



Nourishing Futures for Every Student

Policy Recommendations from FoodCorps
to the White House Conference on Hunger,
Nutrition, and Health



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About

FoodCorps partners with schools and communities to nourish children's health, education, and sense of belonging so that every child, in every school, experiences the joy and power of food. Our AmeriCorps members serve alongside educators and school nutrition leaders to provide children with nourishing meals, food education, and culturally affirming experiences with food that celebrate and nurture the whole child. Building on this direct service, FoodCorps advocates for policy change, grows networks, and develops leaders in service of every child's health and well-being.

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Cover: Students water plants in a school garden with FoodCorps Service Member Jamisha Williams.

Above: A group of students holds up freshly harvested carrots from their school garden.

Executive Summary

The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health is convening in September 2022. The last conference on this topic, held in 1969, resulted in important policies like WIC and the significant expansion of SNAP and school meal programs. The upcoming conference could determine the next several decades of nutrition policy, which makes now a critical time to elevate issues that matter most.

Food education, school meals for all, school kitchen infrastructure, and a talent pipeline prioritizing Black, Indigenous, Multiracial, and People of Color (BIMPOC) professionals in these fields are key in nourishing every child's health, education, and sense of belonging at school, especially for children of color, who face health and education inequities. These policy recommendations guide this impactful work, and create opportunities for academic, nutritional, and social-emotional development for every child.

This report is the product of listening sessions with education and nutrition leaders from across the country who work to feed and teach our children every day, and bring the unique lived experience of navigating the landscape created by these policies.

FoodCorps listened to these grassroots leaders and built out four core recommendations to improve access to nutritious foods, empower healthy choices through education, and close the disparities surrounding them due to systemic oppression. This report shares and highlights the perspectives of school and community partners, and is rooted in FoodCorps' decade of experience as an implementation partner in urban, rural, and Indigenous school communities across the country.

Below we have outlined our policy recommendations, legislative actions, and administrative requests in alignment with the White House Conference pillars. We hope to see these essential policies show up in the Administration's strategies for ending hunger, supporting child nutrition, and eliminating health disparities.

Policy Recommendation	White House Pillars	Legislative Action	Administrative Action
Prioritize food and nutrition education resources as an investment in our children's health and well-being by placing dedicated food educators in schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar 1: Improve food access and affordability • Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health • Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act of 2021 (S. 1421, H.R. 4282) 	The USDA, Ed, and CDC should create an inter-agency task force to support school meals as an integral part of the school day.
Provide school meals for all and allow school nutrition professionals to focus on feeding children, not doing paperwork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar 1: Improve food access and affordability • Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress should fully support and fund school meals for all American children, removing the income test and burdensome paperwork on a permanent basis. • Congress should increase the reimbursement rate for meals to account for increased costs due to market and supply chain disruptions. • Kids Eat Local Act of 2021 (S. 1401, H.R. 2896) 	The USDA should conduct a study about the benefits of school meals for all during the waivers in order to build a strong case for this policy to be made permanent.
Invest in school kitchen equipment upgrades, school gardens, and scratch cooking resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health • Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices • Pillar 4: Support physical activity for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Food Modernization Act (S. 876, H.R. 4379) 	The USDA should create an incentive program for excellence in school nutrition innovation, including monetary awards to districts prioritizing culturally relevant menus, student feedback, integrated nutrition education, scratch cooking, and local purchasing.
Create a talent pipeline to ensure our nation's schools are attracting the next generation of school nutrition and food education leaders who reflect the cultures and identities of the communities they serve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health • Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices 		The USDA should partner with national, state, Tribal, and local organizations to promote and incentivize career development in school nutrition and food education, with an emphasis on Black, Indigenous, Multiracial, and People of Color (BIMPOC) leaders working in their communities.

A Letter from FoodCorps' Leadership



Curt Ellis is the co-founder and CEO of FoodCorps, and a member of a Task Force of diverse stakeholders informing the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health convened by Tufts University, World Central Kitchen, and other partners.



Dr. Robert S. Harvey is the President of FoodCorps, a Pahara Institute Fellow, a former superintendent, school leader and educator, and co-author of the book *Teaching as Protest: Emancipating Classrooms through Racial Consciousness*.

Dear President Biden,

Under your leadership, the White House is convening a Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. This is the first gathering of its kind in more than 50 years, and its ambition is to set the course for our nation's food policy for the rest of the decade. What, in our view, is at stake? Joy and justice for our children.

The reality is stark: our food system discriminates. Amid the systemic racism and structural poverty that deepened during COVID, food insecurity rates for Black households rose to nearly 22%—triple the level of white homes. The impacts of hunger and health disparities will not end as the pandemic fades. Research shows that children who suffer from nutrition insecurity or diet-related disease attain less education, experience more sick days, progress less in their careers, are forced out of the workforce earlier, and die younger, with fewer of their dreams fulfilled.

To shift this trajectory and see food become a part of what bends the arc toward justice for the children who are counting on us, schools are the clear place to focus our attention. There are seven times more school cafeterias than there are McDonald's in America, making schools our largest—and most influential—restaurant chain. Schools are where children spend half their waking hours and eat sometimes half their daily nourishment.

But if we approach food policy right, we have a chance to do more than nourish children's bodies. We can nourish their minds and hearts, too. Teaching children about food in hands-on, experiential ways like school gardens and cooking lessons is a powerful way to reinforce academic concepts and instill values of environmental stewardship. Mealtime is a chance to explore another culture or feel celebrated for one's own, and a pause during a busy day to build community, nurture social skills, and connect across lines of difference. And school meals, sourced from local and BIPOC producers, are an engine for sustainable local economic development, building health and wealth in our communities. Food is far more than fuel—it's the most under-utilized tool in the pencil box.

The time is now to imagine and advance a food policy agenda that can create a future where every child, in every school, experiences the joy and power of food. The details of what that agenda looks like are in this report.

The upcoming White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health is a critical opportunity to build a food system that takes care of our children by nourishing their health, education, and sense of belonging. Mr. President, we are grateful for your leadership bringing this watershed moment to fruition. May we make the most of its potential.

With hope,

Curt Ellis and **Dr. Robert S. Harvey**

White House Conference Pillars

As a guide to the 2022 Conference, the White House provided five conference pillars to help identify actions that can be taken by all parts of society — including the federal government; local, state, territory, and Tribal governments; nonprofit and community groups; and private companies. The White House is especially interested in actions that will help eliminate disparities and support the diverse range of individuals and communities that are impacted by hunger and diet-related diseases, including communities of color, rural communities, people with disabilities, older adults, LGBTQI+ people, military families, and military veterans. Here are the five pillars:



Pillar 1: Improve food access and affordability: End hunger by making it easier for everyone — including urban, suburban, rural, and Tribal communities — to access and afford food. For example, expand eligibility for and increase participation in food assistance programs and improve transportation to places where food is available.



Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health: Prioritize the role of nutrition and food security in overall health, including disease prevention and management, and ensure that our healthcare system addresses the nutrition needs of all people.



