Key Policy Recommendations for Healthy, Climate-Friendly School Foodservice



CONGRESS

• Expand and establish new grant programs and/or reimbursement incentives that help schools serve plant-based meals, such as the program envisioned in the Healthy Future Students and

Earth Act (H.R. 4108 in the 117th Congress).

- Fund nutrition education, school gardens, improved kitchen facilities, equipment and staff training to facilitate scratch cooking and plantbased food preparation.
- Increase meal reimbursement rates and establish permanent universal free meals nationwide.
- Require that non-dairy milk options be made available to any student whose parent makes a request; and authorize school districts to provide a nutritionally equivalent non-dairy milk to any student.



Reform the USDA Foods Program, including by expanding minimally processed and organic plant-based

protein offerings (e.g., tofu, lentils and black bean burgers); offering climate-friendly food products such as organic options; eliminating processed lunch meats; and increasing transparency.

- Modify meal patterns to remove barriers to serving plant-based and plant-forward options and remove the requirement that dairy milk must be taken as part of a reimbursable meal.
- Provide dedicated technical assistance to School Food Authorities (SFAs) on strategies for expanding plant-based and plant-forward menu options.



CALIFORNIA POLICYMAKERS

- Provide continued financial incentives to schools for offering plant-based entrées and organic food options, similar to the recent \$100M appropriation for School Foods Best Practices.
- Provide continued funding for California's Farm to School Program, prioritizing sourcing from farms that use organic practices; culinary training for plant-based food preparation; and marketing and education on climate-friendly farming and culturally appropriate plant-based foods.
- Provide continued Kitchen Infrastructure and Training (KIT) funds for school food services to purchase kitchen equipment and upgrades and offer foodservice staff training.



SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Pass wellness and/or nutrition policies that eliminate or significantly reduce processed meat on school food menus and encourage serving organic and plant-based food.
- Ask for more plant-based sources of protein and higher quality animal products in USDA Foods.
- Adopt a climate action resolution that commits to pursue climate-friendly foodservice and set a district-wide goal for reducing the carbon footprint of school food.
- Take advantage of CDFA funded culinary training opportunities, kitchen infrastructure and training funds, and farm to school programs to procure and serve scratch-cooked plant-forward entrées.
- Expand choices for plant-based offerings on school menus so that at least one plant-based entrée beyond nut butter sandwiches is featured every day.

