School Meals FOR ALL NC

Welcome to SMFANC's Community Advocacy Meeting!

September 1st, 2026

Mission

Ensure that every child in every public school in North Carolina has access to breakfast and lunch at school at no cost to their families.

Guiding Principles

1

No child should go hungry.

2

School meals should be available at no cost to all students in public schools.

3

No child should experience shame or stigma due to an inability to pay for school meals.

4

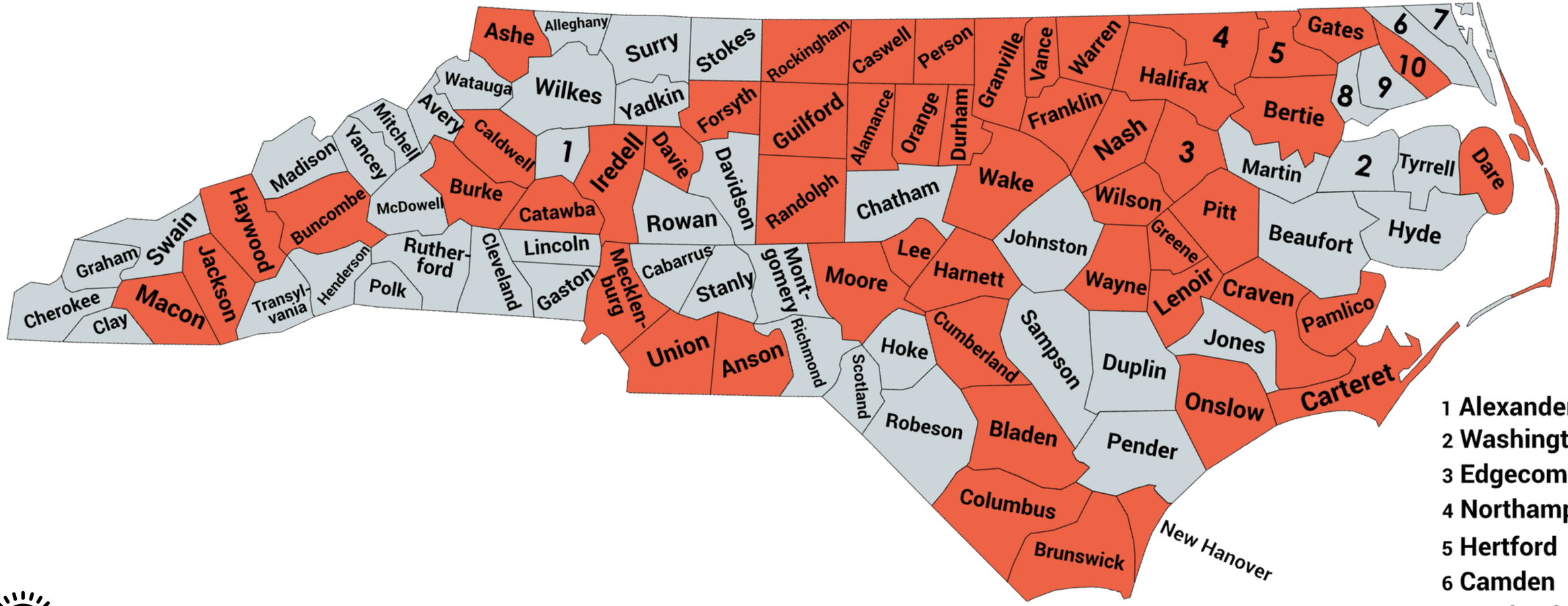
School meals help children succeed both in and out of school and build strong, resilient communities.

How We Will Shape This Movement Together?

You'll Leave This Interactive Session Feeling:

1. Engaged in Coalition Insights
2. Inspired by a SMFANC Champion Spotlight
3. Energized through Community Spotlights
4. Equipped with Workshop skills
5. Supported in your advocacy

