



# FoodCorps School Nutrition Program Guide



AmeriCorps





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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

# What is the FoodCorps School Nutrition Program Guide?

This guide is a supplemental set of resources for FoodCorps AmeriCorps School Nutrition Corps Members, designed to support effective programming with district partners in schools. Members should use this guide alongside the full-length program guide, in addition to FoodCorps' in-person training, to deepen their knowledge of partnership goals and work within their community. In this guide, you will find the following:

- **Six training competencies that encompass school nutrition introductory training at FoodCorps**
- **Strategies and activities that district partners identify as areas of support, capacity, and collaboration**
- **Resources for supporting nourishing school meals in your community**

*Cover: Sra Feigelman encourages a student to try roasted butternut squash.*

*Above: FoodCorps members prepare a nutritious recipe in the Rio School District's test kitchen.*

## How Do I Use It?

We recommend that everyone start by reading the following sections: “Philosophy of Nourishing School Meals” and “Planning and Evaluating Your Program Year” (see page 12 in full-length FoodCorps Member Program Guide). These sections cover the basics about how FoodCorps partners with schools and include required documents and resources that you will use often in your work.

After that, you can continue reading or check out the Table of Contents throughout the year to find exactly what you need. Take the FoodCorps School Nutrition Program Guide to your district, share it with your site supervisor and other support school nutrition professionals, and bookmark your go-to pages!

## A Work in Progress!

This guide is a collection of lessons learned during a two-year pilot and from existing FoodCorps tools, but other parts are still being developed. We will be adding to and adapting the material over time, based on feedback from you and our partner communities. If you have ideas, please reach out to the School Nutrition Leadership Team.



*FoodCorps Member Charlotte Sampson chats with students at lunchtime.*

# School Nutrition Corps Member Program Overview

# History of FoodCorps' School Nutrition Corps Member Program

FoodCorps has long been committed to nourishing school meals through partnerships across our geographic footprint. Partners and members have supported school meals initiatives in various ways over the last decade. Previously, FoodCorps members were placed at the school level and focused on teaching food education in classrooms, cafeterias, and gardens. Members focused on food education had limited opportunities to support district-level meal initiatives, despite expressed interest from our partners.

The School Nutrition Corps Member (SNCM) Program started in August 2021 as a pilot with five states: California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey. The goal was to understand the impact of resourcing partners with the capacity and support needed to enhance school meals. After the success of the first program year, the Year Two evaluation sought to understand:

- **Institutionalization**—Design and implement a program model that helps school districts institutionalize food education and nourishing school meals.
- **Program value**—Understand how the implementation of and outcomes of the SNCM program model differs from the Food Education program model.
- **Resources**—Understand the resources needed to successfully implement the SNCM program model.

After two informative years of a pilot program, the School Nutrition Corps Member Program was institutionalized in August 2023. While this program has seen much success since its inception, an orientation toward progress and innovation will be central as the program continues to grow and meet the needs of partner communities.

# Nourishing School Meals Philosophy During the Program Year and Beyond

FoodCorps believes nourishing school meals is a mechanism to advance justice. Through partnership with local communities, school meals have the potential to shape how kids experience food during their school years and for the rest of their lives. Alongside partner communities, impact is measured through menu change, defined as the process from idea generation to tasting and menu adoptions for a single item on the school breakfast, lunch, or supper menu.

FoodCorps advocates for school meals that reflect the cultures and local contexts of the communities where we partner. We see culturally responsive school meals as a powerful tool for justice, one that says there's room to celebrate students of all races, religions, and backgrounds at the lunch table.

Through an in-depth training program that integrates school nutrition professional standards and FoodCorps' equity frameworks, after participating in national service, members are prepared to be advocates for school meals change.

We are hopeful for a world in which schools share this value and equip students to lead their own food journeys—through their childhoods and for the rest of their lives.

## Logic Model

This snapshot of the logic model provides the intended short, medium, and long-term outcomes by participating in the School Nutrition Program. Short-term outcomes occur during national service medium-term outcomes occur one to two years after national service, and long-term is two years and beyond. There are a variety of activities that members will participate in during their 11-month term that contribute to these outcomes.



## Short-term goals

- SNCMs increase knowledge and skills to lead equity-focused practices in school food.
- SNCMs Increase knowledge and confidence in school nutrition responsibilities, and desire to pursue school nutrition careers.
- SNCMs utilize equity practices to support improvements in school meals.
- SNCMs support menu change at districts.
- SNCMs support nutrition departments to seek out student feedback and tackle innovative infrastructure projects.