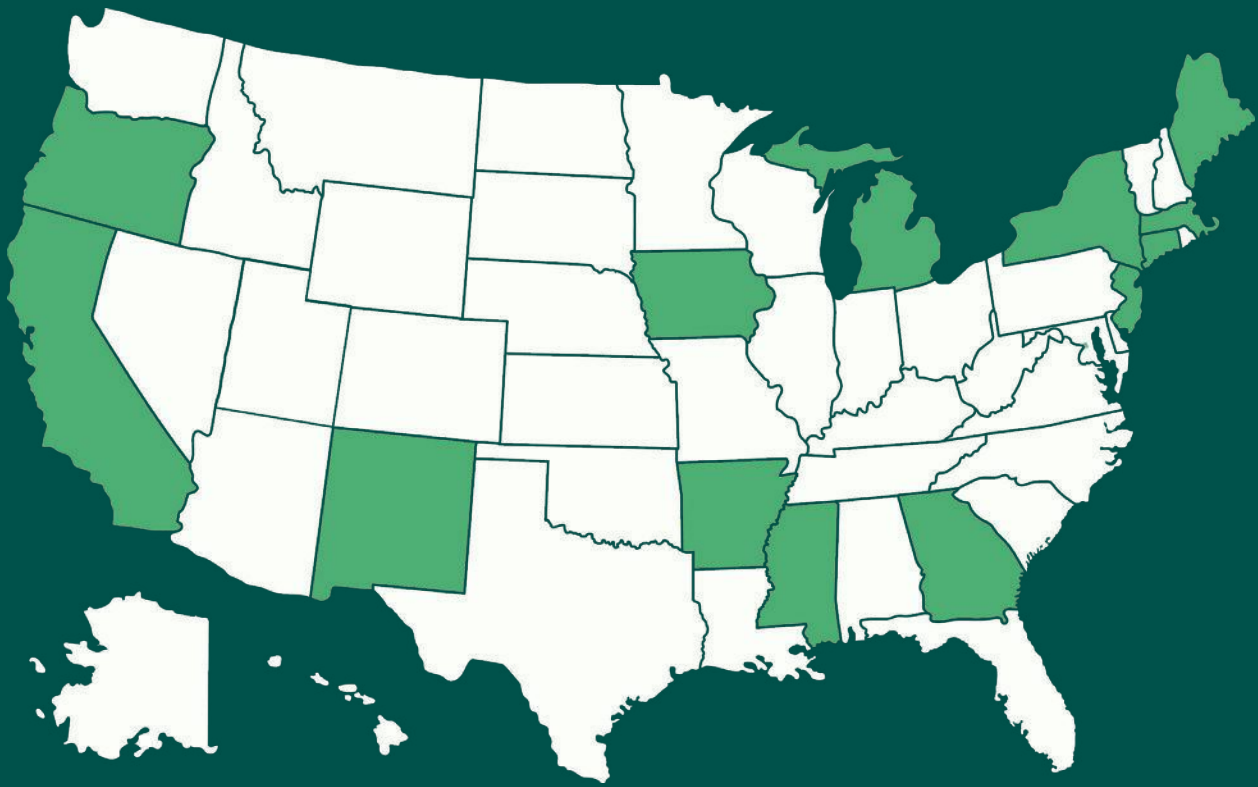
Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices: Foster environments that enable all people to easily make informed healthy choices, increase access to healthy food, encourage healthy workplace and school policies, and invest in public messaging and education campaigns that are culturally appropriate and resonate with specific communities.



Pillar 4: Enhance nutrition and food security research: Improve nutrition metrics, data collection, and research to inform nutrition and food security policy, particularly on issues of equity, access, and disparities.



Pillar 5: Support physical activity for all: Make it easier for people to be more physically active (in part by ensuring that everyone has access to safe places to be active), increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity, and conduct research on and measure physical activity.



FoodCorps Listening Sessions

In preparation for the 2022 Conference, which will be held in September, FoodCorps hosted three regional listening sessions to highlight partners working in schools and communities delivering school meals and hands-on food education. Spotlighting these individuals, who work hard every day to keep children well-nourished and educated, is key to this report and it is their perspectives, along with those of the students, families and caregivers who count on our nation's school meal programs that should most strongly inform the broader policy agenda crafted by the Administration.

The listening sessions are essential to underscoring everyday experiences of food education and school nutrition stakeholders across the nation and determining what government solutions could look like based on these experiences. The goal of the process was to learn from grassroots voices and ensure lived experience is at the core of our recommendations.

To ensure geographic diversity, FoodCorps chose to convene three listening sessions groups in the Eastern, Western, and Central-South regions. Small groups ensured robust participation and ample opportunity for participants to detail specific stories, recommendations, and lived experiences. The overwhelming majority of participants identify as BIMPOC.

FoodCorps synthesized all that was shared during the listening sessions, along with our decade of direct experience in food education and school nutrition, into four core recommendations to improve access to nutritious foods, empower healthy choices through education, and advance equity through food. This report shares and highlights the perspectives of school and community partners.

FoodCorps Service Member Diego Alonso teaches an interactive lesson where students learn how different foods give their bodies energy, grow strong, and stay healthy.



FoodCorps Recommendation 1

Prioritize food and nutrition education resources as an investment in our children's health and well-being by placing dedicated food educators in schools.

For over a decade, FoodCorps has experienced how hands-on food and nutrition education changes students' relationship with food. Embedding nutrition education into the school day serves as both a short-term and long-term investment in our children's health and well-being. Food educators play a critical role in schools by teaching children about where food comes from, how to grow and prepare a variety of foods, the benefits of trying new foods, like fruits and veggies, and the importance of food in our history and cultures.

Food educators can increase children's consumption of nourishing foods. According to a Columbia Teachers College study on the FoodCorps nutrition education model, students who receive more of FoodCorps' hands-on education eat up to three times as many fruits and vegetables as children who receive less of that education.¹

Food education can improve academic outcomes and support children's socioemotional development and wellness. Dedicated lessons on cooking and gardening that incorporate social and emotional learning can set children up for a lifetime of healthy habits.

FoodCorps recommends prioritizing food and nutrition education resources as an investment in our children's health and well-being by placing dedicated food educators in schools.

- **Congress should pass the Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act of 2021 (S. 1421, H.R. 4282):** This bill directs the USDA to establish a pilot program that will work to hire qualified, full-time staff to carry out food and nutrition education programs with the goal of improving student health and nutrition. The proposed pilot program will also award grants for projects that fund school gardens or other evidence-based interventions relating to student health and nutrition to create hands-on learning opportunities for students.
- **The USDA, Ed, and CDC** should create an inter-agency task force to support meals and food education as an integral part of the school day.

¹ Koch P, Wolf R, Graziose M, Gray HL, Trent R, and Uno C. FoodCorps: Creating Healthy School Environments. Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Program in Nutrition, Teachers College, Columbia University. February, 2017.

Recommendation 1

This recommendation supports three of the five White House Conference pillars: Improve food access and affordability, integrate nutrition and health, and empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices.

Food educators **improve food access and affordability** by forging relationships between school nutrition directors and local farmers who can supply healthy ingredients at scale, filling lunch trays with food from local farms, and educating children about food production in the process. The National School Lunch Program represents a \$10 billion annual market for farmers, daily nutrients for 32 million children, and an opportunity for sustainable economic development for communities.

"If our students aren't provided a variety of options, then they are not going to be healthy learners." - Heidi Sipe, Superintendent, OR

Nutrition education **integrates nutrition and health** into schools by giving children the tools to be stewards of their own health and well-being. Gardens, cooking classes, and cafeteria-based taste-tests are gateways to healthy eating and trying new foods. This is a skill that will last a lifetime.

"Teachers are seeing a ripple effect from garden and food education lessons in areas such as social-emotional skills and critical thinking."
- Shanon Morris, Executive Director, NY

Nutrition education also **empowers all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices** by teaching children about healthy food in a school garden, cafeteria, or classroom, enabling children and adults to use those skills and make healthy choices outside of school. Practicing healthy choices with our youth is a major catalyst for change down the line, saving healthcare dollars and ensuring fewer trips to the doctor, and easing the pressure on our healthcare system.

"In hospitals I saw that by the time that someone's in the hospital it's almost too late in some instances to start bringing nutrition education into their lives."
- Randall Mel, Food Services Director & Wellness Committee Chair, CT

Growing up on a mile long dirt road with my great grandparents living on a farm I was well aware of planting my own food, growing my own food, and harvesting my food, learning how to can and all of those wonderful things. But when I got in the school system, I realized that many of our kids had never had that experience before and it was an opportunity for me to be able to share some of my lived experiences with the young people that we serve on a day-to-day basis. We started out with only two of our schools doing school gardens and now all seven of our schools and our satellite school have garden programs within the school system. I think what gives me the joy for this particular position is seeing the change that it has in the students' attitudes about fresh fruits and vegetables and how when I go to summer camp, the kids are trying to get me to try the different things that they've grown.


– **A'Keti Mayweather**

District Wellness Coordinator, FoodCorps Site Supervisor, GA

Nutrition plays a huge role in all kinds of curricular areas...all of our school gardening that we do at schools where we don't have FoodCorps members is led by really passionate teachers...they're willing to do those side projects at recess...without them, this wouldn't happen...we need to get people to be really committed and dedicated.