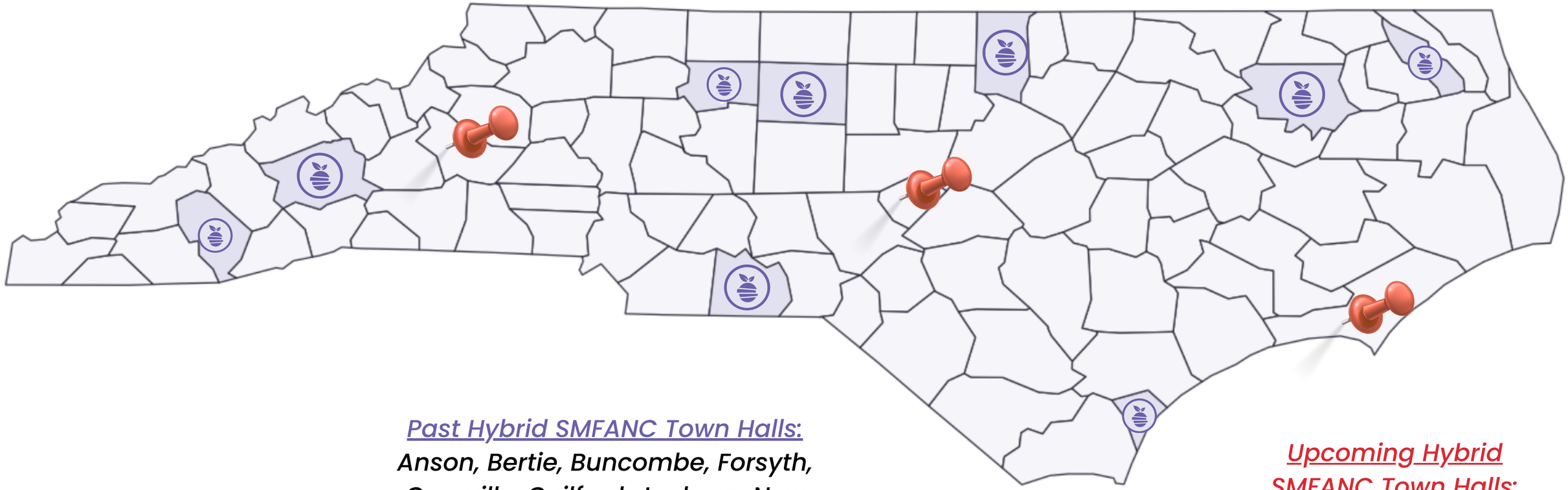
Coalition Growth Update



1 Alexander
2 Washington
3 Edgecombe
4 Northampton
5 Hertford
6 Camden
7 Currituck
8 Chowan
9 Perquimans
10 Pasquotank

Coalition Insights

Coalition Growth Update



Past Hybrid SMFANC Town Halls:

Anson, Bertie, Buncombe, Forsyth, Granville, Guilford, Jackson, New Hanover, and Pasquotank Counties

Upcoming Hybrid SMFANC Town Halls:

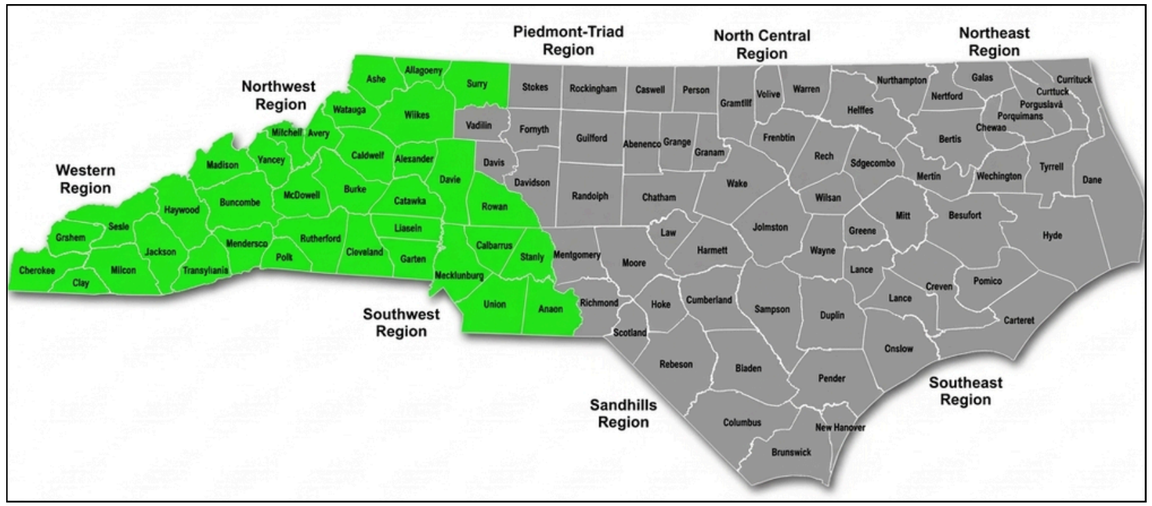
Burke, Lee & Carteret Counties

Coalition Insights

Coalition Insights

Meet our Community Organizers supporting SMFANC!

Dr. Mandy Taylor



Using stories as an advocacy tool to reduce barriers to healthy foods for NC's students is one of the most exciting aspects of this work.



Community Organizer & SMFANC Champion

Western, NC

- **Western Region**
- **Northwest Region**
- **Southwest Region**

Contact Information

- **Email: SMFA@centerforblackhealth.org**
- **Phone: 828-882-9224**

Coalition Insights

Coalition Growth Update

School Meals FOR ALL NC

TOWNHALL MEETING

Hungry kids can't learn - Providing no cost school meals can help!



DATE:
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

TIME
12PM- 2PM

Location: Foothills Higher Education Center
(2128 South Sterling Street, Morganton, NC 28655)

THE CENTER FOR BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY

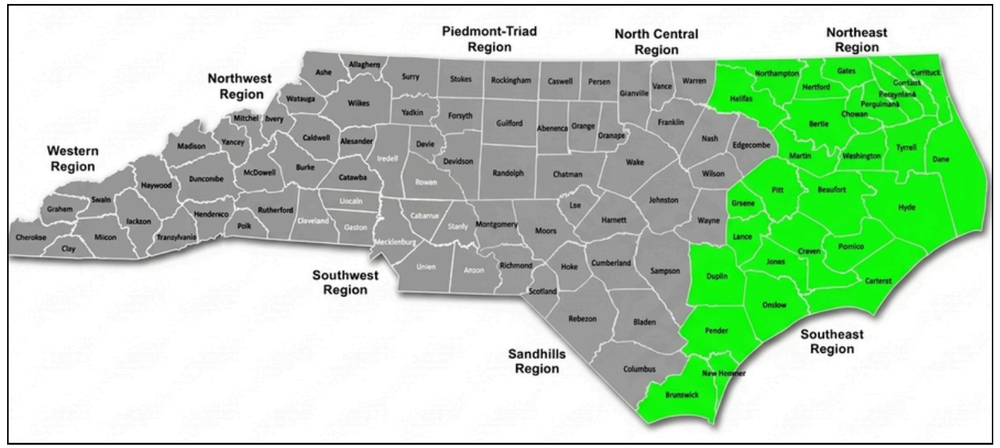
This is a **FREE** event

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED FOR IN-PERSON ATTENDEES

Register & Learn More at: *schoolmealsforallnc.org/events*

JOIN US IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM





Eastern, NC Community Organizer
(Northeast & Southeast Regions)

MONICA GIBBS

Contact Information

- **Email: SMFA@centerforblackhealth.org**
- **Phone: (910) 358-8136**

"Hearing the voices of the community and giving others the tools to advocate alongside the SMFANC Coalition".

