



invests in our school nutrition professionals with \$100 million in one-time Proposition 98 General Fund that will provide school kitchen infrastructure upgrades and training for staff. ***These proposed investments, however, still fall short of achieving School Meals for All as the permanent policy in California.***<sup>1</sup>

We, the undersigned 206 organizations, continue our support of the 2021 Budget Act providing urgent funding to support several policies to reduce child hunger, improve nutrition and educational outcomes, and maximize federal resources available through the Child Nutrition programs. ***We thank the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees for advancing aligning packages of investments to achieve School Meals for All.***

***We urge support by all stakeholders for these actions to provide full funding for the implementation of School Meals for All in California.*** These transformative changes will advance us toward a hunger-free future for our children, provide fundamental support for our essential school nutrition workforce, and bolster our critical agricultural sector.

Specifically, we ask that the 2021 Budget Act include the following provisions:

1. Establish a mechanism to provide free school meals for all California K-12 students. Specifically, to adopt the Senate's proposal to increase state meal reimbursement by \$54 million in the 2021-22 fiscal year and provide \$650 million in ongoing Proposition 98 funding beginning in 2022-23, to cover the costs of offering free breakfast and lunch for all students. LEAs will be required to participate in the National School Meals Programs commencing in 2022-23 and offer breakfast and lunch to all students.
2. Approve the May Revision proposal with amendments to increase funding to \$200 million and define "healthier" and "nutritious." The May Revision proposal would appropriate \$100 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund to provide training for school food service workers to promote healthier and more nutritious meals, and grants for kitchen infrastructure upgrades and improvements to increase access to fresh, high quality school meals.
3. Approve the May Revision proposal to increase Item 6100-201-0890 by \$257,337,000 one-time Federal Trust Fund and includes provisional language for payments to child nutrition program operators. Pursuant to Section 722 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, this program provides reimbursement to school food authorities and other program operators for declining program revenue resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Approve the May Revision proposal to Fund the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Farm to School Initiative at \$30 million.

Although California produces nearly half of our country's fruits and vegetables, our kids are going hungry at alarming rates. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, over two million California children were experiencing food insecurity and struggling to receive adequate nutrition. Now, as

---

<sup>1</sup> Center for Ecoliteracy. <https://www.californiafoodforcaliforniakids.org/governor%E2%80%99s-may-revise-budget-could-leave-out-half-california-schools>.

schools are closed and families struggle to pay bills, food insecurity in California has skyrocketed to levels never before seen. The hunger crisis is hitting communities of color the hardest, with Black and Latinx families with children reporting food insecurity twice that of white households. While the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has taken steps to allow the continued service of free school meals, this de-facto free meal service is set to expire at the end of the 2021-22 school year, taking away a critical nutritional resource from children and families as they continue to experience economic hardship.

Schools and essential nutrition service workers have proven themselves to be trusted community lifelines for students and families. The budget requests we are asking for will allow our schools to serve free meals to all students as the negative economic stresses of the pandemic continue to impact California families in the years to come.

Aside from the immediate need to reduce child hunger, a body of evidence shows that receiving proper nutrition benefits child development, behavior, ability to learn, and the creation of lifelong healthy habits. California's roughly 6.2 million K-12 students are in the midst of obtaining an education that will have monumental impacts on the rest of their lives. If funded, these budget requests will ensure that each one of them has the nutrition they need to learn and thrive — a great equalizer for all students regardless of family income.

Moreover, our schools purchasing more school food from local farmers, via increased farm to school program funding, will bolster the state's economy and support the resiliency of our California farmers. Providing grant funding is critical to support our school nutrition service workers to procure, prepare, and serve fresh, healthy California-grown foods to our children. Grant funding is vital to help meet these additional expenses and will bring several long-term benefits, including to: support California's agricultural producers, strengthen farm-to-school partnerships, improve children's health, and reduce the climate footprint of our food system.

These provisions will go a long way to prevent hunger and improve nutrition while school is in session, but we must take additional action to support low-income students when schools are not in session that are proven to be the times of greatest hunger.

If funded, these investments will reduce child hunger, improve the school academic environment, help low-income families, and provide economic and social benefits that support California farmers. For these reasons, our supporting organizations are proud to support these requests and urge investment in these critical programs in the 2021 Budget Act.

We look forward to working with the Administration and the Legislature in the coming weeks to ensure that Universal Meals, including breakfast and lunch, are included in the final budget with enough funding to make this proposal a reality without creating school meal debt for parents or deficits for schools.

Sincerely,

9to5

Acterra

Agricultural Institute of Marin

Alameda County Community Food Bank

Alliance of Nurse for Healthy Environments - ANHE

Alum Rock Union Elementary School District

Alvord Unified School District

AKI

Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency

American Academy of Pediatrics, California

American Diabetes Association

American Heart Association

American Legion, Santa Cruz

Asian Americans for Housing and Environmental Justice

Asian Food Trade Association

Bay Area Community Resources

Bay Area Legal Aid

Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative

Bay Area Ranchers Coop BAR-C

Bayshore Elementary School District

Berkeley Food Institute

Bonita Unified School District

Cajon Valley Union School District

California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

California Association of Food Banks

California Food and Farming Network

California Immigrant Policy Center

California School Nurses Organization

California State PTA

Californians for Disability Rights, Inc.

