

SNAP in Schools: A winning strategy for families, schools, and communities.

What is SNAP?

- SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, provides monthly grocery benefits on a “debit-like” card to purchase food at places like grocery stores, farmers markets, and online.

Why is SNAP Important for Schools?

- There are thousands of kids across New York State whose families are possibly eligible and not enrolled in the SNAP program.
- Kids that live in households receiving SNAP are directly certified, meaning automatically eligible for no-cost school meals which means there’s no need to collect meal applications. More directly certified students increases meal access and school revenue. They are also automatically eligible for the [Summer EBT benefit](#).
- [The Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#) became more accessible to school districts in School Year 23-24 due to a federal rule change lowering the minimum identified student percentage (ISP) threshold from 40% to 25%. Increasing SNAP enrollment helps to increase the ISP, which increases the likelihood of qualifying for and boosts the revenue potential of CEP.
- New York State now offers Universal School Meals, providing all students with breakfast and lunch at no cost. Robust SNAP enrollment remains essential to the success and long-term sustainability of this model. Students in SNAP households are directly certified, which increases a district’s Identified Student Percentage (ISP) and strengthens Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) reimbursement rates. In practice, higher SNAP enrollment enhances the financial foundation that supports Universal School Meals statewide.

Check out No Kid Hungry’s [SNAP in Schools toolkit](#) for sample messages, social media posts, and more! [Learn more about why SNAP is important for schools here.](#)

How to conduct SNAP outreach in schools:

- Help your school and school district to understand the importance of SNAP.
 - Share this tipsheet with school staff, such as social workers, parent coordinators and school nurses, who regularly interact with students and families.
- Share information about SNAP with families and caregivers.
 - You can share information about SNAP, such as the [link to apply](#) or a way for families to [locate their local SNAP outreach provider](#) or [local organization](#) assisting with SNAP enrollment, through flyers, robo-messages (via text, phone call, and/or app), social media, school websites, and/or including information on school meal menus.
 - Design simple flyers with a QR code linking directly to the SNAP application or a local office locator. Include a brief description of how SNAP helps families and highlight the easy steps to apply. Distribute the flyers during parent-teacher conferences and include them in school newsletters.
 - Feature a dedicated section on the school's website that includes a step-by-step guide on how to apply for SNAP with links to local assistance organizations for further help.
 - Set up a link to send to families with information about SNAP enrollment.
 - Share SNAP resources at summer meal sites and afterschool programs.
 - Include printed SNAP resources or application guides in take-home meal bags distributed during summer or afterschool programs or in school pantry packages.
 - Set up a designated table or booth at summer meal sites and afterschool programs where families can pick up brochures, flyers, or postcards with SNAP information, including how to apply and local assistance resources. Staff or volunteers can be available to answer questions and guide families through the process - perhaps with a tablet on site to make it even easier!
 - Train staff or volunteers at these sites to engage with families during meal distribution or program pick-up/drop-off times. They can verbally share information about SNAP, hand out flyers, and encourage families to apply.

Best Practices:

- Provide families with multiple options to enroll in SNAP in outreach materials, such as a link to the online application. Examples of outreach materials can be found on [No Kid Hungry's website](#).
- Create awareness and education across the school administration and community about the importance of SNAP and the ability for families to apply.
- When creating materials, ensure that language, literacy, and digital access considerations are prioritized. This includes offering materials in multiple languages, using clear language, and ensuring families have alternatives to online applications, such as paper-based or phone applications.
- Layered interactions: use a variety of messengers and messages. Keep in mind it usually takes 6-8 touches to reach families. Use a variety of methods, including digital and paper-based.
- Consider including not only the county social service agency information, but a local organization providing SNAP application assistance.