Coalition Insights

Coalition Growth Update

School Meals FOR ALL NC

TOWNHALL MEETING

Hungry kids can't learn - Providing no cost school meals can help!



DATE:
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

TIME
5:30 PM- 7:30 PM

Location: McGee Building at Carteret Community College (3505 Arendell Street, Morehead City, NC 28557)

JOIN US IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM

THE CENTER FOR BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY

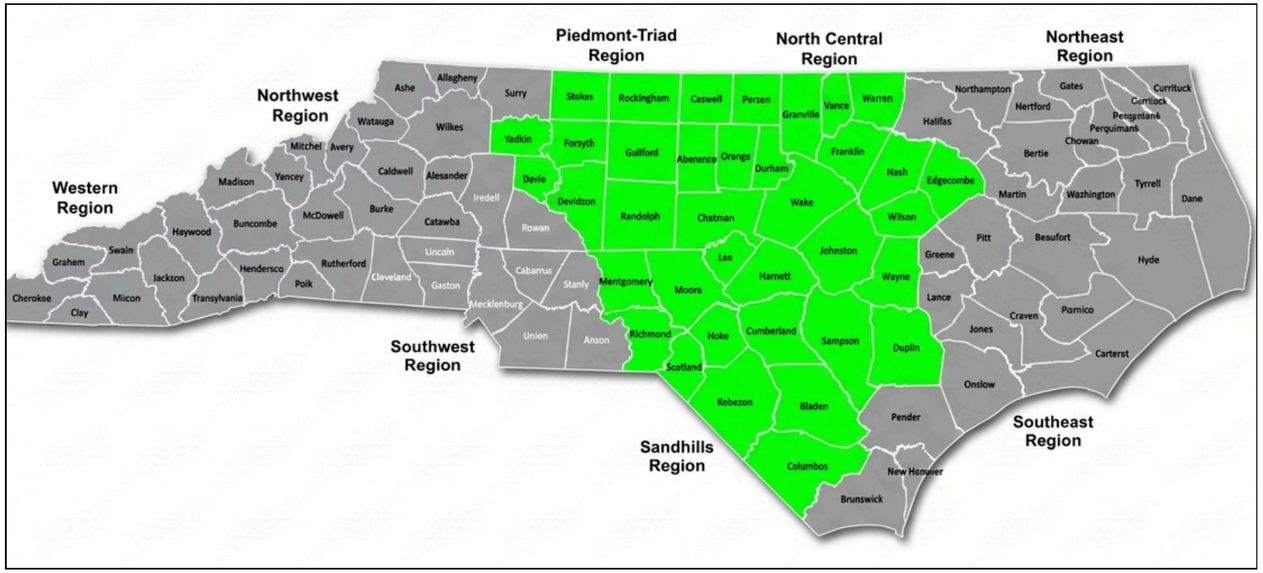
This is a **FREE** event

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED FOR IN-PERSON ATTENDEES

Register & Learn More at: *schoolmealsforallnc.org/events*

Dolores Blue

Central, NC Community Organizer



Central, NC

- Piedmont-Triad Region
- North Central Region
- Sandhills Region

Contact Information

- Email: SMFA@centerforblackhealth.org
- Phone: 919-638-4346



As a nurse, I see firsthand how proper nutrition impacts a child's physical health, focus, and well-being.

Coalition Insights

Coalition Growth Update

School Meals FOR ALL NC

TOWNHALL MEETING

Hungry kids can't learn - Providing no cost school meals can help!



DATE:
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

TIME
12PM- 2PM

Location: Jonesboro United Methodist Church
(407 W Main St, Sanford, NC 27332)

THE CENTER FOR BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY

HELPING HAND Clinic , Inc

This is a **FREE** event

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED FOR IN-PERSON ATTENDEES

Register & Learn More at: *schoolmealsforallnc.org/events*

JOIN US IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM

Inspire

SMFANC Champion Spotlight

School Meals for All NC: Champion Spotlight



Madison Rosenblatt

Recent Salem College Graduate

Hometown:
Hickory, NC

Why I got involved with School Meals for All NC:

I got involved because of my own childhood experience. I was the very student I advocate for now, the kid sitting in the cafeteria who lived the reality of food insecurity. I know firsthand what it feels like when hunger is the loudest distraction in the classroom.

Fun Fact:

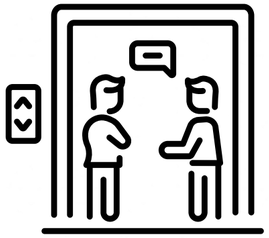
I work with kids everyday as a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)!