– **Heidi Sipe**

Superintendent, OR

A photograph of a school cafeteria where a long line of students is seated at wooden tables, eating from trays. The students are diverse in age and ethnicity. In the background, a teacher or staff member in a green shirt is visible. The cafeteria has large windows and colorful decorations on the walls. A blue curved graphic element is at the bottom of the image.

Students eating colorful, nourishing school meals in a cafeteria.

FoodCorps Recommendation 2

Provide school meals for all and allow school nutrition professionals to focus on feeding children, not doing paperwork.

Just as we don't charge for textbooks and school bus rides, we should not charge students for something so vital as food. Access to school meals for all students is shown to reduce student stigma and relieve schools of administrative burdens. We advocate for school meals being available to all students at no charge, and served with time for children to eat and enjoy their meals. An environment that provides school meals for all can serve to destigmatize school meals, remove unnecessary barriers to access, support the financial security of school meal programs, and allow child nutrition professionals to focus on sourcing and serving healthy meals rather than track down paperwork.

FoodCorps recommends providing school meals for all, allowing school nutrition professionals to focus on feeding children, not doing paperwork.

- **Congress should fully support and fund school meals for all American children**, removing the income test and burdensome paperwork on a permanent basis.
- **Congress should increase the reimbursement rate for meals** to account for increased costs due to market and supply chain disruptions.
- **USDA should conduct a study about the benefits of school meals for all waivers** during the pandemic in order to build a strong case for this policy to be made permanent.
- **Congress should pass the Kids Eat Local Act of 2021** (S. 1401, H.R. 2896) to support farm to school efforts by making it easier for schools to source locally grown, locally raised and locally caught food and farm products for their meal programs.

This recommendation supports two of the five White House Conference pillars: Improve food access and affordability, integrate nutrition and health.

Providing school meals for all **improves food access and affordability** by ensuring that every student has the option to enjoy a healthy breakfast and lunch free of charge, regardless of their family income or background. In schools that have families with more socioeconomic resources, there are students who get left out. These students might be less likely to participate in the meal program without free meals for all, either because of stigma or because the process for signing up involves additional steps.

"I worked at a school district that had a very polarizing student population—my students were on the lower income end, but their friends were very high income. Although my students qualified for free and reduced lunch, they didn't want to participate, because they didn't want their friends to know...there was a stigma attached." - LaMonika Jones, Anti-Hunger & Child Nutrition Program Analyst, DC

School meals for all **integrates nutrition and health** by giving school nutrition staff more flexibility to prioritize food and not paperwork. School nutrition involves a huge amount of administrative work: outreach to families explaining how to apply for free or reduced meals, processing each application, and verifying that each student is assigned the right payment category per meal. Not only would school meals for all reduce this burden, it would also reduce administrative costs per meal, allowing more dollars to be spent on nourishing, locally sourced, scratch-cooked foods.

"If they could figure out a way to not have the application or the household surveys determine how funding sources are provided across the board, it would be wonderful because it is a burden for us to go out and collect these...our business administrators told us that districts could lose funding because they haven't submitted certain documents back...we bang on doors, go to churches, have back-to-school nights, but it is a huge burden on us every year."
- Warren De Shields, Director of Food Services, NJ

Our community has a lot of new immigrant families and a lot of them can't access services without fear or risk of influencing their immigration status and negatively impacting their applications...when we can just provide free meals for all children and take that barrier away, that's a welcoming environment for our new families and that's the type of community I want to welcome people into...it's really important for our children to be exposed to this huge variety of food because it's hard to go to the grocery store and not recognize anything. But when our children can become guides to their parents and help them see what's on the grocery store shelves and help them understand...it helps everyone appreciate living together in our community.

– **Heidi Sipe**

Superintendent, OR

We need to change the school meal program from a transactional process to being a part of the educational day. When we did this in West New York, we saw math classes figuring out how many seeds were on a strawberry, French classes were experimenting with making meals related to the culture, science classes were doing pickling projects and learning about fermentation. Through all of this, we were teaching children about food and better nutrition. That's how you will have a population that will be educated about nutrition and health.

– **Sal Valenza**

Regional Director, NJ

A school cafeteria staff member prepares lunch trays for students waiting in line.



FoodCorps Recommendation 3

Invest in school kitchen equipment upgrades, school gardens, and scratch cooking resources.

Almost 30 million children eat a school meal every day. Yet too many schools and districts have decades-old equipment or lack the basic kitchen infrastructure needed to efficiently process and prepare those meals. A Pew Charitable Trusts survey² found that many schools are relying on workarounds, such as more frequent deliveries of perishable items due to lack of cold storage, that are expensive, inefficient, and unsustainable.

We advocate for policies that increase funding for schools to upgrade and modernize their kitchen and cafeteria facilities to prepare healthy, appetizing meals.

FoodCorps recommends investing in school kitchen equipment upgrades, school gardens, and scratch cooking resources.

- **Congress should pass the School Food Modernization Act (S. 876, H.R. 4379):** This bill will help schools in need of updated kitchen equipment by authorizing a grant, loan guarantee, and technical assistance program. These methods of funding will help schools provide healthier meals to students across the country under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Approved funding will allow schools to purchase durable equipment, improve kitchen infrastructure, and train staff to make it easier for schools to deliver nourishing, fresh foods to their students.
- **The USDA should create an incentive program to recognize excellence in school nutrition innovation,** including monetary awards to districts prioritizing culturally relevant menus, student feedback, integrated nutrition education, scratch cooking, and local purchasing.

² <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2014/03/26/states-need-updated-school-kitchen-equipment-b>

Recommendation 3

This recommendation supports three of the five White House Conference pillars: **Integrate nutrition and health**, **empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices**, and **support physical activity for all**.

Investing in school infrastructure, resources and gardens directly **integrates nutrition and health** by enabling schools to more efficiently process and prepare meals, including more locally sourced ingredients, which often require additional preparation. Access to nutritious food has a positive impact on academic performance, attendance and behavior.

"The benefits from newer, upgraded equipment were mind-blowing. In addition to us being able to provide better, higher quality food...we also saw that once our students got something new and similar to what you will see on a college campus, their behavior changed because they had a nicer environment to eat in."

- Kevin Frank, Assistant Director, Culinary Services, MI

School kitchen equipment upgrades and school gardens **empower students to make and have access to healthy choices** by creating spaces that are welcoming and encourage children to spend time in the cafeteria and gardens.

"Our cafeteria is the most depressing place on our campus...we would love to expand that space for kids to feel excited about coming to lunch."

-Nicole Chandler, Community School Coordinator, AR

Garden programs **support physical activity** for all by bringing students and staff outside in an active and hands-on manner. By the time a fruit or vegetable makes it to the plate, an entire process has taken place: what was once a small seed has grown into a colorful, healthy form of nourishment. Tending to a garden requires physical attention from seed to plate. Students look forward to staying active each day, and revel in opportunities to participate in their own health and wellness.

"We grew wheat this winter, which is the first time we've grown a grain in our garden. We got to harvest it with our high school interns and our elementary students who then threshed and winnowed it...and got to make graham cracker cookies with some of the wheat that was grown in the garden. They also made pizza with whole wheat flour." - Lydia Yamaguchi, Wellness Specialist, CA

If we are going to support fresh fruit and vegetables, salad bars being served in our cafeterias, we need the space and infrastructure changes to bring these things in. We have some buildings here where I can't even get a salad bar in because principals continue to add cafeteria tables because enrollment is growing.

– Warren De Shields

Director of Food Services, NJ

I don't have the ability to purchase additional equipment because we don't have the electrical that we need to bring in the equipment. I have buildings over 100 years old. I need a walk in. I need a new storage facility. I don't have the funds. If the district cannot provide the funds to support, that hinders me from making good sound procurement decisions around purchasing on a large scale to bring the dollar down and being able to store the food I need to be able to serve over the course of the week.

– Arlethia Brown

Senior Director of School Nutrition, NJ



FoodCorps Recommendation 4

Create a talent pipeline to ensure our nation's schools are attracting the next generation of school nutrition and food education leaders who reflect the cultures and identities of the communities they serve.

School nutrition leaders shape so many student experiences, from tasting new foods to reflecting cultural preferences to creating a welcoming cafeteria environment. Yet school nutrition is one of the best-kept secrets as a career track. Listening session participants noted their love for this career and the immense contribution to students' lives, even though many stumbled onto this profession.

