SNAP Outreach in Schools Factsheet

New York's Universal Free School Meal Program requires all participating schools to share information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with families.

SNAP is our nation's largest anti-hunger program, helping nearly 3 million New Yorkers, including more than 850,000 children, supplement their monthly food costs. However, **many eligible New Yorkers are not participating.**

As trusted messengers, schools can share information about SNAP with families and **help close this gap.** SNAP outreach in schools connects more students and families with nutrition resources, while streamlining access to additional services and benefits.

SNAP participation benefits the whole school community:

Students



see improved health, higher reading and math scores, and increased graduation rates.

Families



can get additional benefits like test fee waivers, discounts on AP courses, and Summer EBT, a vital nutrition resource when school is out.

Schools



spend fewer resources on collecting household income information, and may qualify for summer meals, afterschool meals, CEP, and other programs.

> "Implementing SNAP outreach has been a practical and meaningful step for our district. It ensures more families get connected to resources they're eligible for and reduces the administrative burden on school staff. ***It's a smart, student-centered approach."***
>
> —Lisa Ostrowski, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, North Colonie Central School District

Promote SNAP Using the SNAP Outreach Toolkit for Schools

Our SNAP Outreach Toolkit includes free flyers, graphics, and sample communications, and directs families to a SNAP prescreening tool to determine if they might be eligible and connect with free application assistance. Available at: **HungerSolutionsNY.org/SNAPschooltoolkit**



Outreach Best Practices

Engage the school community:

- Equip school social workers, counselors, nurses, and support professionals with outreach resources and referral information. Integrate SNAP outreach in student wellness programs and family support services.
- Highlight SNAP outreach efforts to district administrators, building principals, school nutrition staff, and teachers. Present at staff meetings to explain the importance of SNAP outreach and where your outreach resources are available

Ensure SNAP outreach is publicly available and easy to access:

- Use "high traffic" communication channels, including district-wide parent/school platforms like ParentSquare, newsletters, emails, texts, robocalls, and social media. Also, consider adding SNAP information to the district website, cafeteria menus, calendars, bulletin boards, and at school events.
- Explain the benefits of participating in SNAP and next steps for applying so families understand how SNAP helps and where to find application assistance. Provide both electronic and printed copies to maximize reach. Our outreach toolkit can help!

SNAP helps families buy food.

See if you may be eligible

Add a button on your website to give families an easy way to take the next step. Link to myBenefits.ny.gov or SNAPHelpNY.org

Incorporate SNAP outreach in year-round communications for frequent exposure:

- Back to school: Include SNAP information in back-to-school packets.
- Mid-year: Pair SNAP information with local food drives, school-based pantries, backpack programs, and other programs happening during the holidays.
- End of the school year: Add SNAP information to communications about summer meals and summer enrichment opportunities. Schools have had success including information with report cards.
- Summer break: Schools offering summer meals can inform families about SNAP at meal sites. Consider using flyers that list SNAP information alongside meal site locations, or partnering with local SNAP assistance providers.

Provide direct referrals to families who:

- Submit free or reduced-price school meals applications or household income eligibility forms and are both eligible and near-eligible.
- Access school-based support programs, including backpack programs, food pantries, or similar initiatives.

Get Free Outreach Resources at HungerSolutionsNY.org/SNAPschooltoolkit

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