School Meals FOR ALL NC

Advocacy Skill Support

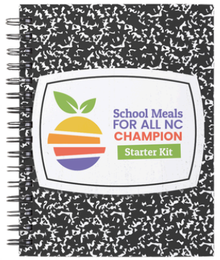
Workshops for Advocates at All Levels

April



Elevator Pitch Workshop

May



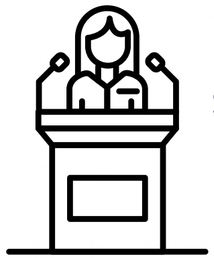
Storytelling Series Part 1: Verbal Storytelling Workshop

June



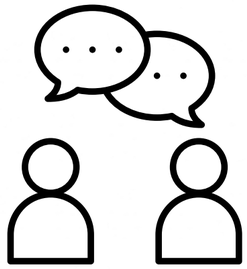
Storytelling Series Part 2: Digital Storytelling Workshop

July



Storytelling Series Part 3: Written Storytelling Workshop

August



Let's Talk About It: Rising School Meals Prices in NC

September



Research & Data-Driven Advocacy Workshop

[Past Meeting PPT Slides are available on The Center's website here]

Equip

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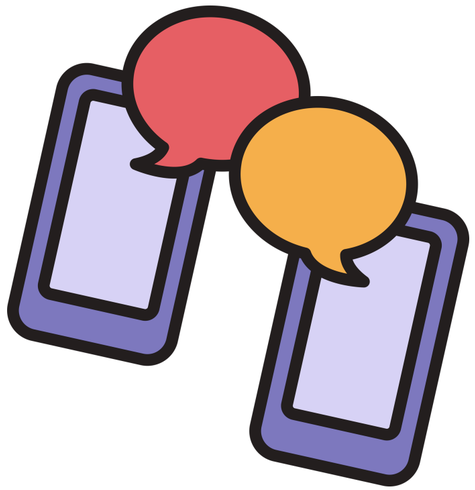
Welcome
MILK
Message from the School Meals for All North Carolina Leadership Team
The School Meals for All NC (SMFANC) Leadership Team thanks you for your ongoing commitment to this movement. Your advocacy, energy, and creativity continue to drive meaningful change in our community.
You have the support of four Leadership Team organizations to guide you through this advocacy journey. We are also here to advance the mission on advocacy day at the North Carolina General Assembly, in monthly virtual meetings, community events like fun runs and more.
NORTH CAROLINA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH
CAROLINA HUNGER INITIATIVE
Within the SMFANC Leadership Team, we are committed to celebrating the strengths and differences that each of our organizations brings. It's this spirit of inclusion and respect that guides our approach to celebrating the diversity across North Carolina and honoring differences in voices, perspectives, and values across this coalition.
1
2–3


School Meals
FOR ALL NC
CHAMPION
Starter Kit

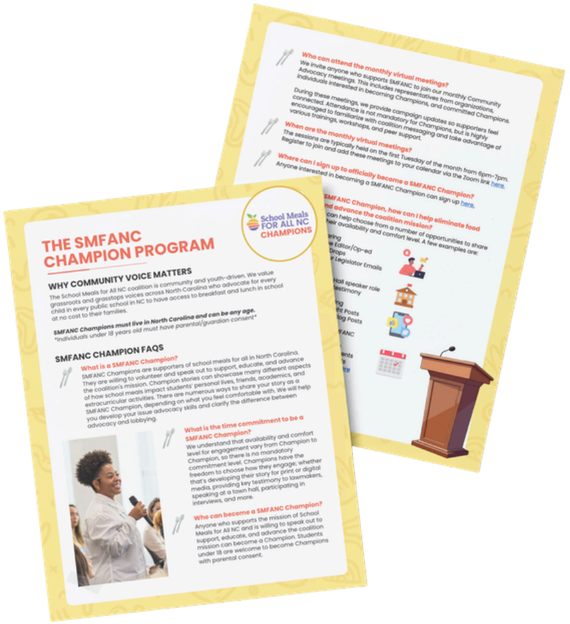
The SMFANC Champion Program

Become a SMFANC Champion



Text “CHAMP” to 89481

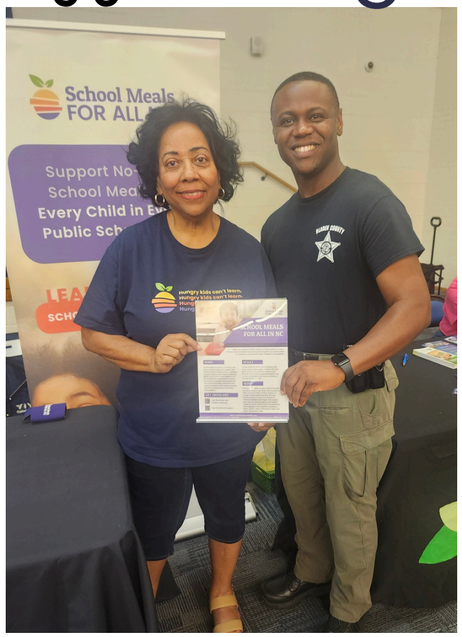
Help us spread the word



Share the program flyer with FAQs

Community Spotlights!

Energize







Recent Events:

1. Blue Jay Recreation Center Back-to-School Event (Saturday, August 8, 2026)
2. Pamlico Relief Team Back to School Event (Sunday, August 9, 2026)
3. Bertie County Schools Back-to-School Bash (Saturday, August 15, 2026)
4. Bladen Community College Back-to-School Blast (August 15, 2026)
5. Caswell County Recreation Center Back-to-School Blast (August 15, 2026)
6. Good News Church Back-to-School Event (Newton, Saturday, August 15, 2026)
7. Gibbs Chapel Wesleyan Church Back-to-School Bash (Morganton, August 22, 2026)

Upcoming Events:

1. SMFANC Western NC Town Hall (Saturday, September 12, 2026)
2. SMFANC Eastern NC Town Hall (Tuesday, September 15, 2026)
3. Helping Hands Clinic, Inc - 4th Annual Helping Hand Awards Dinner (Saturday, September 19, 2026)
4. Kinston Teens Sunday Dinner (Sunday, September 20, 2026)
5. SMFANC Central NC Town Hall (Saturday, September 26, 2026)

Why do you advocate for no cost school meals?