BIMPOC leaders who are part of the communities they serve bring community values and varied cultural backgrounds and foodways into their roles, resulting in diverse perspectives on what good food is and should be in schools. Finding meaningful ways to recognize and celebrate these different definitions of "healthy food" is an enormous opportunity in schools.

Systemic racism in school food systems and decades of divestment from communities of color have resulted in the highest rates of hunger for BIMPOC children. To solve this disparity, FoodCorps recognizes the importance of BIMPOC leaders working in school nutrition and food education. Representation is essential, and when students can see themselves in the people teaching them about nutrition, food education and child nutrition efforts will be transformative.

FoodCorps recommends creating a talent pipeline to ensure our nation's schools are attracting the next generation of school nutrition and food education leaders who reflect the cultures and identities of the communities they serve.

- **The USDA should partner with national, state, and local organizations** to promote and incentivize career development in school nutrition and food education, with an emphasis on Black, Indigenous, Multiracial, and People of Color (BIMPOC) leaders working in their communities.

Recommendation 4

This recommendation supports two of the five White House Conference pillars: Integrate nutrition and health and empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices.

Creating a talent pipeline for the next generation of school nutrition and food education leaders is essential to **integrating nutrition and health** in school meals. When school meals are culturally representative of the children, the food is not just nourishing, but comforting. Students want to spend time in the cafeteria with school nutrition and food education leaders who reflect the cultures and identities of the community.

"The [FoodCorps service member] is embedded in the culture of the school and brings ancestral meals...implementing and discussing with the students about the richness of corn and cooking tortillas and opening up a little fire there. Those are exciting experiences that the students are starting to do."

- Lucia Carmona, Director of Operations and Community Engagement, NM

A talent pipeline **empowers students to make and have access to healthy choices** by fostering an environment that celebrates culturally relevant food that resonates with specific communities through the cafeteria staff. School food can instill in children a love for healthy food and connect children to the cultures of their community. We envision a school food environment that furthers equity and is fully woven into our broader education system as a strategic priority. In such an environment, all students and staff—regardless of race, place, or class—would learn about healthy food, its origin, and its cultural roots, and enjoy nutritious, delicious meals and snacks featuring food that supports and advances equity, livelihoods, and sustainability.

"When [my child would] go to school with their lunch, their friends would say: 'What are you eating, why is this so mushy?' Later, their friends want to try it and that means we are including other children in our culture...immigrant children come to a new school where they don't speak the language, they don't recognize the food, they don't have people who look like them. But by opening the table, by sharing this different type of food, this is inclusion, this is diversity."

- Khadija Ahmed, Consultant, ME

The disconnect about school nutrition is that when you are in college or in trade school learning about food service in general, nobody really talks about school nutrition. I didn't even know that it was a career possibility...it is the best kept secret in the food service world. There are so many benefits to school nutrition, but I don't think we are doing a good job of letting people know about it. Who can say that every day they have the ability to shape and mold how children look at food and enjoy it? Not everybody has that honor...there are a lot of us in school food service that are on their way to retirement. There has to be a better effort in educating our future about the possibilities with school nutrition. There are so many different things that they can bring. We need new and fresh ideas, so I think helping young people to know about it would help us a lot.

– **Marie E. Johnson**

Student Nutrition Program Coordinator and President of NM School Nutrition Association, NM

Two students sit next to a school garden bed full of plants.



SUMMARY:

FoodCorps Policy Recommendations

Legislation

FoodCorps is dedicated to working with Congress to find solutions to hunger, nutrition, and health in schools. We are a willing and engaged partner that supports legislation and policies that serve the children in our nation. As such, FoodCorps urges Congress to pass the following bills in 2022 that provide crucial support in rebuilding from the pandemic and connecting students with healthy food in their schools:

- **Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act of 2021 (S. 1421, H.R. 4282):** This bill directs the USDA to establish a pilot program that will work to hire qualified, full-time staff to carry out food and nutrition education programs that have the goal of improving student health and nutrition. The proposed pilot program will also award grants for projects that fund school gardens or other evidence-based interventions relating to student health and nutrition to create hands-on learning opportunities for students.
- **School Meals for all (federal and state levels):** This policy can serve to destigmatize school meals, remove unnecessary barriers to access, support the financial security of school meal programs, and allow child nutrition professionals to focus on sourcing and serving healthy meals and snacks. With this overarching policy in place, the parallel pieces of legislation we describe can be put into action while maintaining long term sustainability and security for schools and students.
- **School Food Modernization Act (S. 876, H.R. 4379):** This bill will help schools in need of updated kitchen equipment by authorizing a grant, loan guarantee, and technical assistance program. These methods of funding will help schools provide healthier meals to students across the country under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Approved funding will allow schools to purchase durable equipment, improve kitchen infrastructure, and train staff to make it easier for schools to deliver nourishing, fresh foods to their students.
- **Kids Eat Local Act of 2021 (S. 1401, H.R. 2896):** This bill supports farm to school efforts by making it easier for schools to source locally grown, locally raised, and locally caught food and farm products for their meal programs. Currently, schools are not able to specifically ask for “local” products in their food procurement requests. A geographic preference option is available, but many providers find it burdensome and confusing to implement. However, this bill modifies USDA requirements and allows participating institutions to use the local designation as a product specification in food procurement requests.

Administrative Action

FoodCorps applauds the Administration's thoughtful leadership and forward-looking approach in convening the historic White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. The pandemic has clarified the many strengths and assets of school nutrition programs nationwide, while also revealing structural challenges school foodservice departments have been facing since long before COVID-19. We believe that, together, we can make significant progress towards our goal of ensuring that every child in America has access to food education and nourishing food in schools by 2030.

In addition to the policy recommendations, FoodCorps also urges the Administration to take additional steps:


- The USDA, Department of Ed., and CDC should create an inter-agency task force to support school meals as an integral part of the school day.
- The USDA should conduct a study about the benefits of school meals for all waivers during the pandemic in order to build a strong case for this policy to be made permanent.
- The USDA should create an incentive program to recognize excellence in school nutrition innovation, including monetary awards to districts prioritizing culturally relevant menus, student feedback, integrated nutrition education, scratch cooking, and local purchasing.
- The USDA should partner with national, state, Tribal, and local organizations to promote and incentivize career development in school nutrition and food education, with an emphasis on Black, Indigenous, Multiracial, and People of Color (BIMPOC) leaders working in their communities.

Conclusion

The White House Conference has the potential to spark major policy changes that are long overdue in our schools, and that stakeholders from within our education system have identified as key areas of opportunity. This conference is an opportunity to continue advocacy for the needs of our nation's children in the areas of nutrition education, improving school kitchens, expanding school meals for all, and creating a diverse career pipeline. Schools hold enormous potential in shaping how children experience food during their school years and for the rest of their lives, from meeting their basic nutritional needs, to ensuring the foods they eat reflect their cultures and identities.

FoodCorps will continue to advocate for policies that support our children's nutrition, health, and well-being at school. Together with our partners and communities, FoodCorps is proud to contribute to the White House Conference in a meaningful way and inform our nation's policymakers why children's health, education, and sense of belonging are essential to the future of our country.

FoodCorps believes it is crucial to come together around a shared mission, clear vision, and a culture of equity and justice that will deepen our commitment to our work alongside communities. We look toward our 2030 goal: that every child has access to food education and nourishing meals in school.



Two students learn the joy of gardening with classmates.

Appendices

Appendix A: FoodCorps Listening Sessions Acknowledgments

FoodCorps convened three listening sessions groups in late June of 2022 in the Eastern, Western, and Central-South regions with an overwhelming majority of participants identifying as BIMPOC. We would like to thank each of the attendees listed below and applaud them for taking the lead on giving our nation's children the necessary tools to further their health and wellness. Thank you for your dedication.