## Medium-term goals

- SNCM alumni find jobs in school nutrition and related careers.
- Nutrition departments adopt innovative approaches to offering school meals that are student-centered.
- Students are excited to try new foods.
- Students and familiar collaborate with nutrition departments to shape menu options.

## Long-term goals

- SNCM alumni grow as justice leaders.
- SNCM alumni support change efforts within their institutions to build a more innovative school food system and field.
- Partner sites sustain this work with policies and greater capacity.
- Partner sites increase average daily school meal participation.
- Partner sites Improve students' sense of belonging and joy in school meals.

# Competencies and Strategies

The competencies reflect the necessary skills to be proficient in school meals and supportive of your partner community. The strategies represented are based on alignment with FoodCorps partnerships and where AmeriCorps members are best positioned to move change forward. Members are not expected to excel in every area, but a foundational understanding will be supportive of their own growth and development within the school nutrition community.

<p><b>Introduction to School Nutrition Operations</b></p>	<p><b>Menu and Nutrition Management</b></p>	<p><b>Procurement</b></p>
<p><b>Strategy:</b> Staff training and professional development</p>	<p><b>Strategy:</b> Culturally responsive menu items  Scratch cooking and speed-scratch</p>	<p><b>Strategy:</b> Local procurement</p>
<p><b>School Nutrition Perception</b></p>	<p><b>Stakeholder Management</b></p>	<p><b>Equity in School Meals</b></p>
<p><b>Strategy:</b> Cafeteria environment*  Food education*  <i>*indicates a supplemental strategy</i></p>	<p><b>Strategy:</b> Family and community engagement</p>	<p><b>Strategy:</b> Student feedback and engagement</p>

*Thailiya Thomas and Genesis Mena test a recipe and cook a savory Korean pancake.*



CORE COMPETENCY

# Intro to School Nutrition Operations

## Description: Introduction to School Nutrition Operations

Administration, operations, and finance are the central elements of a school nutrition department. This learning path is designed to help FoodCorps members understand the foundations of school nutrition operations, including the role of local, state, and federal agencies that provide nourishing school meals. The School Nutrition Corps Member will increase their knowledge of the department in order to better support staff training and development.

## Objective: Introduction to School Nutrition Operations

The School Nutrition Corps Member will learn the history of how School Nutrition Programs were established in the United States, the various funding structures that support personnel, equipment, and procurement, and the operational models that can exist in the School Nutrition Program. FoodCorps members will also expand their learning through a self-guided safety and sanitation training that will support operations within the kitchen. The knowledge and skills learned will support menu change efforts in the district.

At FoodCorps, menu change is defined as the process from idea generation to tasting and menu adoptions for a single item on the school breakfast, lunch, or supper menu.

## Learning Outcomes: Introduction to School Nutrition Operations

By the conclusion of this module, the member will:

- **Understand** the federal, state, and local agencies that support school food operations.
- **Gain** knowledge of funding structures, including reimbursement and commodities.
- **Recognize** the various types of food service operation models unique to their school district.
- **Identify** the various organizational structures based on district size.
- **Learn** the appropriate safety and sanitation practices for their food service operation.

# District Goal: Staff Training and Professional Development

The foundation of staff training and professional development is positioning school food as a cornerstone in providing students with a sense of belonging. FoodCorps members support their school nutrition department in trainings that allow staff to explore food that honors students' and families' cultures. Staff training and professional development positions school staff to better support student learning in the cafeteria and classroom settings. Whether it is providing resources about the school nutrition program to teachers or assisting with training that will support scratch cooking, FoodCorps members catalyze change that has lasting impacts on the school community.



# Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
<p>Coordinate or support skill-building and professional development (including teacher trainings) that connect the classroom and cafeteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Train the Trainer sessions for teachers or staff to support district wellness goals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communications strategy to share the menu changes to various audiences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduce FoodCorps lessons district-wide</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create resources that support the connection between food justice and social justice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create resources that incorporate food served in school meals into the classroom</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alternative breakfast model trainings (e.g., Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab-n-Go, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of Smart Snacks Guidelines trainings to teachers or staff</li> <li>• Percentage increase in teachers or staff trained through “Train the Trainer” sessions (such as the wellness policy) to support district wellness goals</li> <li>• # schools implement FoodCorps lessons within [timeframe]</li> <li>• # of resources developed that incorporate food served in school meals into the classroom</li> <li>• Assess the effectiveness and reception of alternative breakfast model trainings through participants’ feedback and observed changes in breakfast service</li> </ul>
<p>Coordinate or support skill-building and professional development for Food and Nutrition Service staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff training related to scratch cooking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Updated process for scratch cooking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Garden to cafeteria</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Salad bar engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase in staff members trained in scratch-cooking techniques</li> <li>• # updated process for scratch cooking within [timeframe]</li> <li>• Assess staff feedback and experiences on the garden-to-cafeteria program to understand its impact on their work processes</li> <li>• Increase staff feedback on salad bar engagement training to gauge its effectiveness in improving their work practices</li> </ul>