[Share Your Story Here]

SMFANC Champion Rev. Kim E. Moss' School Meals Story

Click here to watch a video of Rev. Kim E. Moss' Story



Coalition Discussion



Research & Data-Driven Advocacy

How can we use data and research when talking about SMFANC?

School Meals for All Research

Benefits of School Meals for All

- Increased food security
- Better diet quality
- Improved academic performance
- Increased attendance



Universal School Meals and Associations with Student Participation, Attendance, Academic Performance, Diet Quality, Food Security, and Body Mass Index: A Systematic Review

North Carolina Data

- Students attending schools participating in CEP compared to those attending schools not participating
  - Had higher academic performance
  - Were less likely to be absent in elementary and middle school
  - Were less likely to receive an out-of-school suspension in middle and high school

The Effects of the Community Eligibility Provision on Educational Outcomes for Students in North Carolina

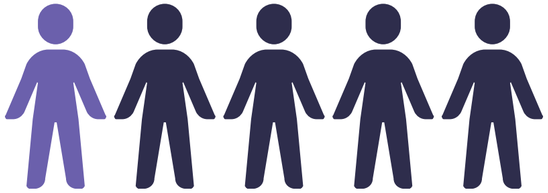
New Study

Estimated Impact of Universal Free School Meal Policies on Educational Outcomes in the U.S.

- State-level universal free school meals policies were associated with
  - Reduced chronic absenteeism
  - Improvements in English proficiency

Estimated Impact of Universal Free School Meal Policies on Educational Outcomes in the U.S

Food Security



1 in 5 kids in North Carolina goes hungry

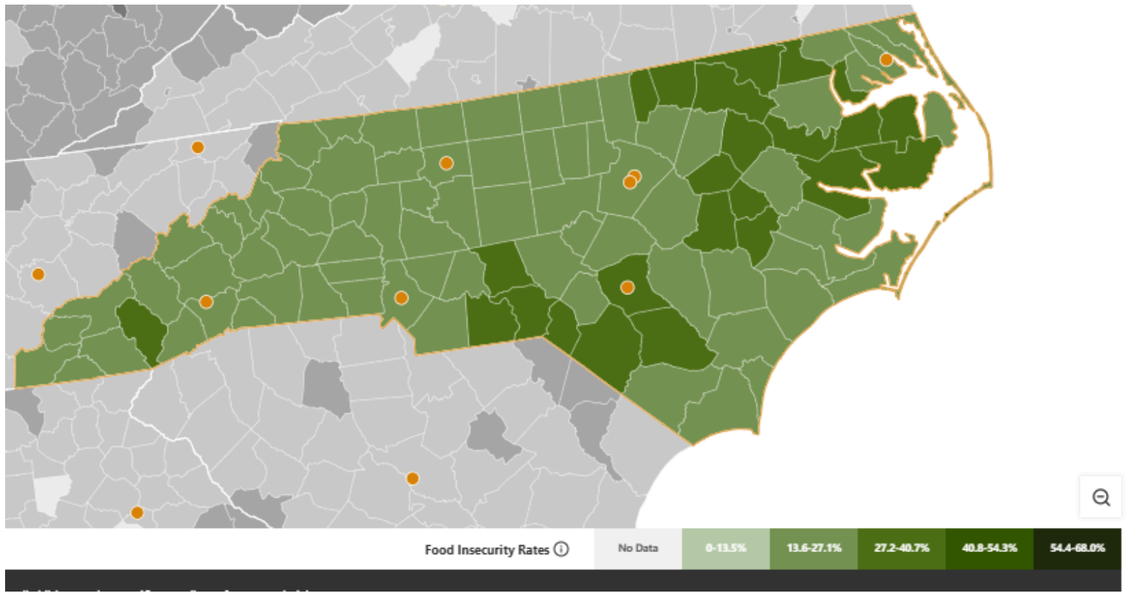
Key Terms

Food Security	Access to enough food at all times for on active and healthy life
Nutrition Security	Consistent access to affordable foods that prevent disease, promote well-being, and, if needed treat disease
Hunger	Physiologic sensation of discomfort
Malnutrition	Excess, deficiency, or imbalance of nutrients of energy

Most data sources currently reflect food security status

Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap

- Food insecurity estimates for U.S., states, counties, and Congressional districts
- Estimates on percentage of individuals experiencing food insecurity who are likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance programs
- Overall and by demographics including children



Map the Meal Gap

"Child" refers to all children under age 18, regardless of race or ethnicity

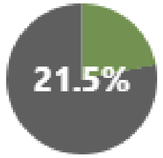
2024 Food Insecurity In North Carolina

FOOD INSECURE POPULATION (CHILD) IN NORTH CAROLINA

504,790



CHILD FOOD INSECURITY RATE IN NORTH CAROLINA



ESTIMATED PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AMONG FOOD INSECURE CHILDREN IN NORTH CAROLINA



35%	Likely ineligible for federal nutrition programs (incomes above 185% of poverty)
65%	Income eligible for federal nutrition programs (incomes at or below 185% of poverty)

AVERAGE MEAL COST IN NORTH CAROLINA

$3.68

ANNUAL FOOD BUDGET SHORTFALL

$1,196,067,000

Map the Meal Gap

Food Security Data Source Update

- USDA published annual food security data on U.S. households
  - Data collected as part of the Current Population Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau beginning in 1995
  - Used many many organizations and researchers
  - Used for Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap
- Final report published in December 2025
  - Included data from 2024



Press Release

USDA Terminates Redundant Food Insecurity Survey

“(Washington, D.C., September 20, 2025) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the termination of future Household Food Security Reports. These redundant, costly, politicized, and extraneous studies do nothing more than fear monger.