Calistoga Joint Unified School District

Campbell Union School District

Carpinteria Unified School District

Center for Ecoliteracy

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Central California Food Bank

Central Kitchen

Ceres Community Project

Children's Advocacy Institute

City of Watsonville Environmental Science Workshop

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations

Coastside Hope

Common Sense Media

Community Action of Napa Valley, Food Bank

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County  
Community Food Bank of Stockton  
Community Health Trust of Pajaro Valley  
Compass Family Services  
Conscious Kitchen  
County of Santa Clara  
Cultiva La Salud  
Dignity Health Connected Living, North State Food Bank  
Dolores Huerta Foundation  
Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation  
Emerald Earth Farms  
Emergency Food Bank of Stockton  
End Child Poverty California/GRACE Institute  
Environmental Working Group  
EPIC  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Extra Food  
Feeding San Diego  
Feeding America Riverside & San Bernardino Counties  
Fiber Shed  
FIND Food Bank  
First 5 California  
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano  
Food Bank of Eldorado County  
Food Bank of Santa Barbara County  
Food Bank for Monterey County  
Food For People  
Food Link for Tulare County  
Food Matters  
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)  
Food Share of Ventura County  
Food Tribe  
FoodCorps  
Fort Bragg Food Bank  
Foster Poultry Farms  
Fresh Approach  
Fresno Barrios Unidos  
Friends Committee on Legislation of California  
Friends of the Earth  
Frog Hollow Farm  
GLIDE  
Growing the Table  
Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County  
Healthier Kids Foundation

Healthy Day Partners  
Healthy Schools Campaign  
Holy Cross Food Pantry  
Housing on Merit  
Hunger Action Los Angeles  
Imperial Valley Food Bank  
Inland Equity Partnership  
Innovative Health Solutions  
Interfaith Food Bank for Amador County  
Jacob's Heart Cancer Support Services  
K12 Food Pros  
Kehillat Israel  
Kings Community Action Agency  
Koreatown Youth & Community Center  
LA FOWLER, LLC  
Lakeport Unified School District  
Lakeside Union School District  
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California  
Life Lab  
Long Beach Unified School District  
Los Angeles Community Action Network  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
LunchAssist  
Mar Vista Homeless Task Force  
Marin Food Policy Council  
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
Merced County Food Bank  
Monterey Peninsula Unified School District  
Moreland School District  
Morgan Hill Unified School District  
Morris Grassfed  
National Association of Social Workers California  
National Council of Jewish Women California Policy Advocacy Network  
National Farm to School Network  
National Women's Political Caucus of California  
NextGen California  
No Kid Hungry  
NOSH - Napa's Operative for School food Health  
Oakland Food Policy Council  
Oakland Unified School District  
Office of Kat Taylor  
Orange County Food Bank  
Oxnard School District  
Pacific Elementary School District

ParentChild+ Bay Area  
Pesticide Action Network  
Placer County Food Bank  
Project Ropa  
Redwood Empire Food Bank  
Richards Grassfed Beef  
River City Food Bank  
Root Down Farm, LLC  
Roots of Change  
Sacramento City USD  
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services  
Sacramento Food Policy Council  
Sage Garden Project  
Salud Para La Gente  
San Diego Childhood Obesity Initiative  
San Diego Food Bank  
San Diego Hunger Coalition  
San Diego Unified School District  
San Francisco Senior & Disability Action  
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank  
San Jose Bridge Communities  
San Lorenzo Family Help Center  
San Luis Coastal Unified School District  
San Luis Obispo Food Bank  
San Ramon Valley Unified School District  
Santa Cruz American Legion Post 64  
Santa Cruz City Schools  
Santa Cruz Community Health Centers  
Santa Cruz Medical Society  
Santa Rosa City Schools  
SCCSBA Legislative Action Committee  
Second Harvest Food Bank Orange County  
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County  
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley  
Second Harvest of the Greater Valley  
Senior & Disability Action San Francisco  
Sequoia Science Foundation  
Sierra Harvest  
Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits  
SLCUSD Food  
Slow Food California  
Snowline J.U.S.D.  
Solana Beach School District  
Southern Humboldt Unified School District

SPUR  
SRVUSD Child Nutrition  
Stemple Creek Ranch  
Stronger California Advocates Network  
Sustainable Agriculture Education  
Teen Kitchen Project  
The Gubbio Project  
The HEAL Project  
The Opportunity Institute  
The Praxis Project  
The Resource Connection Food Bank  
The San Diego County Childhood Obesity  
The Women's Building  
TomKat Ranch  
Turlock Unified School District  
Turning Green / Conscious Kitchen  
unBox  
United States Healthful Food Council Inc., DBA Eat REAL  
Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College  
Village Lutheran Church and Interfaith Center  
Wellness in the Schools, Inc.  
West Contra Costa Unified School District  
Western Center on Law and Poverty  
Westside Coalition  
Westside Food Bank  
Westside Infant-Family Network (WIN)  
Westwood Presbyterian Church  
Women's Foundation California  
Yolo Food Bank  
Yuba-Sutter Food Bank

Cc: Angie Wei, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Joey Freeman, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Richard Figueroa, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Kayla Ungar, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Bryan Sapp, Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond  
Keely Bosler, Department of Finance  
Chris Ferguson, Department of Finance  
Christopher Woods, Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins  
Jason Sisney, Office of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Joe Stephenshaw, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee  
Christian Griffith, Assembly Committee on Budget

Jessica Bartholow, Office of Senator Nancy Skinner  
Jessica Duong, Office of Assemblymember Phil Ting  
Elisa Wynne, Senate Budget Subcommittee #1  
Erin Gabel, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2  
Joanne Roy, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2  
Genevieve Morelos, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3  
Edgar Cabral, Legislative Analyst's Office