AR - Nicole Chandler, Community School Coordinator

AR - Tomiko Townley, Advocacy Director

CA - Janelle Manzano, Farm to School Specialist

CA - Lydia Yamaguchi, Wellness Specialist

CA - Stephanie Lip, School Nutrition Director

CA - Vince Caguin, School Nutrition Director

CT - Dawn Crayco, FoodCorps Northeast Regional Director

CT - Joey Listro, Executive Director

CT - Randall Mel, Food Services Director & Wellness Committee Chair

CT - Sherlene Rodriguez, Steering Committee Member

DC - LaMonika Jones, Anti-Hunger & Child Nutrition Program Analyst

DC - Lola Bloom, School Nutrition Director

GA - A'Ket Mayweather, District Wellness Coordinator

GA - Ashley Rouse, Program Director, Project Learning Gardens/Project Giving Gardens

GA - Wande Okunoren Meadows, Co-Creator, Executive Director

IA - Sarah Tanis, FoodCorps IA Program Manager

IA - Apple Amos, FoodCorps IA Program Coordinator

MA - Simca Horwitz, Co-Director

ME - Khadija Ahmed, Consultant

ME - Lily Chaleff, Schools and Youth Program Director

MI - Dale Anderson, FoodCorps Central-South Regional Director

MI - Kevin Frank, Assistant Director, Culinary Services

MI - Nathan Bates, Chef, Food Service Director

MI - Paishann Curtis, 3rd/4th Grade Teacher

MI - Seema Jolly, FoodCorps MI Impact Program Lead

NJ - Arlethia Brown, Senior Director of School Nutrition

NJ - Dr. Tonya McGill, Executive Director of Food Services

NJ - Sal Valenza, Regional Director

NJ - Warren DeShields, Director of Food Services

NM - Christopher "DJ" De Jesus, Teacher, Administrator

NM - Lucia Carmona, Director of Operations and Community Engagement

NM - Maria Brock, Student Wellness Director

NM - Marie Johnson, Student Nutrition Program Coordinator, President of NM School Nutrition Association

NY - Shanon Morris, Executive Director

OR - Fatima Jawaid Marty, Policy Advocate

OR - Heidi Sipe, Superintendent

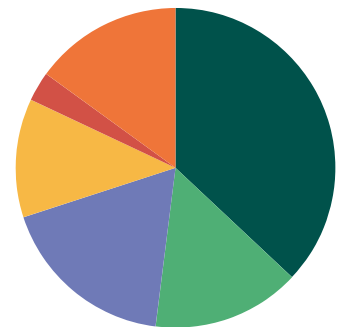
1. How many years have you been involved in food education, school nutrition, or farm to school in total? (33 total responses)

- **31%** of the participants have been involved for 20+ years. (10 participants)
- **18%** of the participants have been involved for 10+ years. (6 participants)
- **18%** of the participants have been involved for 7-10 years. (6 participants)
- **6%** of the participants have been involved for 5-7 years. (2 participants)
- **18%** of the participants have been involved for 3-5 years. (6 participants)
- **9%** of the participants have been involved for 1-3 years. (3 participants)



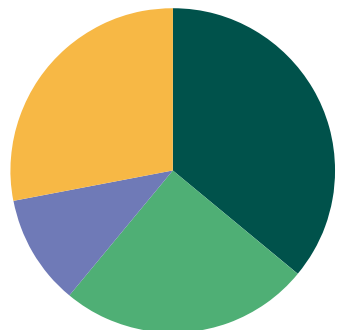
2. How many children does your work directly reach? (33 total responses)

- **37%** of the participants reach 10,000+ children. (12 participants)
- **15%** of the participants reach 3,000+ children. (5 participants)
- **18%** of the participants reach 1,000-3,000 children. (6 participants)
- **12%** of the participants reach 500-1,000 children. (4 participants)
- **3%** of the participants reach 300-500 children. (1 participant)
- **15%** of the participants reach 100-300 children. (5 participants)



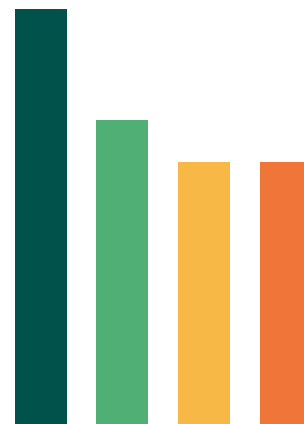
3. In your experience, what do you see as the top benefit of food education? (28 total responses)

- **36%** of the participants said: Food education helps students make healthier food choices. (10 participants)
- **25%** of the participants said: Food education supports social-emotional learning. (7 participants)
- **11%** of the participants said: Food education helps improve academic outcomes. (3 participants)
- **28%** of the participants said: Food education supports educators and nutrition professionals in their goals to provide nourishing meals to children. (8 participants)



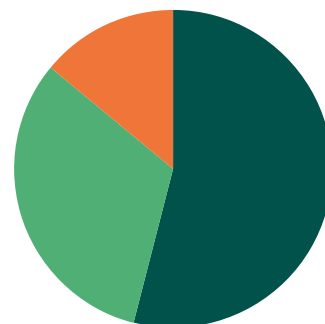
4. What can local governments do to support food education? (28 total responses, multiple selections allowed)

- **68%** of the participants selected: Fund food educators and food education for all elementary schools. (19 participants)
- **50%** of the participants selected: Increase meal reimbursements to allow school nutrition services to conduct food education. (14 participants)
- **43%** of the participants selected: Provide technical support to nutrition professionals like lessons, menus, and garden infrastructure. (12 participants)
- **43%** of the participants selected: Pass laws that encourage school districts to integrate nutrition education into the school day. (12 participants)



5. In your opinion, what should be the top priority of the White House to support food education and school meal access? (28 total responses)

- **54%** of the participants said: Provide more funding. (15 participants)
- **32%** of the participants said: Cut the red tape and require less paperwork for parents and educators to apply for nutrition programs including the free school meal program. (9 participants)
- **14%** of the participants said: Bring more awareness to the benefits of nutrition education to the wellbeing of the whole child. (4 participants)





Tell President Biden It's Time for Food Education

For the first time in 50 years, the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health is convening in September 2022—where the Biden-Harris administration will announce a national strategy to end hunger, support child nutrition, and eliminate health disparities. Now is a critical time to elevate the food policy issues that matter most—and we need your help to make sure food education has a seat at the table.

Join us in urging President Biden to support placing a food educator in every school. Food education is key in nourishing every child's health, education, and sense of belonging at school, especially for children of color, who face health and education inequities. School is where kids begin to develop relationships with food that can last a lifetime, and hands-on food and nutrition education can transform those relationships.

"Seeing things actually start from a seed or a starter and just the miracle that happens when life grows through the dirt, I think that encourages them to want to try foods." —Pamela Lee, Director of Nutrition Services, Ocean View School District (Oxnard, CA)

Food educators create opportunities for academic, nutritional, and social-emotional development for every child. Food education can help to meet the needs of all learners, support kids' social and emotional growth, and can support kids' learning in a variety of subject areas. It's also a crucial tool for helping students build confidence and a connection to their community through lessons like gardening and cooking. Food and nutrition educators also broaden students' exposure to nutritious, locally grown food—a key strategy for building healthy habits that can last a lifetime. For example: Kids in schools with more FoodCorps hands-on learning activities eat up to three times as many fruits and veggies as students who receive less of that hands-on learning.

Sign the petition and share it with your community to get food education in front of the administration. No matter who you are, your voice can make a difference!



Tell President Biden it's time for food education.

Next week we're sending our [#TimeForFoodEd petition](#) to President Biden. Food education is key in nourishing every child's health, education, and sense of belonging at school, especially for children of color, who face health and education inequities. As the White House prepares for its Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health this September, we want to make sure food education has a seat at the table.

We need your help! Join us in urging President Biden to support placing a food educator in every school. So far, we have over 1,300 signatures! Will you take 2 minutes right now to sign on and share the petition with your community?

[Add your name to the petition »](#)

[Like and share on Instagram »](#)

[Like and share on Facebook »](#)

[Like and share on LinkedIn »](#)

[Like and share on Twitter »](#)

Every voice makes a difference in helping all students have access to food education and nourishing meals in school. Thank you for using your voice, spreading the word, and joining us!

July 15, 2022

President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

RE: Letter of support from FoodCorps Philanthropic Partners

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your leadership in hosting the historic White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health in September 2022. We, as part of the philanthropic community, appreciate that you asked **how the public and private sectors can work together, guided by your five pillars**, to tackle these challenges. We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, are philanthropic supporters of FoodCorps and their work to increase students' access to nutritious foods and nutrition education in underserved areas of our nation. Working with FoodCorps, we are engaged in innovative, successful activities already happening at the local and Tribal levels, serving communities, students, and their families.