For 30 years, this study – initially created by the Clinton administration as a means to support the increase of SNAP eligibility and benefits allotments – failed to present anything more than subjective, liberal fodder. Trends in the prevalence of food insecurity have remained virtually unchanged, regardless of an over 87% increase in SNAP spending between 2019 - 2023.

USDA will continue to prioritize statutory requirements and where necessary, use the bevy of more timely and accurate data sets available to it.”

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

CEP Acronyms and Basics

- LEA: Local Educational Agency

- ISP: Identified Student Percentage
  - Students certified to receive school meals without completing a household application

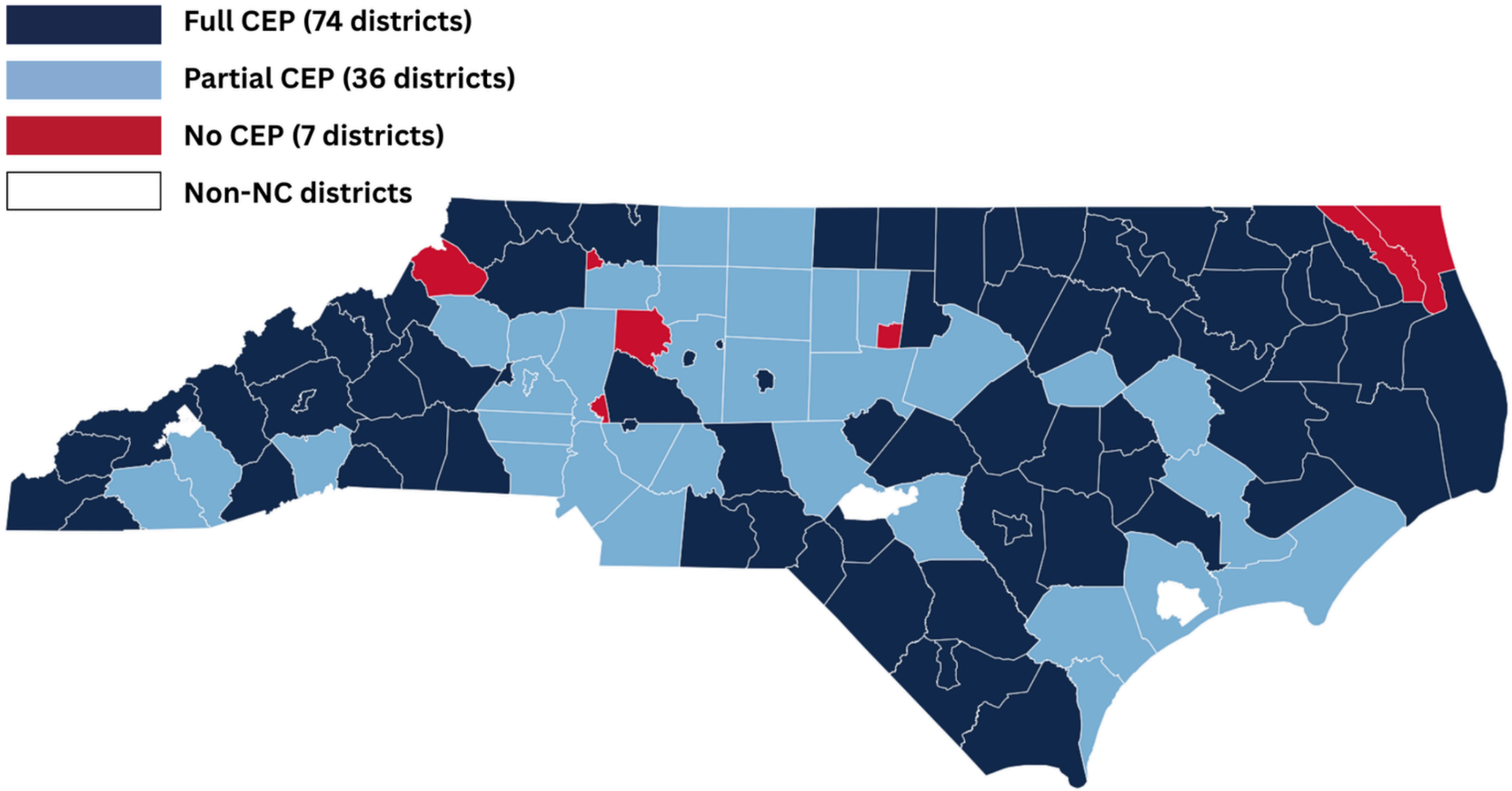
- Schools with an ISP of at least 25% are eligible to participate
- Percentage of meals reimbursed at the free rate is ISP x 1.6
  - Need an ISP of at least 62.5% to be reimbursed at the free rate for all meals served

CEP Annual Notification Report

- State agencies required to post to public websites a list of local educational agencies and schools eligible for CEP (ISP of at least 25%), near-eligible for CEP (less than 25% but greater or equal to 15%), currently participating in CEP, and eligible for a grace period (in fourth year of CEP with ISP less than 25% but greater than 15%)
- Posted annually on NC Department of Public Instruction website