*Students eating colorful, nourishing school meals in a cafeteria.*



CORE COMPETENCY

# Menu and Nutrition Management

## Description: Menu and Nutrition Management

This competency is designed to familiarize the School Nutrition FoodCorps Member with federal regulations and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition standards that qualify school meals for reimbursement under the National School Lunch Program, the National School Breakfast Program, and other nutrition programs at the school district where they will participate in national service as a FoodCorps AmeriCorps member. The School Nutrition Corps Member will develop the skills and ability to support equity-centered menu development that meets standards and understand the relationship of nutrition management to the overall integrity of the school nutrition program.

## Objective: Menu and Nutrition Management

The School Nutrition Corps Member will learn how the menu and USDA meal pattern of the school nutrition programs affect student acceptance of foods served, student participation in the program, and how the menu impacts program operations and finances. The School Nutrition Corps Member will demonstrate knowledge of navigating the processes and challenges that lead to community-informed menu options and will serve as a bridge to support menu changes in the district.

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## Learning Outcomes: Menu and Nutrition Management

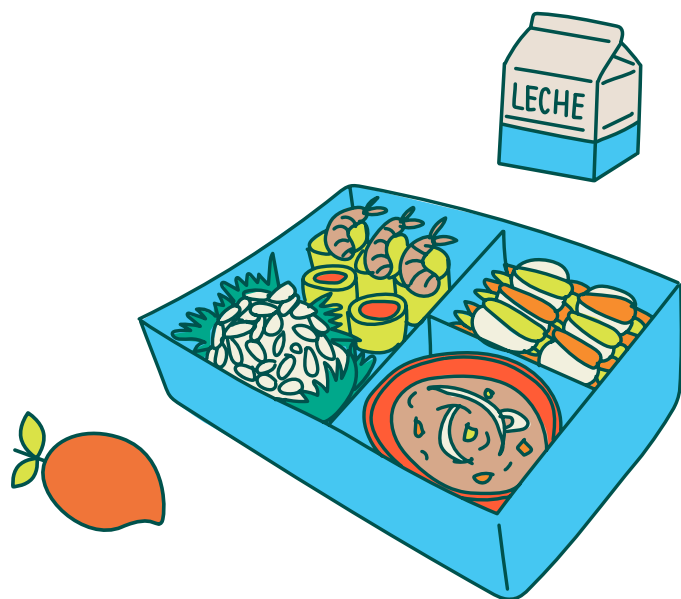
At the conclusion of this module, the member will:

- **Gain** knowledge of federal and local guidance regarding menu and nutrition requirements in school nutrition programs.
- **Support** the development and implementation of menus based on federal regulations, nutrition standards, and student and community feedback.
- **Recognize and describe** meal components for different school nutrition programs.



# District Goal: Culturally Responsive Menu Items

The goal of culturally responsive menus and menu items is to incorporate diverse food options that reflect and respect the cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds of students and their families. This approach encourages pluralism (instead of assimilation) by welcoming cultural culinary traditions into the cafeteria environment and the school menu. FoodCorps members are key partners in helping the district move toward a menu that not only honors differences in dietary habits and foodways but also create cafeterias that adapt, recognize, and celebrate students' diverse traditions as an integral part of each student's and family's uniqueness.



