

Every Meal is an Investment in Student Equity and Success!

California Universal Meals

This program has helped to reduce child hunger by serving **64 million more meals annually* to students** since the program began, even as student enrollment and attendance declines, ensuring more students have access to healthy meals. Universal meals supports all students' well-being and academic success, particularly for families ineligible for federal aid due to California's high cost of living. It plays a key role in alleviating food insecurity and promoting equity during the school day.

*Data from Dept of Ed



Support Equity for All Children

- **1 in 4 California families with children face food insecurity.**
- All children receive equity in qualified teachers, curriculum, desks, clean classrooms, why not meals?
- Universal meal reduces stigma of accessing the cafeteria, regardless of socioeconomic status.
- Research shows benefits from Meals for All including:
 - Improved student nutrition
 - Better attendance and academic performance**

**Research: Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs

Kitchen Infrastructure and Training (KIT)

KIT funding is essential to upgrade outdated school kitchens and meet rising meal demand. While 92% of schools have benefited, a study done by University of Berkeley estimates \$5.8 billion is still needed for all California schools to be scratch cooking capable. Investing in KIT improves meal quality, supports staff training, and expands access to fresh, California-grown food.



Grow California Together!

School meal programs are the largest consumer of US agriculture, purchasing over \$3 billion worth of food annually. California Universal Free School Meals create a reliable market for local agricultural businesses and help build food systems that support both student health and learning along with the future of agriculture.