

# Deputy Minister's Bulletin

Ministry of Education and Child Care



## Feeding Futures School Food Programs Funding – Questions and Answers

March 22, 2024

### What is the purpose of the new school food programs funding?

- Budget 2023 committed \$214.5 million in operating funding over three years to make sure all students are fed and ready to learn by expanding existing school food programs in districts and schools that already have them and creating new ones in districts and schools without.

### How much funding has been committed to school food programs in the 2024/25 school year?

- For the 2024/25 school year, the following funding has been allocated:
  - \$71.5 million for districts for targeted food funding and school food coordinators,
  - \$5.0 million for minor capital enhancements required for school food programs through the Food Infrastructure Program.
- The allocation formula is consistent with the 2023/24 Feeding Futures allocation formula.

### Who qualifies for this funding?

- The 60 public school districts in B.C.
- The funding is expected to reach approximately 20% of students in each district who need it most.

### When will we know each district's allocation?

- District allocations for 2024/25 are available [here](#).

### What can this money be used for?

- School districts continue to have the flexibility to use the funding provided in the 2024/25 school year to address the immediate need of feeding hungry students in a stigma- and barrier-free manner.
- Funding can be used for food purchases and staffing for up to one school food coordinator in each school district. Within reason, districts may use a portion of Feeding Futures funding to offset staffing costs for staff directly involved in the delivery of school food programs.
- Stable, ongoing funding will help districts to enter into long-term agreements and partnerships with non-profit organizations, local catering companies, and food suppliers/distributors.

### Can salaries at the school level be paid for under this funding? For example, staff to organize and provide food services (food bags etc.)?

- The intent of the Feeding Futures funding is to directly support students and move towards ensuring that all students are fed and ready to learn.
- Within reason, districts may use a portion of Feeding Futures funding to offset staffing costs for staff directly involved in the delivery of school food programs.
- However, funding is not intended to be used for administrative costs (e.g., reporting costs, HR costs, travel costs, additional insurance, etc.).

### Can the 2024/25 school year funding be used over multiple years? For example, if a district has an allocation of \$800,000 can they plan to spend \$200,000 per year on lunches for the next four years?

- No, this commitment provides multi-year funding to address the immediate need of student hunger in the province.

- There should be no need to hold back funding for future years as districts now have a commitment of ongoing funding to plan for each year.

**Is CommunityLINK funding impacted in any way by new school food funding?**

- There have been no changes to CommunityLINK. However, with Feeding Futures funding now available to support school food programs, districts are encouraged to utilize CommunityLINK funding for other student supports.

**Are districts expected to offer universal food programs to students? What about weekend and holiday support?**

- The funding is expected to reach approximately 20% of students in each district who need it most.
- Building the capacity in each school community to work towards stigma- and barrier-free access to nutritious food for any students who need it will take time.
- The delivery of food programs is expected to be stigma-free, considering models such as opt-in and pay-what-you-can, in addition to supplementing with partnerships with the surrounding community.
- Support from community non-profit organizations, corporate donors, and parent advisory councils continues to play a vital role alongside schools to address student hunger for weekends and school closures (e.g., spring break).

**Can capital, for example fridges, or other equipment be purchased with this funding?**

- The intent of the funding is to create and expand school food programs to directly support students, rather than to purchase capital items and equipment.
- However, if a school district can justify that it needs to purchase equipment to allow food programs to be delivered at a school, then this is permissible.
- Alternatively, capital investments to enhance food security can be supported through the Feeding Futures School Food Infrastructure Program (FIP), a \$5 million per year program to assist boards of education with creating, improving, or expanding the delivery of food programs.

**Can we keep working with non-profit organizations or current community partners?**

- Yes, community partnerships are essential for a long-term model of feeding students; non-profit organizations, corporate donors, and parent advisory councils will continue to play a vital role alongside schools to deliver school food programs.

**Who do I contact if I have more questions?**

- Please reach out to your local school district or contact [ECC.schoolfood@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ECC.schoolfood@gov.bc.ca).