Community Eligibility Provision: Election Deadline and Annual Notification and Publication Requirements

2025/26 North Carolina School Districts by CEP Status



Additional Helpful Resources

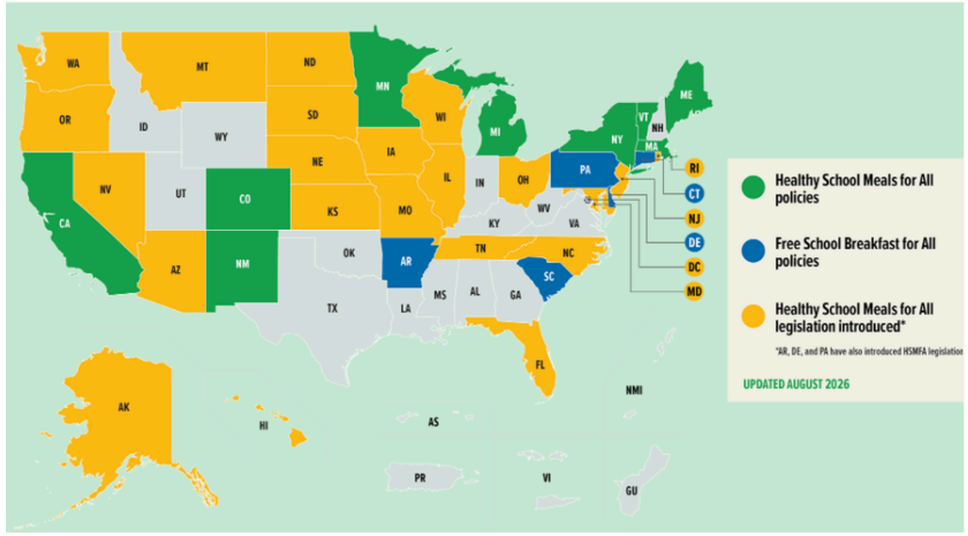
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

FRAC

- Numerous reports and resources related to school meals
- Highlight national and state-specific data



Community Eligibility Provision Resources and Report



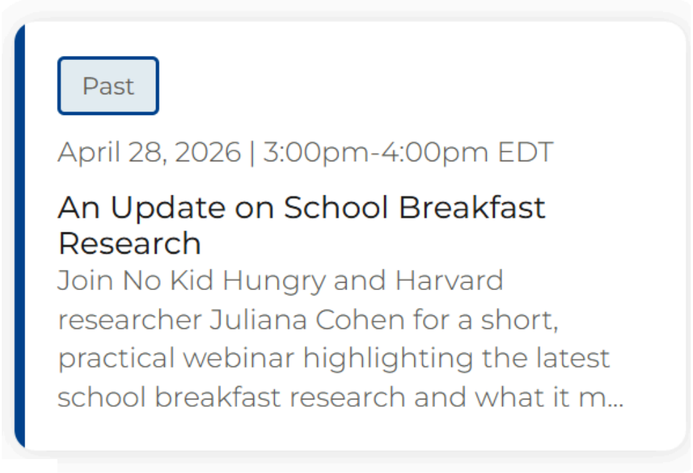
Healthy School Meals for All

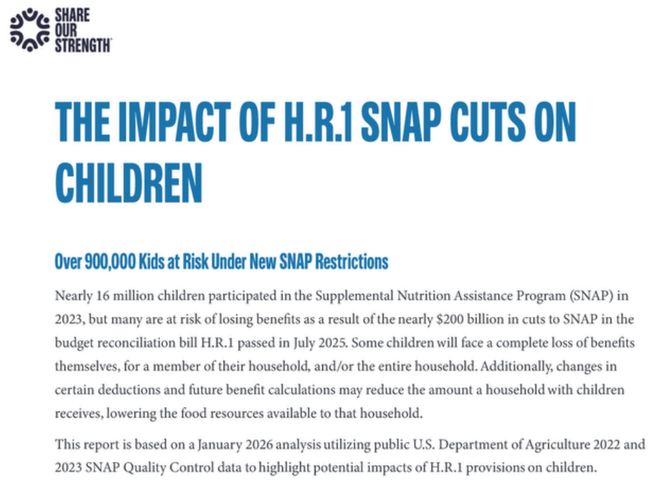


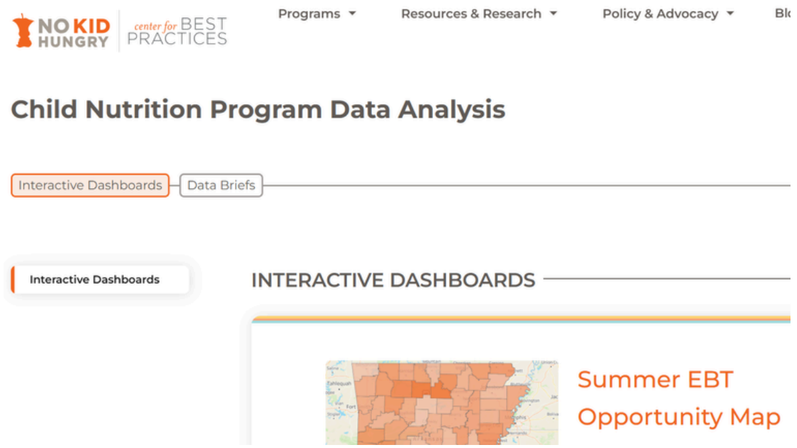
The Reach of School Breakfast and Lunch

No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices

- Numerous resources including
  - Reports
  - Interactive Dashboards
  - Policy and Advocacy Resources
  - Webinars







