

Deputy Minister's Bulletin

Ministry of Education and Child Care



Feeding Futures School Food Programs Fund – Instructions to School Districts

April 4, 2023

The Ministry is allocating \$71.5 million per year in dedicated, multi-year funding to school districts to increase food security for students by expanding or creating school food programs.

This new funding is part of government's broader Feeding Futures School Food Programs Framework, which is a commitment to ensure students are properly fed for learning in order to enhance positive academic and healthy outcomes. Feeding Futures School Food Programs (FFSFP) funding addresses the top two barriers identified by schools in the province: sustainable and consistent food funding and human resources.

Funding is allocated in a similar manner to the Student and Family Affordability Fund (SFAF). This means it is proportional to preliminary September operating grants, with a floor funding level of \$350,000. This first year of funding is intentionally flexible to provide districts with time to develop a longer-term approach to delivering school food programs.

School Year (SY) 23/24 Foundational Year

Districts will have the flexibility over the foundational year (SY 2023/24), to continue supports established with SFAF that increase student food security as longer-term food programming supports are put into place. Criteria will be adjusted over time; districts can expect standardized FFSFP spending criteria in place for SY 2025/26.

This new FFSFP funding may free up district operating funding that has been previously dedicated to school food program budgets to use for other non-educational supports (e.g., mental health).

FFSFP spending criteria:

- Food
 - Must be towards the delivery of food programs to feed students who need it most (e.g., maintain current programs, increase number of students served, increase nutrition of food).
 - Spending may support Culinary Arts programs if the food produced by the program is provided to students in need.
 - Program delivery may include the procurement of third-party food service providers, or expansion of existing contracts.
 - Districts are encouraged to use nutritious and B.C. grown/produced food where possible.
 - Program delivery should be stigma-free, flexible, and respect student privacy.
- Staff
 - Flexibility to hire up to one School Food Coordinator FTE if needed or offset existing costs to a School Food Coordinator.
 - Functions of role may include coordination and/or delivery of the program (e.g., prepare food, build community connections, seek local partnerships and procurement opportunities, work with local First Nations and Indigenous partners).
- Other (for foundational year only)
 - Small appliances or equipment to prepare, store, cook and transport food from a school with a kitchen to another school (e.g., kitchen utensils, insulated containers, microwaves).
 - Continuity of SFAF supports that improve student food security (e.g., grocery store gift cards, food for weekends and school closures).

Reporting

- Spending plans will be required in July 2023.
- A draft spending plan reporting template will be distributed shortly and will ask for budgeted **Spending on Food Security** including:
 - Utilization of third-party food service providers: caterers; food distributors; First Nations; and not-for-profit organizations or non-government organizations.
 - Food purchased and provided using district staff: food produced in BC; and other.
 - Other goods, services and/or programs to feed students that are within the policy direction.
 - Spending to provide food security supports.
 - Staffing costs to directly support the provision of food programs: Administration; Management/Professionals; Teachers; and Support Staff.
 - Operational spending targeted to food programs prior to the FFSFP funding announcement redirected to supporting educational programs.
 - There should be no space enhancement spending in this category.
 - Administration or overhead spending (e.g., equipment, non-food supplies) in this category must be minimal and limited to SY 2023/24 only to transition to longer-term sustainable programming.
- An interim report will be required in early spring 2024 to support Ministry understanding of spending patterns.
- Reporting will be required at the end of the school year, in addition to the reporting in the Annual Budget and audited Financial Statements for 2023/24. Reporting categories will mirror those in the Spending Plan.
- School districts will also be asked to report on decisions making processes regarding the funding:
 - What processes were used to identify students who could benefit from this funding, including those from diverse communities where equity is a consideration?
 - Did you engage with your Indigenous Education Council (IEC or local equivalent) to identify the needs of Indigenous students?
 - If so, who did you engage with and how?
 - If not, what other engagement with Indigenous peoples did you undertake?
 - How did you support First Nations students living on reserve/other First Nations students and other Indigenous students attending your schools with this funding?
 - Number of students
 - Amount of funding
 - Types of support

Future Considerations

- Building the capacity in each district to work towards stigma-free access to nutritious food for any students who need it will take time.
- Each district's long-term delivery model of school food programs is expected to be stigma-free in addition to supplementing with coordination from the surrounding community.
- Community inclusion (e.g., non-profit organizations, corporate donors and parent advisory councils) will be an essential component of each district's long-term model. District Parent Advisory Councils should be included in the long-term planning process.
- The multi-year funding commitment supports districts to enter into long-term agreements (e.g., food service management companies, non-profit organizations, local catering companies and food suppliers/distributors).