

SNAP IN SCHOOLS



Promising Models for Expanding Access

Overview

Across the country, leveraging schools for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) access is a powerful strategy to connect families to nutrition supports through trusted, everyday settings. Rather than relying on traditional outreach alone, these models embed SNAP access directly into school systems and the broader networks that support students and families. SNAP plays a critical role in reducing food insecurity, supporting student success, and strengthening the overall well being of children and families. Learn more about how SNAP enrollment strengthens school meal access, Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) participation, Summer EBT connections, and overall school funding in another No Kid Hungry resource, [SNAP Benefits for Schools](#).

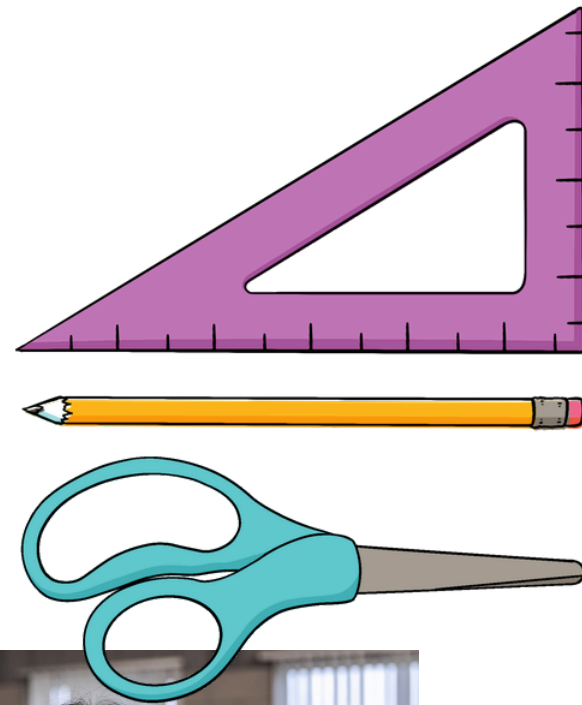
The examples below highlight how partners across the nation are implementing and expanding SNAP in Schools through different approaches, all grounded in a shared goal of making enrollment more accessible, coordinated, and effective.

The examples below reflect active initiatives currently underway; a future version of this resource will highlight outcomes, lessons learned, and emerging results as projects conclude.

What defines SNAP in Schools?

At its core, SNAP in Schools is about more than outreach in a school building. The most effective models:

- Leverage schools as trusted entry points for families
- Pair outreach with direct enrollment support
- Integrate SNAP into existing school and community systems
- Rely on strong partnerships across sectors



Promising Models

Statewide SNAP in Schools Infrastructure

Feeding Kentucky: Feeding Kentucky is leading a SNAP outreach and enrollment initiative statewide which includes developing and recommending a plan to increase SNAP enrollment and expanding awareness and understanding of the gaps and barriers that currently exist in the SNAP enrollment process. By becoming a SNAP Outreach Hub, in partnership with the state's Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Feeding Kentucky will serve the entire state of Kentucky through its network of regional food bank members. Currently, only four food banks serving Kentucky offer SNAP outreach and enrollment, and that work is managed directly by those food banks. The broader plan is to bring this work into Feeding KY and to establish Feeding KY as the primary point of information for SNAP outreach in the state while at the same time, making the process more accessible for eligible households and increasing federal program participation.

What this looks like in practice: This model builds the infrastructure to support SNAP in Schools at a statewide level by creating a centralized outreach and enrollment hub connected to school systems and regional partners.

Why it matters for SNAP in Schools: Rather than limiting efforts to individual districts, this approach creates the foundation to expand SNAP access across schools statewide, ensuring consistency, coordination, and broader reach.

Key takeaway: Schools are effective entry points, but families need support beyond awareness. Confidence, trust, and clarity about the program all influence whether families apply. This model also highlights the importance of aligning SNAP and Summer EBT messaging within school based outreach.

School Linked Community Hub Model

Hunger Free Colorado: Hunger Free Colorado (HFC) is leveraging a process where school-based health centers and community hub staff will screen visitors for food insecurity. Where identified, they will refer to HFC Food Resource Navigators, who will provide onsite SNAP outreach and application assistance in Denver Public Schools community hubs and potentially in some School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) to assist families in determining their eligibility and applying for SNAP. Benefits of this streamlined referral process include a warm handoff between SBHC/hub staff and HFC navigators and onsite navigator availability. Clients will also benefit from HFC Navigators' expertise and access to resources, experienced Spanish/English bilingual navigators who have access to interpretation support in 100+ languages, access to a system where they can submit SNAP applications on behalf of clients, training and expertise in SNAP eligibility and culturally appropriate and trauma-informed assistance for community members, and referral information for other supports such as food pantries, Summer EBT and WIC.