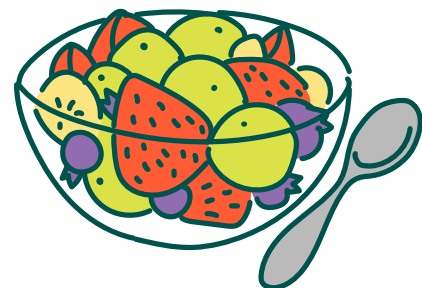
## Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
<p>Collaborate with community members (including students) on defining culturally responsive menu items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participate in district meetings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate taste tests for culturally responsive menu items</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support community coalitions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gather school nutrition staff and community input on spices or ingredients that can be added to menu items to become more culturally responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new culturally responsive menu item suggestions generated through the collaborative meetings with community members and students</li> <li>• # of culturally responsive menu items successfully implemented on the menu based on student feedback from taste tests</li> <li>• % increase in student satisfaction ratings for culturally relevant menu items</li> <li>• # of community coalitions formed for advancing culturally responsive school menu items</li> </ul>
<p>Support ongoing sustainability of culturally responsive menu change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School nutrition staff training on culturally responsive menu items</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> District menu committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase in staff knowledge of culturally responsive menu items</li> <li>• Support # staff trainings on how to prepare a cultural food</li> <li>• # of menu items successfully implemented based on collaborative input from the menu committee</li> </ul>
<p>Assist with the marketing and promotion of culturally responsive items</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> This is a supportive goal. SNCM can engage in this goal, but it cannot be the main goal during their 11 month program year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Resource development (e.g., posters, signage, fact sheets, social media)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communications strategy to share the menu changes to various audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create # posters, # different signages for various schools, # fact sheets for guardians and teachers, and # social media posts</li> <li>• Aim to inform ___% of students and school district community about menu changes within [timeframe], measured via social media metrics, feedback forms, and/or event attendance</li> </ul>

# District Goal: Increase Scratch and Speed-Scratch Cooking

Scratch cooking emphasizes menu items crafted from the ground up by using fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and raw and plant-based proteins. Speed-scratch cooking skillfully blends the freshness of these ingredients with the convenience of pre-made items, for example, assembling a pizza with a pre-made whole grain crust, topped with locally-sourced bell peppers. By implementing these cooking preparations with feedback informed by students, the community, and school nutrition staff, FoodCorps members support the school district in moving towards more nourishing food options that will foster the sense of belonging in students.

Sources used: [The Lunch Box](#), [USDA C1CN: Speed-Scratch Cooking](#)



## Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
<p>Collaborate with menu planner on menu development focused on scratch or speed-scratch cooking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recipe development with support of district staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scratch-cooked recipe taste-testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new or updated scratch-cooked recipes within a year</li> <li>• % increase in scratch-cooked recipe taste tests</li> </ul>
<p>Support operationalization of scratch or speed-scratch cooking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff training related to scratch cooking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research equipment needed for scratch cooking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore grant opportunities*</li> </ul> <p><i>*Researching and working on a grant is allowed, but it is not a requirement for SNCMs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support # staff trainings related to scratch-cooked recipes</li> <li>• Tracking systems to identify equipment needed for effective scratch cooking</li> <li>• # of grant opportunities identified by SNCM and pursued by district</li> </ul>
<p>Assist with the marketing and promotion of scratch-cooked items</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> This is a supportive goal. SNCM can engage in this goal, but it cannot be the main goal during their 11 month program year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Resource development (e.g., posters, signage, fact sheets, social media)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communications strategy to share the menu changes to various audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create # posters, # different signages for various schools, # fact sheets for guardians and teachers, and # social media posts</li> <li>• Aim to inform __% of students and school district community about menu changes within [timeframe], measured via social media metrics, feedback forms, and/or event attendance</li> </ul>

*A cafeteria staff member  
preps local-sourced  
carrots for the school's  
salad bar.*



CORE COMPETENCY

# Procurement

## Description: Procurement

This competency aims to introduce School Nutrition Corps Members to the essentials of school food procurement with the goal of supporting current school food operations within the district. The definition of local procurement differs across communities in school nutrition; it is influenced by a variety of factors, such as district size, proximity to growers, producers, ranchers, agricultural areas, growing seasons, climate, and demographics. With this in mind, FoodCorps Members will be introduced to the importance of creating sustainable, values-based partnerships with stakeholders who support district and community goals, as well as the concept of value-chain coordination. The knowledge and skills learned will provide the foundation to aid menu change efforts within the district.

## Objective: Procurement

The School Nutrition Corps Member will gain an introductory knowledge of the USDA guidelines and regulations that inform school food procurement. Through this competency, FoodCorps Members will learn value-chain strategies, the importance of relationship-driven partnerships, shifting power, and how to support the movement toward a highly collaborative, cooperative system through direct training provided by FoodCorps or values-aligned partners. Value-chain coordination in school nutrition involves aligning the values, goals, and efforts of all stakeholders, such as local farmers, distributors, the community, and the district.

