

Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act (H.R. 8450)

President Biden and Congressional Democrats acted decisively to prevent millions of infants and children from going hungry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (FFRCA) expanded nutrition programs to serve students and families safely during the pandemic by:

- Giving school meal programs the flexibility to expand eligibility for school meals and address the challenges of serving students who are not physically present in school buildings;
- Providing key flexibilities for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to operate remotely until the end of the public health emergency; and
- Creating the [Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer \(P-EBT\)](#) program, which ensured that low-income families who could not access meal sites receive funds for groceries to feed their children.

The Problem

Even before the pandemic, more than [2.7 million households with children](#)—particularly low-income households and households of color—did not have reliable access to nutritious food. Moreover, the pandemic worsened pre-existing inequities in food insecurity. Both Black and Hispanic households with children reported food insecurity at rates [roughly twice](#) that of white households with children throughout the pandemic.

The Solution

The *Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act* will help us achieve our ultimate goal—eliminating child hunger—by delivering a comprehensive, science-driven reauthorization of federal child nutrition programs that meets the needs of children and families. Specifically, the *Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act* will:

- **Expand access to school meals** by expanding the Community Eligibility Provision so more school districts can provide free meals and ensuring children on Medicaid are automatically certified for free school meals.
- **Preserve the future of school meal programs** by increasing the reimbursement rate for lunch by 10 cents and providing commodity support to the School Breakfast Program.
- **Modernize the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** by expanding WIC eligibility to age six, improving access to telehealth to reduce the physical presence requirement, and expanding the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program to ensure more mothers have access to breastfeeding support.
- **Address food insecurity during the summer** by authorizing the Summer EBT Program at \$75 per month per child for eligible households, lowering the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) area eligibility threshold so sites can serve more low- to middle-income neighborhoods, and increasing access to summer feeding through transportation assistance and mobile meal delivery.
- **Improve school meal capacity and sustainability** by providing grants to purchase kitchen equipment, supporting farm to school programs, and incentivizing scratch cooking.
- **Strengthen the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** by providing reimbursement for an additional meal or snack per child, allowing children in households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to be automatically eligible for CACFP, and expanding food access for those experiencing homelessness or in emergency shelters by increasing the eligible age of reimbursement for these individuals from 18 to 25.