We urge you to include a discussion on access to school meals and food education as part of your historic White House Conference. These important investments in our children are aligned perfectly with your 5 pillars as follows:

School meals are essential and often the only consistent source of nourishment for many children in our country. Access to school meals means that every student, in every school, can receive the same breakfast or lunch free of charge, regardless of their family income. It's an important move for advancing equity in school nutrition, and for ensuring that all children are nourished at school and ready to learn.

When school meals for all are supplemented with **hands-on nutrition education**, children consume

more nourishing, healthy foods. In fact, they eat up to three times as many fruits and vegetables as children who receive less of that education. FoodCorps educators play a critical role in our schools by teaching children about where food comes from, how to grow and prepare a variety of foods, the benefits of trying new foods like fruits and veggies, and the importance of food in our history and cultures.

The time is way overdue to advance policies that improve the nutrition and wellbeing of our children and set them up for a healthy life, but we have a golden opportunity with this Conference to do right by our children. We therefore urge you to make school meals and food education part of the agenda of the White House Conference. We are investing in these solutions as philanthropists and we anticipate seeing a return on investment in the form of child health and wellness. Therefore, we urge you to support the following real world solutions:

- Ensure every child has access to meals during the school day as a consistent source of nutrition.
- Prioritize nutrition education resources as an investment in our children's health and wellbeing.
- Place more food educators in the schools to supplement the work of teachers and nutrition professionals.
- Invest in school kitchen equipment upgrades, school gardens, and scratch cooking resources.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. We look forward to working with you and your Administration toward achieving these policy visions. We have dedicated our resources, time, and energy into manifesting these goals, and we now ask that school meal access and food education is a critical part of every child's school day. Now is the time to give our children hands-on experiences with food, nutrition, cooking, and gardening, so that every child, in every school, experiences the joy and power of food.

Sincerely,

Alejandro Gibes de Gac, CEO & Founder,
Springboard Collaborative

Andrew Kaplan, Vice President, Culinary
Operations, Rachael Ray; Director, The Yum-o!
Organization

Ann Cornell, President, Cornell Douglas Foundation

Bill Draper, Draper Richards Kaplan

Brian Cavey, Senior Vice President of Government
Affairs, CoBank

Christopher Kimball, Founder, Christopher
Kimball's Milk Street

Dylan Smith, Box

Edgar M. Cullman, Jr.

Jack Johnson, Johnson Ohana Foundation

Jean and Rick Witmer

Jenny Shilling Stein

Kara Bobroff, One Generation, Indigenous Farm
Hub

Kate Barrett, President, Campbell Soup
Foundation; Director of Community Affairs,
Campbell Soup Company

Kendal Chavez

King Arthur Baking Company

Kristin DeSimone, Thrive Market

Lauren Sturgeon Bailey, Vice President of
Government Affairs, CoBank

Laurie and Jeffrey Ubben

Lee Seward, Chair, Inclusive Capital Partners
Foundation

Lynn Forester de Rothschild

Mailee Walker, The Claneil Foundation

Megan Shore, Policy and Strategy Director, Elmina
B. Sewall Foundation

Miriam E. Nelson, Ph.D., President and CEO,
Newman's Own Foundation

Natalie McKinney, Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation

Nell Solley

Nithya Das, Chief Operating Officer, Olo

Noah Glass, Founder and CEO, Olo

Richard and Ann Sarnoff

Stephanie DiMarco

Susan Ellis

Susan Tunnell

The Office of Kat Taylor

TomKat Ranch Education Foundation

Union of Concerned Scientists

William Rosenzweig, Faculty Director, Sustainable
Food Initiative, University of California, Berkeley

Cc:

Secretary Xavier Becerra, US Health and Human
Services

Secretary Tom Vilsak, US Secretary of Agriculture

Secretary Miguel Cardona, US Department of
Education

Appendix E: Organizational Letter of Support for White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health Policy Recommendations

July 15, 2022

President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

RE: Organizational Sign-On Letter in Support of Policy Recommendations for the The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your leadership in hosting the historic White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health in September 2022. We, as part of the community that supports food education and nutritious school meals, appreciate that you asked **how the public and private sectors can work together, guided by your five pillars**, to tackle these challenges. We, the undersigned organizations, are partners of FoodCorps and our collective work to increase students' access to nutritious foods and nutrition education in underserved areas of our nation. Together, we are engaged in innovative, successful activities already happening at the local and Tribal levels, serving communities, students, and their families.

We urge you to include a discussion on access to school meals and food education as part of your historic White House Conference. These important investments in our children are aligned perfectly with your 5 pillars as follows:

School meals are essential and often the only consistent source of nourishment for many children in our country. Access to school meals means that every student, in every school, can receive the same breakfast or lunch free of charge, regardless of their family income. It's an important move for advancing equity in school nutrition, and for ensuring that all children are nourished at school and ready to learn.

When school meals for all are supplemented with **hands-on nutrition education**, children consume more nourishing, healthy foods. In fact, they eat up to three times as many fruits and vegetables as children who receive less of that education. FoodCorps educators play a critical role in our schools by teaching children about where food comes from, how to grow and prepare a variety of foods, the benefits of trying new foods like fruits and veggies, and the importance of food in our history and cultures.

The time is way overdue to advance policies that improve the nutrition and wellbeing of our children and set them up for a healthy life, but we have a golden opportunity with this Conference to do right by our children. We therefore urge you to make school meals and food education part of the agenda of the White House Conference. We, as the collective child nutrition community, have dedicated our lives to supporting the health and wellbeing of our nation's children. Therefore, we now urge you to support the following proven policies:

- Ensure every child has access to meals during the school day as a consistent source of nutrition.
- Prioritize nutrition education resources as an investment in our children's health and wellbeing.
- Place more food educators in the schools to

supplement the work of teachers and nutrition professionals.

- Invest in school kitchen equipment upgrades, school gardens, and scratch cooking resources and provide financial incentives for purchases of local and/or values aligned products.

These policy recommendations can be achieved by:

- Passing the "Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act" (S.1421) (H.R. 4282) which would direct the USDA to establish a pilot program to hire staff in schools to provide hands-on food and nutrition education.
- Passing the "School Food Modernization Act" (S.876) (H.R. 4379) which would authorize funding for schools to purchase equipment, improve kitchen infrastructure, and train staff to make it easier for schools to deliver nourishing, fresh foods.
- The Congress and Administration should fully support and fund school meals for all **on a permanent basis**.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. We look forward to working with you and your Administration toward achieving these policy visions. We have dedicated our time, energy, and resources into manifesting these goals, and we now ask that school meal access and food education is a critical part of every child's school day. Now is the time to give our children hands-on experiences with food, nutrition, cooking, and gardening, so that every child, in every school, experiences the joy and power of food.

Sincerely,

FoodCorps

About Fresh (Boston, MA)

America's Promise Alliance (Washington DC)

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
(Raleigh, NC)

Captain Planet Foundation (Atlanta, GA)

Center for Getting Things Started (Pahoa, HI)

Chaparral Elementary (Poway, CA)

Chef Ann Foundation (Boulder, CO)

Common Threads (San Antonio, TX)

Cultivating Community (Portland, ME)

DC Greens (Washington, DC)

FamilyCook Productions (New York, NY)

Farm to Table & New Mexico Food & Agriculture
Policy Council (Santa Fe, NM)

Full Plates Full Potential (Brunswick, ME)

Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities
(Traverse City, MI)

Hand, Heart, and Soul Project (Jonesboro, GA)

Healthy Communities of the Capital Area
(Gardiner, ME)

Human Service Chamber of Franklin County
(Columbus, OH)

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
(Baltimore, MD)

KidsGardening (Burlington, VT)

Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education and
Policy (New York, NY)

Local Matters (Columbus, Ohio)

Lutheran Social Services (Columbus, OH)

Maine Farm to Institution (Gardiner, ME)

Maine Farm & Sea to School Network (Gardiner,
ME)

Māla'ai: The Culinary Garden of Waimea Middle
School & Hawaii Island School Garden Network
(Kamuela, HI)

Massachusetts Food System Collaborative
(Worcester, MA)

