Healthy Meals Help Kids Learn Act, and H.R. 1424, Helping Schools Feed Kids Act, which provide critical federal funds to ensure the long term sustainability of school meal programs to benefit students. When the Keep Kids Fed Act expired,...



SNA 2023 Position Paper - Urge Congress to Act

Sign Up for Alerts

Enter your information below to sign up.



Look Up Your Legislator

Elected Officials Candidates



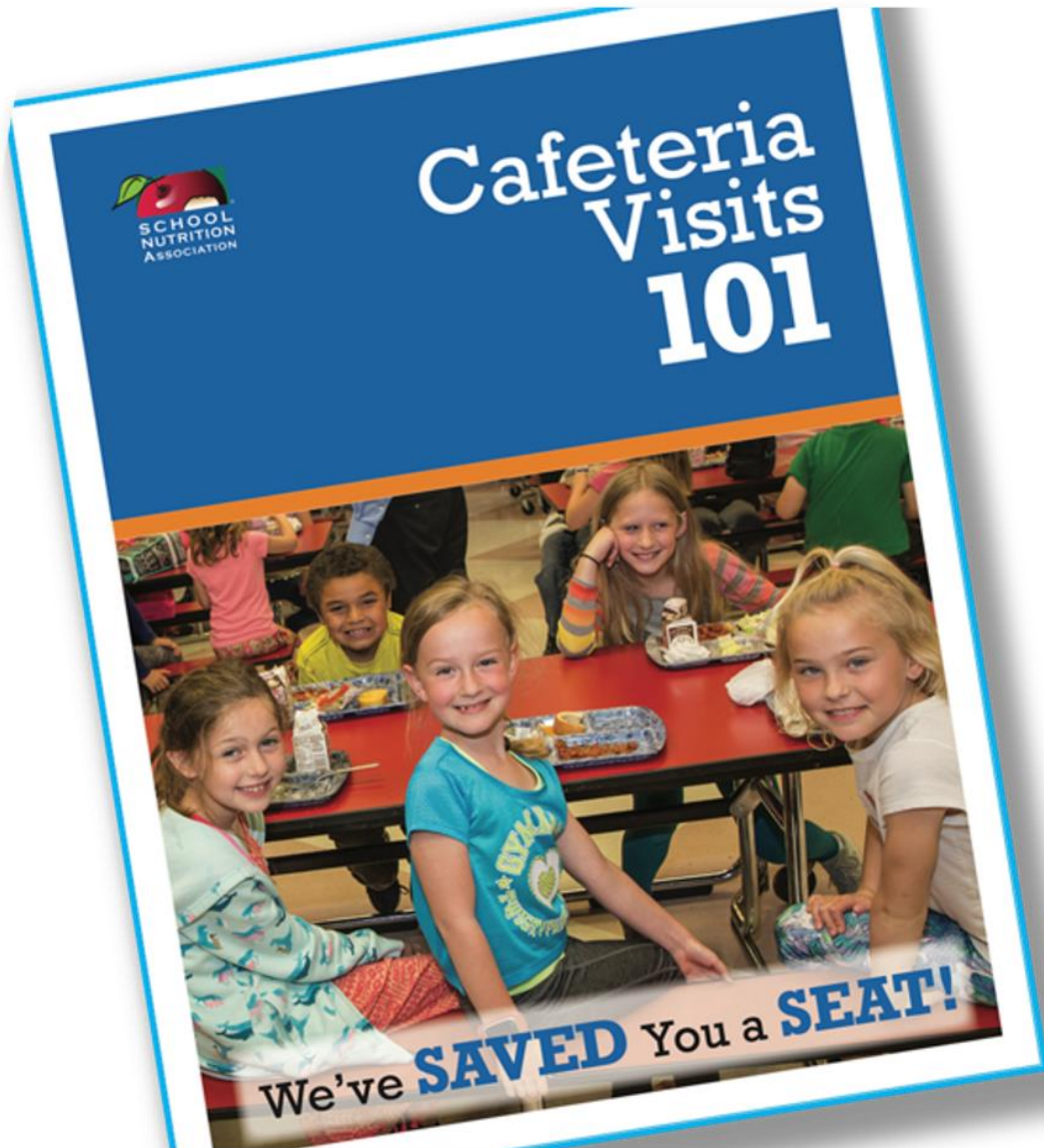
Find Legislation

View and search for legislation.



[View key legislation](#)

Invite Your Legislators to your Cafeteria!



- A complete guide, from start to finish on how to invite and host a cafeteria site visit
- Step by step instructions for staff
- Contains tips and examples
- Includes helpful checklists
- Lists other useful resources





LAC 20
24

LEGISLATIVE
ACTION CONFERENCE

MARCH 3-5, 2024 | WASHINGTON, D.C.

Overview

DESCRIPTION

WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS®

February 14, 2024

Join experienced school nutrition advocates to discuss the SNA 2024 Position Paper. Gain insider tips for advocating on behalf of school meal programs at the 2024 Legislative Action Conference (#LAC24) and throughout the year! All members are encouraged to participate– especially those attending LAC.

[Learn more about LAC here!](#)

February 14, 2024

Wed 3:00 PM EST 🕒

DURATION 1H 15M

You can access this item by
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\$0.00 - \$49.00

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Prepare for 2024 Advocacy Success!

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discover how SNA's policy positions are formed.
- Review the SNA 2024 Position Paper and accompanying resources.
- Identify tools and strategies to enhance your messaging and increase the impact of your school meal advocacy efforts.