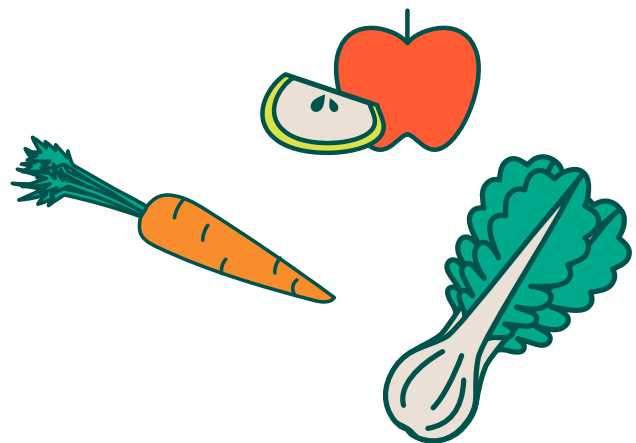
## Learning Outcomes: Procurement

By the conclusion of this module, the member will:

- **Gain** foundational knowledge of USDA guidelines and regulations governing school food procurement.
- **Learn** the principles of value-chain strategies within the context of school food and how these strategies can positively impact the local food systems.
- **Learn** the different roles FoodCorps AmeriCorps Members can play in value-chain coordination, such as facilitating effective procurement processes within the district and local food vendors.
- **Develop** skills to support current district efforts to create intentional, sustainable, and values-based partnerships between the district and local food vendors.

# District Goal: Local Procurement

The goal of local procurement is to strengthen the relationships between the district, local food vendors, and community stakeholders. By engaging local producers and implementing value-chain coordination strategies, the district can work toward shifting power to the community, coordinating efforts to showcase a variety of locally sourced items on the menu. FoodCorps Members can support districts on this initiative by facilitating communication efforts and relationship-building with stakeholders, as well as supporting the basic operational aspects of local procurement.



# Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
<p>Support the operational aspect of local procurement efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create/maintain a tracking system of local farmers and producers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">National Farm-to-Institution Metrics Collaborative</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Track systems of local produce</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Minneapolis Farm to School Toolkit</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acquire quotes and product specifications such as broccoli crowns vs. florets; case/pack size</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Update standard operating processes/procedures (SOPs) for food service models that support scratch cooking, salad bars, or local procurement projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate procurement of local items for programs such as Harvest of the Month (HOTM) and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase in the use of locally sourced ingredients</li> <li>• % increase in student awareness of the benefits of locally sourced food</li> <li>• Track the number of SOPs created to support local procurement efforts</li> <li>• # of schools where HOTM and FFVP have been implemented</li> <li>• Create a HOTM calendar with locally sourced produce</li> </ul>

Local Procurement Strategies continues next page



# Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
<p>Build relationships with local farmers and producers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sit on local farm-to-school coalitions where local farmers are present</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research and outreach to local growers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support district efforts in implementing value-chain coordination strategies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Aid in planning field trips or Meet the Farmer talks for students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular interviews and satisfaction surveys, specifically looking for indicators of mutual trust and communication frequency</li> <li>• # of partnerships established with local farmers and producers</li> <li>• Tracking system of local farmers and producers</li> </ul>
<p>Assist with the marketing and promotion of scratch-cooked items</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> This is a supportive goal. SNCM can engage in this goal, but it cannot be the main goal during their 11 month program year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop resources (e.g., posters, signage, fact sheets, social media) to share local efforts with various audiences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a communications strategy to share locally sourced, student-driven menu changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create # posters, # different signages for various schools, # fact sheets for guardians and teachers, and # social media posts</li> <li>• Aim to inform ___% of students and school district community about menu changes within [timeframe], measured via social media metrics, feedback forms, and/or event attendance</li> </ul>

Sources used: [USDA Procuring Local Foods](#), [USDA Farm to School Procurement Guide](#), [VCC](#), [Wallace Center](#)

*A lunch tray featuring a delicious and nutritious school meal.*



**CORE COMPETENCY**

# School Nutrition Perception

## Description: School Nutrition Perception

School meals deserve to be celebrated and seen as a hub for creativity, social justice, child health, and environmental sustainability. This module encourages members to reflect on their own experiences with school food, then examine the school community context in order to shift toward a more positive view of school meals. Members will develop knowledge and understanding of how marketing and effective communication can elevate the status of school nutrition programs, increase student participation, and contribute to the overall efficacy of the program. They will support district partners in creating cafeteria environments that make this possible while aiding food education corps members on efforts that link the classroom to the cafeteria.

## Objective: School Nutrition Perception

The stigma and negative perception of school food and the cafeteria experience among students, caregivers, and broader school communities discourages student participation, politicizes school meals, and holds the program back as a whole. In this module, members will learn techniques for communicating and collaborating with various audiences to inform, persuade, or challenge current perceptions of school meals and provide alternative perspectives. Whether it is informing parents at a back-to-school night, drafting resources to share with the community, or leveraging online spaces to shift the narrative, members will create school meals systems change.