Organizational Letter of Support for White House Conference
on Hunger, Nutrition and Health Policy Recommendations, cont'd

Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) (<i>East Lansing, MI</i>)	Senator John Boozman, Ranking Member Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Middlesex Coalition for Children (<i>Middletown, CT</i>)	Senator Cory Booker, Chair Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research
National Association of Elementary School Principals (<i>Alexandria, VA</i>)	Senator John Cornyn, Co-Sponsor of S. 1421, Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act
National REACH Coalition (<i>Silver City, NM</i>)	Representative Bobby Scott, Chair House Committee on Education and Labor
NJ YMCA State Alliance (<i>Trenton, NJ</i>)	Delegate Stacey Plaskett, Sponsor of H.R. 4282 Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act and original co-sponsors: Representative Alma Adams, Representative Jahana Hayes, Representative Joe Courtney, Representative Donald Payne, Jr., Representative Kweisi Mfume, and Representative Frank Mrvan
Nourish Colorado (<i>Denver, CO</i>)	Representative Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member House Committee on Education and Labor
Oregon Farm to School & School Garden Network (<i>Ashland, OR</i>)	Representative Jim McGovern, Co-Chair, Congressional Hunger Caucus
Pinnacle Prevention (<i>Chandler, AZ</i>)	Representative Jackie Walorski, Co-Chair, Congressional Hunger Caucus
Real Food for Kids (<i>McLean, VA</i>)	Representative Rodney Davis, Co-Chair, Congressional Task Force on Childhood Obesity
School Garden Support Organization Network (<i>Austin, TX</i>)	Representative Ron Kind, Co-Chair, Congressional Task Force on Childhood Obesity
School Nutrition Association (<i>Arlington, VA</i>)	
Seeds That Feed (<i>Fayetteville, AR</i>)	
Sustainable Food Center (<i>Austin, TX</i>)	
The Common Market (<i>Philadelphia, PA</i>)	
Waimea Middle School (<i>Kamuela, HI</i>)	
Wallace Center (<i>New Orleans, LA</i>)	
Wellness in the Schools (<i>New York, NY</i>)	
West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition (<i>Charleston, WV</i>)	

Cc:

Secretary Xavier Becerra, US Health and Human
Services

Secretary Tom Vilsak, US Secretary of Agriculture

Secretary Miguel Cardona, US Department of
Education

Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chair Committee on
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry



July 26, 2021

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and Labor
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

On behalf of FoodCorps and the undersigned organizations, we thank you for your commitment to children's health and urge you to include the Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act in the 2021 Child Nutrition Reauthorization. Food and nutrition educators play a critical role in schools by showing kids where their food comes from, how it grows, how to prepare it, and why it's fun to try fruits and vegetables. Food and nutrition educators increase children's acceptance and enjoyment of the nutritious, tasty meals they are offered in schools, setting them up to make healthy choices for life.

The Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act provides funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a pilot grant program to create food and nutrition education positions in rural, urban, and Tribal schools. Food and nutrition educators will teach lessons rooted in research proven to maximize students' consumption—and enjoyment—of healthy meals, including hands-on experiential learning with school gardens, taste tests, and student engagement. Priority will be given to schools in

neighborhoods with high rates of childhood diet-related illnesses and schools in which 40 percent or more of students qualify for free or reduced price meals.

When hands-on food and nutrition education is integrated as a part of a school day, it can have significant impacts on students' nutritional, emotional, and educational well-being. An evaluation of FoodCorps programming found that students who get lots of hands-on education through gardening, cooking, and taste testing activities *eat up to three times more fruits and vegetables at school* than those who get less. Engaging children with hands-on lessons can lead to reducing food waste because students know where their food comes from and have experience tasting it before they see it on the cafeteria serving line. Studies have also shown that garden education not only connects children to an understanding of where their food comes from, but can improve academic, social, and emotional outcomes as well.

Thanks to Congressional leadership, implementation of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act has introduced students to new menu items, including a variety of fruits and vegetables. Food and nutrition educators help children try, eat, and enjoy the new tastes that are being introduced.

COVID-19 has highlighted the critical importance of nutritional well-being, as communities who face systemic barriers to nutritious food were hit hardest by the pandemic. School meals are a vitally important resource in ensuring that our children thrive. Experiential food and nutrition education activities expose children to foods in engaging ways, reducing their reluctance to try new things and encouraging them to choose healthy options at mealtime.

We urge you to include the Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Act in the next Child Nutrition Reauthorization, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (*Chicago, IL*)

Advocates for Better Children's Diets (*Washington, DC*)

Afterschool Alliance (*Washington, DC*)

America's Promise Alliance (*Washington, DC*)

American Heart Association (*Dallas, TX*)

American Horticultural Society (*Alexandria, VA*)

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (*Raleigh, NC*)

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (*Washington, DC*)

Captain Planet Foundation (*Atlanta, GA*)

Center for Ecoliteracy (*Berkeley, CA*)

Center for Science in the Public Interest (*Washington, DC*)

Chef Ann Foundation (*Boulder, CO*)

Common Threads (*Brooklyn, NY*)

Ecotrust (*Portland, OR*)

Family Farm Action (*Missouri*)

First Focus Campaign for Children (*Washington, D.C.*)

FoodCorps (*Washington, DC*)

Food Research & Action Center (*Washington, DC*)

Healthy Schools Campaign (*Chicago, IL*)

KidsGardening (*Burlington, VT*)

Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University (*New York, NY*)

Life Lab (*Santa Cruz, CA*)

LunchAssist (*West Hollywood, CA*)

Mission: Readiness (*Washington, DC*)

National Education Association (*Washington, DC*)

National Farm to School Network (*Washington, DC*)

National REACH Coalition (*NY*)

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (*Washington, DC*)

School Nutrition Association (*Arlington, VA*)

Save the Children (*Washington, DC*)

Slow Food USA (*New York, NY*)

Slow Food USA School Garden Network (*Brooklyn, NY*)

The Common Market (*Philadelphia, PA*)

The Edible Schoolyard Project (*Berkeley, CA*)

Union of Concerned Scientists (*Cambridge, MA*)

Urban School Food Alliance (*Washington, DC*)

Wellness in the Schools (*New York, NY*)

YMCA of the USA (*Washington, DC*)

Regional, State and Local Organizations

ACCESS (*Medford, OR*)

Agri-Cultura Network / La Cosecha CSA
(*Albuquerque, NM*)

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank (*Akron, OH*)

All Our Kin (*New Heaven, CT*)

AR Hunger Relief Alliance (*Little Rock, AR*)

Arthur Morgan Institute for Community Solutions/
Agraria (*Yellow Springs, OH*)

Berkeley Unified School District (*Berkeley, CA*)

Blue Mountain Vegetable Farm (*Magazine, AR*)

Bridgeton Board of Education (*Bridgeton, NJ*)

Bronx Health REACH/Institute for Family Health
(*New York, NY*)

Canal Market District and Enterprise Hub
(*Newark, OH*)

Cedarville Public School (*Cedarville, AR*)

Center for Getting Things Started (*HI*)

Central Community House (*Columbus, OH*)

Chaparral Elementary School (*Poway, CA*)

Chicopee Public Schools (*Chicopee, MA*)

Children's Aid (*New York, NY*)

Children's Food Lab (*Brooklyn, NY*)

Children's Hunger Alliance (*Columbus, OH*)

City of Bridgeport - Board of Education
(*Bridgeport, CT*)

City Year Columbus (*Columbus, OH*)

Columbus City School (*Columbus, OH*)

Common Ground/New Haven Ecology Project
(*New Heaven, CT*)

Community Development for All People/Thrive to
5 (*Columbus, OH*)

Community Food Advocates (*New York, NY*)

Comune (*Columbus, OH*)

Connecticut Community Foundation (*Waterbury, CT*)

Connecticut Food System Alliance (*Hartford, CT*)

Connecticut Partnership for Children, Inc.
(*Naugatuck, CT*)

Coupeville Farm To School (*Coupeville, WA*)

CT Farm to School Collaborative (*Vernon, CT*)

Dietitian In Your Kitchen (*Columbus, Ohio*)

Dig Down Deep (*San Diego, CA*)

Edible Schoolyard NYC (*Brooklyn, NY*)

