News Release

For immediate release: October 9, 2026

Contact

Jessica Christopher

jessica.christopher@curatorpr.com

610-945-8615 (PT)

Chef Ann Foundation Awards 96 Salad Bar Grants to Schools Nationwide

Over 49,000 students across 18 states will benefit from increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Boulder, CO – The Chef Ann Foundation announced that it awarded 96 salad bar equipment grants to 38 school districts in 2026 through its Salad Bars to Schools program. These salad bars will provide over 49,000 students across 18 states with increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy proteins through school meals. The program prioritizes schools with high free and reduced lunch participation rates to ensure the greatest impact on students who might otherwise have limited access to fresh foods.

The Salad Bars to Schools program is part of the Chef Ann Foundation's ongoing efforts to replace ultraprocessed foods with fresh, healthy, and delicious scratch-cooked meals that nourish kids and protect the planet. Grantees in K–12 schools receive equipment, marketing materials, and training to implement self-serve salad bars in their cafeterias. Each grant includes a salad bar and all needed accessories, as well as technical assistance and resources to help schools successfully implement a salad bar.

"Salad bars offer a straightforward, scalable approach for school districts transitioning from a heat-and-serve model to more scratch cooking. Swapping highly processed sides with a daily salad bar of fresh, whole foods elevates the nutritional quality of every tray," said Mara Fleishman, CEO of the Chef Ann Foundation.

Since 2010, the Chef Ann Foundation has granted over 6,500 salad bars to schools nationwide, providing more than 3 million children with more access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

These 2026 Salad Bar to Schools grants are made possible through generous funding from our mission-aligned partners. Thank you to our mission-aligned partners, Whole Foods Market Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and the Denver Broncos Foundation, for their generous funding that makes these grants possible.

About Chef Ann Foundation

Chef Ann Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to ensure that school food professionals have the resources, funding, and support they need to provide fresh, delicious, scratch-cooked meals that support the health of children and our planet. To date, the organization has reached more than 19,000 schools and 5.9 million kids in all 50 states with healthy school food programming.