## Learning Outcomes: School Nutrition Perception

At the conclusion of this module, the member will:

- **Understand** the common myths and misconceptions about school food.
- **Demonstrate** how to tailor and provide consistent messaging to different target audiences (employees, students, parents, principals, school district administration, and the general public).
- **Utilize** appropriate communication channels to share information with the school community.
- **Develop** resources to promote the school meals program.
- **Understand** the foundation principles of movement building through storytelling.
- **Support** the school nutrition department in marketing or promoting specific school nutrition programs or events.

# District Goal: Cafeteria Environment

The cafeteria environment is a critical learning space for students and the larger school community. Members work in schools to get kids excited about eating fruits and veggies, to support school nutrition staff in getting nourishing meals on the lunch tray, and to create positive, welcoming school environments for kids of all cultures and identities. By understanding the cafeteria environment, members are better positioned to affect how students perceive and participate in school meals programming.

This supplementary goal is included so members can work with school staff to support cafeteria initiatives that move the school meals program forward. Due to the primary goal of this position being to implement menu change, supporting changes in the cafeteria environment is a supplementary activity and should compose no more than 20% of the work of members.

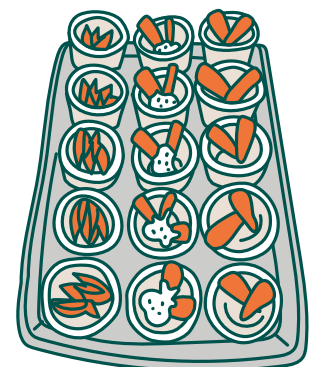
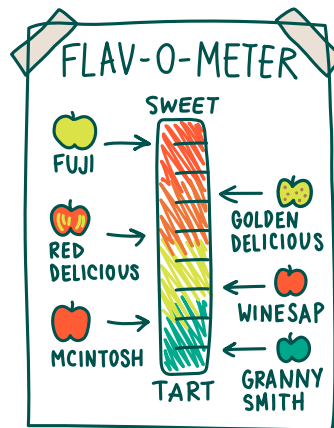


# Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
<p>Lead or support cafeteria environment improvement projects that can be replicated at multiple schools throughout the district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gather student input through projected-based learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with a principal and school FNS manager on Our Cafeteria Project</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work with Food Education Corps Members to create programs and projects for a more supportive cafeteria environment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work with student councils at various schools to facilitate programming to create a more inclusive cafeteria environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # student interviews to assess impressions of new cafeteria environment</li> <li>• Survey to assess feedback and satisfaction levels from students and staff to understand the impact and effectiveness of the ambassador program on improving cafeteria experiences</li> </ul>
<p>Develop resources, signage, or decorations to be used in school cafeterias</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create seasonal serving-line decorations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop informational posters about cafeteria safety and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create # posters, # different signages for various schools, # fact sheets for guardians and teachers</li> </ul>
<p>Support nationally recognized school nutrition events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop materials and work with food service department for National School Lunch or School Breakfast Week</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partner with local vendors for Farm to School Month or similar events that position the cafeteria as a place of learning and belonging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create # posters, # different signages for various schools, # fact sheets for guardians and teachers</li> <li>• Tracking collaboration with local vendors for events</li> </ul>

# District Goal: Food Education

This supplementary activity is included so members can support food education corps members that are partnering within the same district. Hands-on, experiential food education can get kids excited about growing, cooking, and tasting new foods, affecting these preferences for a lifetime. Schools hold enormous potential in shaping how kids experience food during their school years and for the rest of their lives. Members are encouraged to assist in hands-on learning activities that connect the cafeteria to the classroom. Due to the primary goal of this position being to impact menu change, food education is a supplementary activity and should compose no more than 20% of the work of members.



## Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
Develop educational materials for federally assisted grant programs such as Harvest of the Month (HOTM) and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop content for social media platforms (such as Youtube, Instagram, and TikTok) <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">34 Social Media Content Ideas</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase content engagement through social media analytics (likes, share, comments, views)</li> <li>• Increase student engagement on [social media platform] by % within [timeframe]</li> </ul>
Collaborate with FECM with specific connections to school meals	<input type="checkbox"/> Support Sprout Scouts or similar programming and connect food grown in garden to school cafeteria <input type="checkbox"/> Co-lead culinary-focused classes with FECM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement # foods grown in the garden (sourced from produce distributor) into the cafeteria menu</li> <li>• Assess the perceived improvement in meal quality and variety through surveys and feedback sessions from students and staff, following the integration of produce from Sprout Scouts or similar programs</li> <li>• Increase number of students attending culinary-focused classes</li> </ul>
Teach classes of students to support the consumption of nourishing meals	<input type="checkbox"/> Give a nutrition lesson for items on school menu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of classes taught to students within [timeframe]</li> </ul>
Create resources to support hands on learning (taught by teachers or Food Education Corps Members)	<input type="checkbox"/> Support Harvest of the Month enrichment requirement in the classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Develop FFVP resources or guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create # posters, # different signages for various schools, # fact sheets for guardians and teachers</li> </ul>
Support cafeteria composting and food waste management	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead a plate waste study <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">SB 1383 resources</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menu changed based on results from waste study</li> </ul>