No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices

School Nutrition Association

- Resources, statistics, advocacy resources and more
- Annual Trends Report
  - Data on areas such as challenges for school nutrition programs, meal prices and unpaid meal debt, funding and financial sustainability



School Nutrition Association

Carolina Hunger Initiative

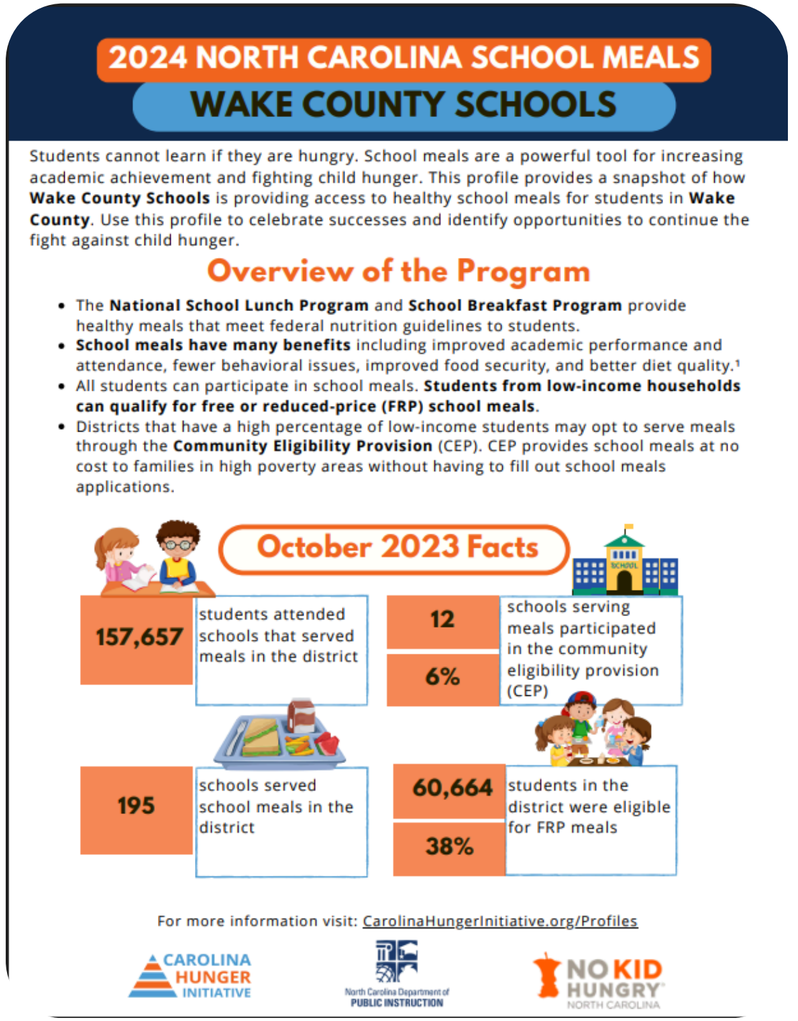


Child Nutrition Data Profiles

To understand childhood hunger in North Carolina better, each year we use data from the NC Department of Public Instruction to build profiles of child nutrition programs. The profiles shed light on how these programs support the health of children and strengthen local economies.

SCHOOL MEALS PROFILES

SUMMER MEALS PROFILES



References

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- Education Policy Initiative at Carolina. (2021, September). The effects of the Community Eligibility Provision on educational outcomes for students in North Carolina [Policy brief]. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. https://epic.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1268/2021/09/EPIC_CEP-Policy-Brief_FINAL.pdf

- Ramponi, F., Zhou, H., Lokko, L., Cohen, J. F. W., & Verguet, S. (2026). Estimated impact of universal free school meal policies on educational outcomes in the United States. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Article 108472. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2026.108472

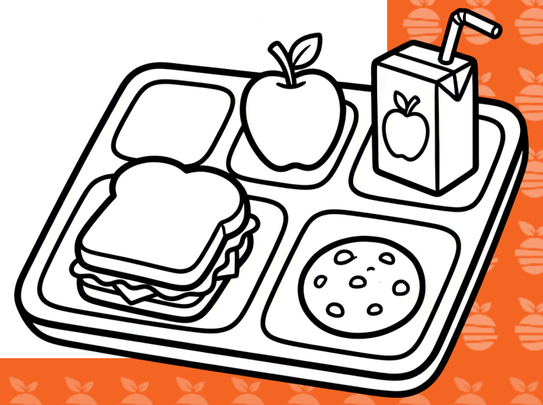






Let's keep writing the next chapter of this movement together.





REMINDER

Next Meetings

- **Next Coalition Meeting on September 23rd @ 11am**
  - During these meetings, the School Meals for All NC Leadership Team provides updates on how the coalition is advocating for school meals across the state. This includes conference recaps, remarks from public health leaders, and partner sharing.

- **Next Community Advocacy Working Group meeting on October 6th @ 6pm**
  - During these meetings, we provide campaign updates so supporters feel connected. We give our supporters the opportunity to participate in workshops, share their stories, and learn more about becoming a School Meals for All NC Champion.

School Meals FOR ALL NC

THANK YOU

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

@Schoolmealsforallnc

@Schoolmealsforallnc

@SchoolMeals4NC

School Meals for All NC

School Meals for All NC

School Meals for All NC