

GOOD LAWS, GOOD FOOD: PUTTING FOOD POLICY TO WORK IN THE NAVAJO NATION



Section VIII: School Food & Nutrition Education Summary and Handout

Overview

As places where children and adolescents spend much of their days, schools are in a unique position to ensure that kids get healthy, balanced meals. This section of the toolkit considers strategies for improving the nutritional profile of the foods served in schools in the Navajo Nation while helping students develop healthy habits and strengthening the links between schools and the rest of the community.

Recommendations

School Meals Programs

- Increasing the number of children participating in the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program by using direct certification and exercising the Community Eligibility Option.
- Increasing participation in the National School Breakfast Program by changing how breakfast is served.
- Maximizing the use of USDA Foods Programs to purchase unprocessed, healthy foods.

Other Foods

- Creating stricter nutrition guidelines for all foods served in schools.
- Promoting healthy food or non-food fundraisers.
- Enforcing and strengthening school wellness policies to improve the school food environment.
- Designing smarter lunchrooms that will encourage students to make the best food choices.

Schools Purchasing Locally Grown Foods (“Farm to School”)

- Helping schools apply for existing federal, state, and private resources for farm to school programs.
- Connecting schools with local farms.
- Implementing a geographic preference policy for schools in order to increase farm to school purchasing.
- Purchasing school food from local farmers outside the formal bid process, and advocating for states to raise their small purchase threshold to the federal standard.
- Helping schools assess their contracts with food distributors and assisting them in changing or terminating them when necessary.

Food and Nutrition Education Initiatives

- Incorporating education about food (with particular attention to Navajo food culture) into the school curriculum.
- Creating funding and resource support for developing school gardens.