## Description: Stakeholder Management

In the school nutrition community, stakeholders encompass a broad array of individuals who have a vested interest in cultivating the well-being of students. Examples of this important group of people include students, family members, caregivers, community members, teachers, school board and school administrators, and school nutrition staff. Members will develop knowledge on how to effectively engage and support the management of stakeholders at various levels while advancing equity through food (one of FoodCorps' core competency areas) in schools.

## Objective: Stakeholder Management

Members will learn how to strategically engage stakeholders in various aspects of school nutrition management. From receiving student menu feedback to participating in family and community engagement events, members will create strategies to engage, maintain, and explore new and existing relationships with stakeholders. Through their 11-month term, members will feel increased confidence in supporting community engagements that honor and celebrate diverse cultures, thereby building long-lasting and sustainable relationships between the community stakeholders and the school nutrition department.

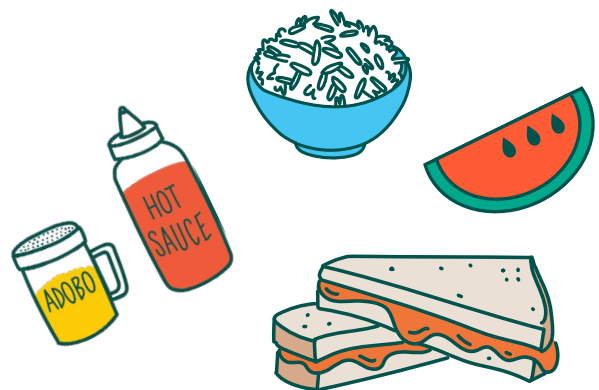
## Learning Outcomes: Stakeholder Management

At the conclusion of this module, the member will:

- **Understand and summarize** the role and status of each stakeholder.
- **Gain** skills to engage with a diverse array of stakeholders to enhance student well-being initiatives.
- **Understand** how to facilitate and support community events that promote cultural diversity and strengthen school-community ties.
- **Actively participate** in multiple stakeholder communities, as applicable.

# District Goal: Family & Community Engagement in School Nutrition

The goal of family and community engagement in school nutrition aims to foster meaningful interactions and partnerships between the school district and its families and community members. This goal is centered on understanding and addressing the collective needs, preferences, and aspirations related to providing nourishing and culturally responsive meals. This goal highlights the importance of collaborative communication and actions to enhance the school meal experience for students, their families, and the community.



## Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
Coordinate a parent/ community advisory on school meals in your district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Baseline assessment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Education and awareness campaign</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate or support a school meals community advisory group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase in community engagement as a result of a baseline assessment on school meals</li> <li>• Track growth in # of parents and community members reached and actively participating due to the education and awareness campaign</li> </ul>
Coordinate or participate in events that engage families and community members  *Use <a href="#">Family Engagement: Planning Resource</a> as a starting point * <a href="#">Family Engagement Tools</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide an interactive booth at a Community/ Family Night</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fruit or vegetable game wheel or food demonstration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Table at Back to School Night throughout the district</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate in-person and virtual cooking nights that include participation from both students and their families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase in community and families engaged through the events</li> <li>• Calculate # of attendees during each event</li> <li>• # of informational materials distributed during the event to families and the community</li> </ul>
Build or contribute to community partnerships that support school meal initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participate in a coalition with local partners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback from district work to external partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the quality and effectiveness of partnerships through feedback surveys with local partners</li> <li>• Evaluate changes in external partner strategies or operations as a result of feedback provided by SNCMs</li> </ul>

## Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
<p>Align district school nutrition goals and community vision for nourishing school meals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate conversations (such as facilitating a focus group)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Halal School Meals Focus Group*</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Focus Group Guide for FoodCorps Members</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gather data through a survey</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asset mapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 focus group within [timeline] to discuss school meals</li> <li>• Increased #of data points gathered through surveys to measure the alignment between school nutrition and community vision</li> <li>• # of community assets identified and described (institutions, individuals, associations, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p>Support communication between FNS and the school community</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> This is a supportive goal. SNCMs can engage in this goal, but it cannot be the main goal during their 11 months of national service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Draft a monthly/quarterly newsletter with a Parent/Community Corner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This could include a point of contact (email, Google Form, etc.) to give suggestions or feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # newsletters within [timeframe], reflecting the languages spoken in the community</li> </ul>

*A variety of fresh fruit and vegetables offered to students in the lunch line.*



CORE COMPETENCY

# Equity in School Meals

## Description: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in School Nutrition

Equity in school meals refers to the necessary resources that will achieve equal outcomes, recognizing that different people need different things to realize justice. “Justice in school meals” means that nourishing food is seen as a human right. It addresses structural barriers that inhibit access to that right\*. In this learning path, members will reflect on their own identity and how it affects and supports the advancement of nourishing school meals in their community. Through this awareness, members will begin to understand the complexities of the school food system and how change happens at each level.

\*Adapted from FoodPrint definition

## Objective: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in School Nutrition

Members will use the SHIFTING framework as their foundation to apply an equity-centered approach to school meals. SHIFTING is an acronym that FoodCorps created to help guide us in our work, relationships, and decision-making. This tool was specifically adapted for school nutrition professionals to apply to programming and the administration of federally funded programs. School Nutrition Corps Members will collaborate with school districts on increasing culturally responsive meals, local foods, and scratch cooking by centering the voice and choice of students. As systemic and structural barriers are addressed through equity-centered approaches, the School Nutrition Corps Member and district will come closer to offering menus and an environment where all can experience the joy and power of food.

## Learning Outcomes: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in School Nutrition

At the conclusion of this module, the member will:

- **Understand** the various levels of equity consciousness as it relates to school meals change.
- **Participate** in equity-centered projects that center student voice and choice.
- **Complete** a SHIFTING project during the program year, in consultation with their FoodCorps programs and School Nutrition Leadership teams.
- **Support** systems that work to increase student-level feedback and engagement.

# District Goal: Student Feedback and Engagement

Student feedback and engagement is fundamental in school meals, as it centers the experience and amplifies the voices of those most impacted by the school food system. Members participate in activities that close the feedback loop between students and the cafeteria. The greatest impact can be seen when food education and School Nutrition Corps Members collaborate on projects that reinforce education in the classroom with change in the cafeteria. It is through this goal that members are learning the deep systemic change that results in a more justice oriented school environment.



# Strategies

Strategies	Example Member Activities & Projects	Examples of Metrics (suggested for district collection)
Support a student taste test, survey, or demonstration that supports school menu change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct taste test at school level—can be in collaboration with Food Education Member</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Garden-to-Cafeteria Program: SNCMs can support students and FECMs on integrating garden produce into school meals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likert scale or rating system to measure % increase of student satisfaction</li> <li>• # of menu items added based on taste test results</li> <li>• Consumption data: Analyze sales or consumption data to identify changes in the consumption patterns of different menu items before and after the menu changes</li> </ul>
Coordinate or facilitate a student-led advisory in school meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with students to conduct a comprehensive landscape assessment and create a strategy (utilizing components from Our Cafeteria Project or similar project-based learning resources)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Our Cafeteria Project</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate an ambassador program with students to promote the school meals program</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">NOW Project</a>, San Francisco</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % increase in student satisfaction ratings for specific menu items</li> <li>• % increase in student participation in the school meals program (NSLP, SBP, etc.)</li> <li>• Survey to assess feedback and satisfaction levels from students and staff to understand the impact and effectiveness of the ambassador program on improving school meals</li> </ul>
Support self-sustaining efforts through menu data collection, data analysis, and/or data implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support or develop menu surveys to understand student experience with the menu and overall meal service</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support data analysis of menu surveys (themes, ratings, levels of satisfaction)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Help implement a data-driven menu design process where findings from the collected data are used to revise and improve future menu plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # menu surveys distributed and # returned, reflecting student engagement with the menu and meal service in # schools across the district</li> <li>• Themes identified from # menu surveys (such as satisfaction, dissatisfaction, food quality, etc.)</li> <li>• Percentage of menu items revised or improved based on data-driven feedback from student menu surveys</li> </ul>





*Julia Balsam watches a student place a vote during a cafeteria taste test.*



To learn more about FoodCorps please visit our website.

[www.foodcorps.org](http://www.foodcorps.org)

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