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**NATIONAL GRANT OPENS TO SUPPORT SCRATCH COOKING IN SCHOOLS**

*The Chef Ann Foundation has opened applications for their Get Schools Cooking program, accepting school districts into their 4th cohort*

BOULDER, Colo. – August 19, 2019 – Chef Ann Foundation (CAF) and Whole Kids Foundation are now accepting applications for [Get Schools Cooking](#) (GSC), a comprehensive three-year program that helps districts transform their school lunch program to healthy, whole, nutritious meals made from scratch. The application deadline is Monday, October 28, 2019.

“This is our most comprehensive grant, an incredible opportunity for districts to work with school food experts to transition to scratch cooking,” said Mara Fleishman, CEO of the Chef Ann Foundation. “If your district is serious about wanting to move towards scratch cooking, this grant provides the hands-on support and partnership you need.”

The GSC program kicks off with a workshop in Boulder, CO, followed by an on-site operational assessment; strategic planning; a \$35,000 systems grant to cover items such as equipment, staff training, and data solutions; and continued technical support to implement the strategic plan. The grant is valued at up to \$267,000.

School food experts visit and assess each school district and their sites to provide customized recommendations and strategic plans across five key areas of school food operations: food, finance, facilities, human resources, and marketing. Each of the goals within these key areas support the districts’ transition to a scratch cook operation.

For the 2019 cohort, CAF will continue its partnership with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN) to evaluate each district’s progress in meeting their goals and addressing the recommendations from their assessment. With years of research experience in the field of childhood nutrition, GSCN will utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods as part of their formal evaluation process.

Since 2016, GSC has supported 187 schools in twelve states working to transform their school food operations to include more fresh, healthy meals.

“I can’t explain how informative, beneficial, and invigorating this whole experience has been. It’s really made me a better director and leader and I can see my staff are happy with the changes I’ve put into place thus far,” says Amber Watson, Director of Nutrition Services for Marysville Joint Unified, a 2018

cohort district. “With the help of the Chef Ann Foundation, we’ve implemented a 6 week menu cycle for lunch and planned the menu for the entire year in advance; we’ve narrowed down our menu choices to items that are made in our own kitchens and drive participation.”

Districts continue to eliminate highly processed foods and introduce new recipes using whole fruits and vegetables. They are also adding raw proteins like beef and chicken to their menus, rather than processed chicken nuggets and heavily refined hot dogs. School kitchens are now equipped with salad bars, food processors, specialty ovens and more, and staff are receiving the training they need for their programs to succeed. Students are still enjoying favorites like mac and cheese, pizza, and tacos—only now, they’re made from scratch with fewer and healthier ingredients.

“What our kids eat at school matters! We understand that moving from processed food to scratch cooking takes a deep commitment,” said Kim Herrington, Programs and Finance Director of Whole Kids Foundation, “and making that change has enormous benefits for students’ health, their achievement, and the environment.”

According to a [2016 report](#) from the Pew Charitable Trusts, school food directors report steady or increased participation in school lunch programs and stable or rising revenue after implementing more scratch cooking. It also promotes local economic growth as it gives schools the ability to purchase more ingredients locally.

Recognizing these economic benefits, more states are proposing legislation that rewards schools for local food purchases, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is on board. The agency recently [announced more than \\$9 million](#) in USDA Farm to School Program grants “that will increase the amount of healthy, local foods served in schools and create economic opportunities for nearby farmers.”

With 30 million children eating school lunch every day, scratch cooking is an important step in ensuring today’s youth learn the benefits of eating real, healthy food from whole ingredients.

[Learn more and apply](#) for the Get Schools Cooking program or [register for an informational webinar](#) on September 12, 2019 at 2 p.m. MST.

#### About Chef Ann Foundation

Chef Ann Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to provide school communities with the tools, training, resources, and funding that enables them to create healthier food and redefine lunchroom environments. To date, the organization has reached more than 10,000 schools and 3 million kids with healthy school programming. Learn more at [chefannfoundation.org](http://chefannfoundation.org).

#### About Whole Kids Foundation®

Whole Kids Foundation, a Whole Foods Market foundation, is based in Austin, Texas, and operates as an independent, nonprofit organization. By empowering schools and inspiring families, the Foundation aims to help children reach optimal health through the strength of a healthy body fueled by nutritious food. For more information on the Foundation’s programs, including school gardens, salad bars and nutrition education for teachers, visit [wholekidsfoundation.org](http://wholekidsfoundation.org).

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