End Hunger Connecticut! (*Hartford, CT*)

Experimental Farm Network (*Philadelphia, PA*)

FamilyCook Productions (*New York, NY*)

Farm to Table - New Mexico (*Santa Fe, NM*)

Farmers Assisting Returning Military (F.A.R.M.)
(*Dallas, TX*)

Fayetteville Housing Authority (*Fayetteville, AR*)

Full Plates Full Potential (*Portland, ME*)

Garden Farms Foundation (*Las Vegas, NV*)

Girls on the Run Central Ohio (*Columbus, OH*)

Greater Newark Conservancy (*Newark, NJ*)

Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities
(*Traverse City, MI*)

Grow Garden Grow (*Dallas, TX*)

Grow Hartford Youth Program (<i>Hartford, CT</i>)	Massaro Community Farm (<i>Woodbridge, CT</i>)
Grow Portland (<i>Portland, OR</i>)	Micro2Life LLC (<i>Hartford, CT</i>)
Grow Some Good (<i>Kihei, HI</i>)	Middlesex Coalition for Children (<i>Middletown, CT</i>)
Growing and Growth Collective (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)	Middletown Public Schools (<i>Middletown, CT</i>)
Growing Healthy Waves- Tupelo, MS (<i>Tupelo, MS</i>)	Mountain Song Community School (<i>Colorado Springs, CO</i>)
Hamakua Institute (<i>Ninole, HI</i>)	New Albany Food Pantry (<i>New Albany, OH</i>)
Harlem Grown (<i>New York, NY</i>)	New Britain ROOTS (<i>New Britain, CT</i>)
Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy (<i>Hartford, CT</i>)	New Directions Career Center (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)
Hawai'i Seed Growers Network (<i>HI</i>)	New London Public Schools-Child Nutrition Program (<i>New London, CT</i>)
Hawaii Island Food Alliance (<i>HI</i>)	New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council (<i>Santa Fe, NM</i>)
Healthy Communities of the Capital Area (<i>Gardiner, ME</i>)	NJ Academy of Science (<i>Flemington, NJ</i>)
Healthy New Albany (<i>New Albany, OH</i>)	NJ YMCA State Alliance (<i>Trenton, NJ</i>)
Human Service Chamber of Franklin County (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)	NM Healthy Soil Working Group (<i>Santa Fe, NM</i>)
Imua Culinary (<i>Honokaa, HI</i>)	Northeast Organic Farming Association NJ (<i>Princeton, NJ</i>)
ISD #719, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (<i>Prior Lake, MN</i>)	Now You Know New Mexico (<i>Tijeras, NM</i>)
Jackson County Schools (<i>Jackson County, GA</i>)	NY Common Pantry (<i>New York, NY</i>)
Johnson Ohana Foundation (<i>HI</i>)	Oahu Farm to School Network (<i>Oahu, HI</i>)
Kokua Hawaii Foundation (<i>HI</i>)	Oelwein Community School (<i>Oelwein, IA</i>)
Local Matters (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)	Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Assoc. (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)
LSS Food Pantries (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)	Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)
Maine Farm to Institution (<i>Gardiner, ME</i>)	Ohio Women's Alliance (<i>Columbus, OH</i>)
Maine Farm to School Network (<i>Gardiner, ME</i>)	One Generation, a project of the Tides Center (<i>Albuquerque, NM</i>)
Maka'alamihī Farm (<i>HI</i>)	One Ocean County (<i>Toms River, NJ</i>)
Mala Kaluulu Cooperative (<i>Honolulu, HI</i>)	Opportunity Knocks, Middlesex Health, Family Advocacy Program (<i>Middletown, CT</i>)
Mary Hooker Environmental Sciences Magnet School, Hartford Public Schools (<i>Hartford, CT</i>)	
Massachusetts Food System Collaborative (<i>MA</i>)	

Oregon Farm to School & School Garden Network (Ashland, OR)	Terrapin Environmental Solutions Inc. (Port Washington, NY)
Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Watsonville, CA)	Texas State Alliance YMCAs (TX)
Paterson Public Schools (Paterson, NJ)	The Community Ecology Institute (Columbia, MD)
Pinnacle Prevention (Chandler, AZ)	The Dublin Food Pantry (Dublin, OH)
Real Food for Kids (McLean, VA)	The Environmental Center (Bend, OR)
Row by Row (Portland, OR)	Tory Hill (Lakeville, CT)
Rural Coalition (Atrisco, NM)	UConn Rudd Center (Hartford, CT)
Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ)	Urban Ecology Wellness Center (Hartford, CT)
Sage Garden Project (Encinitas, CA)	Urban Agriculture Cooperative (Newark, NJ)
Salem County Vocational Technical Schools (Mannington, NJ)	Western Arkansas Child Development, Inc. (Alma, AR)
Santa Fe Indian School (Santa Fe, NM)	Zenger Farm (Portland, OR)
Sauvie Island Center (Portland, OR)	
Seeds That Feed Inc. (Fayetteville, AR)	
Schenectady City School District (Schenectady, NY)	
School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (Cheshire, CT)	
Skip Shockley Foundation (Dallas, TX)	
Slow Food DFW (Dallas, TX)	
Slow Food Wallowas (Joseph, OR)	
South Side Family Farms (Columbus, OH)	
South Valley Preparatory School (Albuquerque, NM)	
Springdale Public Schools (Springdale, AR)	
St. Stephen's Community House (Columbus, OH)	
STEAM URBAN (Newark, NJ)	
Sunny Glen Garden (Columbus, OH)	
Sustainable Food Center (Austin, TX)	

Convened in December of 1969, the landmark White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health influenced our country's nutrition agenda for decades to come.

With the purpose of putting an end to hunger in America and improving the nutritional well-being of all Americans, the Conference addressed malnutrition and hunger during a time when these issues became urgent national concerns. The road to this Conference; however, was not an easy one.

Beginning in 1967, Senators Robert Kennedy (D-MA) and Joseph D. Clark (D-PA) visited Cleveland, Mississippi, and witnessed unexpected levels of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. This discovery unleashed a chain reaction of events: the Citizens Board of Inquiry released the report *Hunger USA: A Critical Review*, the Columbia Broadcast System (CBS) filmed a documentary titled, "Hunger in America," and politicians embarked on their own "hunger tours" to poverty-stricken areas. Together, these events worked to shed light on hunger in America and created controversy about the extent and magnitude of this issue.

As a result, Congress directed the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to survey and identify the prevalence, intensity, and distribution of malnutrition in the fall of 1967. This effort on behalf of Congress culminated in the Ten State Nutrition Survey of 1968-1970, which was the largest nutrition survey ever conducted in the United States. Organized and led by Dr. Arnold Schaefer, Chief of the Nutrition Program, a series

of ad hoc committees developed a plan for conducting such a survey. The committees recommended that emphasis be placed on obtaining information from the low-income segment of the population, since it was here that malnutrition was expected to be most prevalent. Due to time and money constraints, the survey was limited to the following ten states: Washington, California, Texas, Louisiana, South Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia, Michigan, Massachusetts, and New York. The results of this survey, particularly from Texas and Louisiana, provided evidence of critical metrics of hunger and poor nutritional status.

Informed by all of these findings, the bipartisan Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs was established in 1968, which became instrumental in championing issues related to hunger and malnutrition under Senator George McGovern (D-SD). Later in 1969, the Conference would come to fruition. Appointed by the president as a Special Consultant, Dr. Jean Mayer planned and led the Conference. In the months leading up to the Conference, dozens of committees and individuals representing major federal, state, and local governments, the private sector, and voluntary organizations met to formulate recommendations. These recommendations were debated, modified, and agreed upon at the Conference, which was held in the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C.

In the midst of marches, tear gas, and demonstrations against the Vietnam War, the Conference took place over three days, December 2-4, 1969. Meeting simultaneously over the course of the Conference, 3,000 participants from diverse interest groups were split into 20 working groups with the final report being delivered to the president on December 24, 1969. Voted on by more than 5,000 attendees, the final report contained over 1,800 recommendations, of which 1,650 were implemented within two years of the Conference. This monumental Conference ultimately resulted in key accomplishments, such as major expansions of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the creation of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), permanent authorization of the National School Breakfast Program, and improvements to nutrition and ingredient labeling.



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