



# Healthy, Hunger-Free Schools Minnesota

## BACKGROUND

**Hunger in Minnesota is unacceptably high.**  
1 in 6 kids in Minnesota is food insecure.

**Adequate nutrition is a precursor to success in schools.**  
Students who participate in school meals have improved attendance, and academic achievement as well as decreased tardiness. Like busing, internet access and proper hydration, food is required for learning.

**MN is leaving millions of federal dollars on the table.**  
The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a federal program that allows high poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no charge to ALL students. Currently, only half of Minnesota schools eligible for CEP are participating.



**1 in 6**  
kids in Minnesota  
is food insecure

## HEALTHY, HUNGER-FREE SCHOOLS

The purpose of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Schools Program is to ensure all students are supported in achieving their academic potential; that all students have access to nutritious options while they are developing life-long eating habits; and that there is no stigma associated with receiving free school meals. Core components of the bill include:

- Requires all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to provide breakfast and lunch to all children at no cost to them.
- Maximizes federal reimbursements including Free and Reduced-Price Lunch and the Community Eligibility Provision.
- Requires eligible schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision and provides additional state resources to fully fund school meals for the children not covered by this provision.

## IMPACT

**Increase Future Potential.** Ensuring kids get healthy food is a critical step on the path out of poverty. This is good for Minnesota. When you have stronger, smarter, healthier kids, you have a stronger, smarter, healthier, more economically competitive state.

**Address Health Equity.** Minnesota ranks among the worst in the nation when it comes to health equity, and ensuring all students have access to healthy food at school is one of the most impactful tools available to address food as a social determinant of health.

**Reduce Stigma and End Lunch Shaming.** Universal meals level the playing field for all students. Kids will no longer feel singled out for eating a school meal.

**Cover All Kids.** 1 in 4 kids in Minnesota who experience food insecurity are in households that earn too much to qualify for free or reduced school meals.

**Maximize Federal Resources.** 158 schools in Minnesota are currently eligible for CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) but are not participating. Ensuring all eligible schools are able to participate would bring millions in additional support to cover school meals for all kids in high poverty schools.

Lead partners include Allina, American Diabetes Association, Appetite for Change, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Children's Minnesota, Ed Allies, Education Minnesota, Every Meal, Food Research and Action Center, General Mills, Hunger Solutions Minnesota, MAZON, Minnesota Legal Aid, Minnesota School Social Workers Association, Second Harvest Heartland, The Food Group and YouthPrise.

For more information contact Leah Gardner, [lgardner@hungersolutions.org](mailto:lgardner@hungersolutions.org), 651-789-9850