What this looks like in practice: Schools, school based health centers, and community hubs screen families and connect them to navigators who provide SNAP application assistance and ongoing support.

Why it matters for SNAP in Schools: This model expands the reach of schools by connecting them to a broader ecosystem of support, ensuring families can move from referral to enrollment with less barriers.

Key takeaway: SNAP in Schools is most effective when embedded into existing systems and supported by strong coordination. Schools are trusted partners, but implementation depends on staffing, training, and alignment across sectors.

Regional SNAP in Schools Expansion

Meals4Families and MANNA Food Bank (North Carolina): Building on a successful [Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports](#) pilot partnership supported by Meals4Families, MANNA Food Bank, UNETE, Pisgah Legal Services, and Buncombe County Schools, this work extends the North Carolina SNAP in Schools model to support school communities in three additional Western NC school districts. As part of this expansion, this work explores and initiates a strategic partnership with Blue Ridge Health, a regional partner operating School Based Health Centers across Western NC.

What this looks like in practice: A regional approach that expands SNAP in Schools across multiple districts, leveraging partnerships with school systems, food banks, and health providers.

Why it matters for SNAP in Schools: This model demonstrates that SNAP in Schools can scale effectively when implemented regionally rather than school by school.

Key takeaway: Regional infrastructure enables sustainability and scale. Schools cannot carry this work alone and benefit from dedicated partners who can provide enrollment support and coordination.

Cross Sector School-Based Implementation Model

Real Food for Kids (Virginia): Real Food for Kids (RFFK) will establish a multi stakeholder SNAP in Schools initiative in Fairfax County strengthen SNAP access for district families and students. To operationalize the initiative, RFFK will establish a SNAP in Schools Action Team (SISAT) made up of partners critical to successful implementation through shared ownership and cross-sector collaboration. Members will include representatives from Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Administration, Food and Nutrition Services, Family School Partnerships, the Fairfax Department of Family Services, and the Fairfax Food Council, among others. The SISAT will provide a strategic infrastructure for coordination across partners directly serving FCPS households. Activities will be divided into planning and implementation phases. During the six month planning phase, the SISAT will develop a SNAP in Schools workplan, define and coordinate implementation roles across partners, and establish metrics to measure outcomes. The implementation phase will launch with a pilot focused on FCPS Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools in the West Potomac pyramid. Lessons learned from the pilot will be used to refine program design and will support future expansion to additional CEP and Title I schools.

What this looks like in practice: A coordinated approach that brings together schools, government agencies, and community partners to co design and implement SNAP in Schools initiatives.

Why it matters for SNAP in Schools: This model focuses on building the systems and partnerships needed to embed SNAP into school operations long-term.

Key takeaway: Early investment in planning, shared ownership, and clearly defined roles is essential to successfully implementing SNAP in Schools.



District Wide SNAP in Schools Integration

Community Action Partnership OC (California): With the goal of increasing SNAP enrollment among eligible children and families, Community Action Partnership of Orange County will work with a group of school districts across the county to embed SNAP outreach and enrollment supports. This work will emphasize culturally responsive, multilingual materials and work to ensure families have a streamlined experience navigating program enrollment. In year 1, CAPOC will formalize partnerships with 5-7 school districts to implement on-campus SNAP outreach and enrollment support, including the management of warm handoff referral protocols to ensure families are directly connected with SNAP Coordinators. They will also develop multi-lingual SNAP outreach materials and will hold SNAP outreach and enrollment events. In year two, CAPOC will build upon the foundation established in year one by expanding the program's reach and capacity. Partnerships will grow to include 10 to 12 school districts, and a third outreach specialist will be added to support increased demand and geographic coverage. CAPOC will conduct more school events.

What this looks like in practice: A district wide effort to embed SNAP outreach and enrollment into school systems using multilingual materials, coordinated referral pathways, and on site support.

Why it matters for SNAP in Schools: This approach prioritizes scale within school systems and ensures families have consistent, accessible pathways to enrollment.

Key takeaway: Standardizing processes across schools improves the family experience and increases participation. Language access and culturally responsive engagement are critical.

Key Takeaways

Across these SNAP in Schools models, several clear lessons are emerging:

- Schools are powerful entry points, but they cannot do this work alone
- Direct enrollment support is essential to convert outreach into participation
- Embedding SNAP into existing school and community systems leads to better outcomes
- Regional and statewide approaches are more sustainable than isolated school efforts
- Clear messaging across SNAP and Summer EBT is critical in school based settings

Closing

SNAP in Schools offers a clear, scalable pathway to increase access by meeting families where they already are. These models show that when schools are paired with strong partners, coordinated systems, and direct enrollment support, they can play a central role in strengthening SNAP access for children and families.

More information:

[No Kid Hungry's Center for Best Practices SNAP and SNAP in Schools Page](#)