

# Expanding Enrollment & Breakfast Participation



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# Enroll Every Eligible Student!



**YOUR KEY TO  
HEALTHY, FOCUSED STUDENTS  
AND A  
SUCCESSFUL  
SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM**

# School Meal Application Campaign: Every Student. Every Year.

- School Meals are a tool to address hunger; 1 in 5 Vermont children are food insecure
- School meals helps your struggling families put more and better food on the table at home
- The higher the number of students enrolled in your school meal program, the higher your Title I funding
- The more students who are enrolled and participate, the more financially stable your school meal program
- Once 50% or more of your students are enrolled in your school meal program, you can provide free summer and afterschool meals to ALL children in your community

**Apply For School Meals!**

**Today!**

Who should apply?  
**Everyone!**

- It helps your school.
- It helps your community.
- It helps your family.

Want help?

Many who apply are surprised to learn they qualify!

Contact:

This institution is an equal opportunity provider of USDA Child Nutrition Programs

**HUNGER FREE VERMONT** **SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION**

The graphic features a yellow background with blue and red circular accents. It includes two photographs: one of a child's hands holding a school lunch tray with various food items, and another showing a close-up of a food service counter with several compartments containing different types of food like rice, beans, and vegetables. The text is arranged in a clear, bold font, with key messages highlighted in larger, darker colors.

# How to Increase Enrollment



**EXAMPLES FROM VERMONT SCHOOLS**

# The Personal Touch



“What made the biggest difference was reaching out personally to families we knew were in need and who couldn’t pay for their school meal bills.”

- Steve Marinelli, Food Service Director, Milton Town Schools

# Mail the Application home Separately



“I mail the school meals application home with a letter about the program, and I ask every family to fill it out. Even if they are certain they don’t qualify, I ask that they sign it and send it in. A mailing costs more up front, but the increased participation makes up for it in the long run”

- Carol Brill, Food Service Director  
St Johnsbury

## Other Effective Strategies



- Make the form mandatory for all families. When everyone is turning in the form, there is less stigma, and many families who assume they don't qualify discover they do!
- Make September or October free breakfast month for parents. Invite parents in for breakfast and a cup of coffee, and help them complete their school meal application at the same time that you promote your school breakfast program!

# MOST IMPORTANT: Change the Message



Change the message associated with applying for school meals.  
Let people know that they are helping their school by applying.  
Their application is a contribution to the community!

# Build an Enrollment Team



**SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE STAFF**

**+**

**SUPERINTENDENT  
BUSINESS MANAGER**

**PRINCIPAL**

**TEACHERS**

**SCHOOL NURSE**

**COUNSELORS**

**SCHOOL BOARD**

**PTO**

# Who Is Doing What?



- Does everyone on the team understand how important this is?
- What is your team goal? Why are you expanding enrollment?
- Who is managing the applications? Should this role be shifted somewhere else?
- How will you get the word out?
- Who do families trust? Who should reach out?

# Application Campaign Resources!



**YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE!**

# www.SchoolMealsVT.com



## schoolmealsvt.com

An informational resource and community forum for school food service directors, administrators, parents, and concerned citizens living in Vermont.



Why Do School Meals Matter?

Enrollment, Participation & Revenue

Meal Quality & Environment

Summer, Afterschool & FFVP

Farm to School

School Boards, Administrators & Parents

Professional & Program Development

### Sign up for our School Nutrition E-Update:

**Breakfast After the Bell & Program Resources: Click Here to Improve Participation!**



**AMP up Afterschool!**



**For All You Need To Enroll Every Student in School Meals, Click Here**

**NO MORE REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS!**  
All students who qualify now eat lunch free!

Apply  
Now!



### Partner Organizations

School Nutrition Association-VT

**Read Steve Marinelli's tips for getting students to eat fruits and veggies on Letsmove.gov**

# What Can You Get on SchoolMealsVT?



- Customizable Poster, Cover Letter, Web Blurb, and Article
- Tips for implementing the new reduced-price meal policy
- Help explaining the elimination of reduced-price meals to parents, principals, school boards, etc.
- Many other resources for breakfast, summer meals, afterschool meals, farm to school, and much more!

# Increase Breakfast Participation!



**THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY  
FOR ALL STUDENTS!**

# Breakfast is Really Important



- Fewer absences
- Fewer tardies
- Fewer illnesses, headaches, stomach pain
- Improved behavior
- Improved focus
- Increased math scores (up to an 18% increase / year)
- Improved graduation rate

**\*AND, 1 in 5 children are food insecure in Vermont**



How / Where / When  
Do YOU  
Serve Breakfast?



## **Your Breakfast Participation**

Are

YOU

Satisfied

With WHO is  
eating breakfast

&

With how many  
are eating?

- Only the low income students?
- Reaching those who need it every day?
- A match for your lunch numbers?
- How about the teachers and administrators?

# Many Breakfast Times & Places



## Location Options:

- Cafeteria
- Classroom
- Hallways
- Busses

## Timing Options:

- Before school
- In the classroom at the start of the first class
- Grab 'n go before the bell, with the option to take it into class
- After first period
- At snack time



What do you think  
Works best  
&  
Why?

# After the Bell = More Participation



- Serving breakfast after the bell is the most sure-fire way to increase participation
- Serving breakfast at multiple times and in multiple locations is also very effective
- Increased participation helps to stabilize your program's finances
- Stronger finances will help you meet the new breakfast regulations and increase quality and variety

# Before the Bell Challenges



- Busses come late
- Parents drop off late
- Students would rather socialize
- Cafeteria far from classes
- Cafeteria not a “cool” place to hang out
- Students aren’t hungry yet (especially teens!)



What (or Who)  
is in the way  
of serving breakfast  
the way you want to?



# Who Are Your ALLIES? (or who could be?)



What's Your  
FIRST / NEXT  
MOVE?

# Remember Your Resources!



# www.SchoolMealsVT.com



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Summer,  
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Farm to  
School

School Boards,  
Administrators &  
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Professional &  
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Development

## Sign up for our School Nutrition E-Update:

## Partner Organizations

[School Nutrition  
Association-VT](#)

[Hunger Free Vermont](#)

[VT FEED – A Statewide  
Farm to School Project](#)

[Home](#) ▶ [Enrollment, Participation & Revenue](#) ▶ breakfast after the bell increases breakfast participation

## Breakfast After the Bell Increases Breakfast Participation

*"As much as people thought that breakfast in the classroom would be disruptive, it's actually the opposite. It allows for children to get to the classroom faster, to be able to eat together, and to focus on their day more quickly".*

*- Steve Marinelli, Food Service Director, Milton Town School District*

[Breakfast Program Alternatives](#)

[Additional Ideas to Improve Participation](#)

[Breakfast Success Stories](#)

[Helpful Links and Additional Resources](#)

[Visit our Grants Page for Funding Opportunities](#)

**Breakfast After the Bell: Serving Breakfast Methods**

Breakfast Serving Alternatives to Increase Participation

# Get Personalized Assistance!



- Hunger Free Vermont's Child Nutrition Advocacy Team will help you figure out the best strategy for increasing participation at your school.
- Call or Email us!  
Anore Horton  
802-865-0255  
[ahorton@HungerFreeVT.org](mailto:ahorton@HungerFreeVT.org)