

Deputy Minister's Bulletin

Ministry of Education and Child Care



Feeding Futures School Food Programs Funding – Questions and Answers

April 4, 2023

What is the purpose of the new school food programs funding?

- Budget 2023 commits \$214.5 million in operating funding over three years to make sure all students are fed and ready to learn, by expanding existing school food programs in districts and schools that already have them and creating new ones in districts and schools without.

How much funding has been committed to school food programs in the 2023/24 school year?

- For the 2023/24 school year, Budget 2023 includes:
 - \$71.5 million for districts for targeted food funding and school food coordinators staffing,
 - \$5.0 million for capital enhancements required for school food programs.
- The allocation formula is consistent with the one-time Student and Family Affordability Fund (SFAF), but with the funding floor increased to \$350,000.

Who qualifies for this funding?

- The 60 public school districts in B.C.
- The funding is expected to reach the 20% of the students who are facing food insecurity across the province.

When will we know each district's allocation?

- District allocations are available [here](#).

What can this money be used for?

- School districts will have the flexibility to use the funding provided in the 2023/24 school year to address the immediate need of feeding hungry students in a stigma and barrier-free manner.
- Funding can be used for food purchases and staffing up to one FTE for school food program coordination in their school district.
- Stable, on-going funding will help districts to enter into long-term agreements and partnerships with non-profit organizations, local catering companies and food suppliers/distributors.

Can salaries at the school level be paid for under this funding? For example, staff to organize and provide food services (food bags etc.)?

- The intent is to directly support students, making sure all students are fed and ready to learn.
- There are reasonable exceptions though, like where there are additional staff required, such as kitchen staff to make and prepare the additional food and meals.
- However, the intent is not to allow for administrative overhead (e.g., reporting costs, HR costs, costs of paperwork, additional insurance, the consultation, engagement costs, etc.).

Can the 2023/24 school year funding be used over multiple years? For example, if a district has an allocation of \$800,000 can they plan to spend \$200,000 per year on lunches for the next four years?

- No, this commitment provides multi-year funding to address the immediate need of student hunger in the province.
- There should be no need to hold back funding for future years as districts now have a commitment of on-going funding to plan for each year.

Is CommunityLINK funding impacted in any way by new school food funding?

- CommunityLINK is not changing at this time.
- Many districts use CommunityLINK funding for school food programs; you can expect funding to continue and, if food programs are already robust, districts can redirect this funding to other student supports.

Are districts expected to offer universal food programs to students? What about weekend and holiday supports?

- The funding is expected to reach the 20% of the students who are facing food insecurity across the province.
- Building the capacity in each school community to work towards stigma and barrier-free access to nutritious food for any students who need it, will take time.
- The delivery of food programs is expected to be stigma-free, considering models such as opt-in and pay-what-you-can, in addition to supplementing with coordination with the surrounding community.
- The support from community non-profit organizations, corporate donors and parent advisory councils will continue to play a vital role alongside schools to address student hunger for weekends and school closures (e.g., spring break).

Can capital, for example fridges, or other equipment be purchased with this funding?

- The intent of the funding is that it should be used to expand existing processes and practices where it can have the most impact, rather than in purchasing capital items and equipment.
- However, if a school district can justify that it needs to purchase equipment to allow food programs to be delivered at a school, then this is permissible in the first year of funding.
- Alternatively, capital investments to enhance food security can be supported through the Feeding Futures School Food Infrastructure Program (FIP), a \$5 million per year program to assist boards of education with creating, improving, or expanding the delivery of food programs.
- Districts will receive FIP instructions in April.

Can we keep working with non-profit organizations or current community partners?

- Yes, community inclusion is essential for a long-term model of feeding students; non-profit organizations, corporate donors and parent advisory councils will continue to play a vital role alongside schools to deliver school food programs.

How do we start building a school food program in our district?

- Please visit www.gov.bc.ca/bcschoolfood, which contains information on how to start and/or expand a school food program. Additional resources will continue to be added to the website as they are developed.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

- Please reach out to your local school district or contact ECC.schoolfood@gov.bc.ca.