

# School Meals+

Strategies for Building Successful & Sustainable School Meal Programs



## Background

This is an exciting time for school meals. As a result of the updated USDA nutrition standards for school meals, students have greater access to a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lower-sodium menu items. While the implementation of the new standards has faced challenges, the changes have also given school districts the opportunity to rethink and revitalize school meals in order to attract new customers. In partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, **California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA)** is working with school district leaders across Los Angeles County to ensure that school cafeterias play a powerful and active role in improving student eating habits.

## Goals

With over 900,000 students attending public schools daily in Los Angeles County, cafeterias offer opportunities to teach students good eating habits that can last a lifetime. The project's goals are:

- Provide more appealing, freshly prepared school meals.
- Incorporate behavioral economics strategies (i.e. relocating fruit, renaming vegetables, prompting students to select healthy items, etc.) into the school cafeteria's design and operations.

## Project

CFPA will help school districts (school food services, school boards, cafeteria managers) implement **School Meals+** strategies, a menu of interventions that can support implementation of the new USDA standards and ensure success and sustainability of the school meals program. CFPA can provide technical assistance and tools in the following areas:

- Improve the appeal and presentation of breakfast and lunch dishes
- Identify innovative ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption
- Increase the number of freshly-prepared school meals
- Create effective brands to market cafeteria meals
- Promote water consumption on school campus
- Connect with key stakeholders and share best practices



Incorporating **School Meals+** strategies has been shown in many communities to increase participation, decrease food waste, and **enhance the bottom line**.

## Contact

Please contact us to learn how to partner on this initiative.

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