



## News Release

For immediate release: November 19, 2024

## Contact

Jessica Christopher

[jessicachristopher@curatorpr.com](mailto:jessicachristopher@curatorpr.com)

610-945-8615 (PT)

## Application Now Open for Spring 2025 California Healthy School Food Pathway Pre-Apprenticeship

*Paid, seven-week culinary program offers an entry point to a career in healthy school food*

**Sacramento, CA** – California residents interested in building a career in school food service can now apply to join the [California Healthy School Food Pathway Pre-Apprenticeship](#) program. Administered by the [Chef Ann Foundation](#) – a national nonprofit dedicated to promoting scratch cooking in schools – the initiative offers paid, on-the-job learning focused on preparing healthy school meals from scratch.

The seven-week program is tailored for individuals with little to no experience in school food operations and is available to English and Spanish speakers. Pre-Apprentices gain hands-on culinary and operational experience at a local school district, complete online coursework, and engage in virtual learning sessions with peers and mentors. Since launching in 2022, over 200 California residents have graduated from the program.

“School food careers require skill, creativity, and dedication,” said Emily Gallivan, Senior Director of California Workforce Programs at Chef Ann Foundation. “School food professionals hold the unique responsibility of not only preparing and cooking meals but also the opportunity to shape students’ eating habits and introduce them to healthy and diverse foods at a young age.”

Since the start of the pandemic, schools nationwide [have reported](#) significant staffing shortages. The demand became even stronger under California’s universal school meal program, underscoring the current need for a skilled school food workforce. A [study](#) released this year by [Food Insight Group](#), [California School Nutrition Association](#) and the Chef Ann Foundation found that the annual turnover rate for California school food departments is 13%, exceeding turnover rates from

comparable state and national industries. The Healthy School Food Pathway program was designed to address critical staffing needs and upskill new and existing school food professionals.

More than 70 school districts across the state will participate in the Pre-Apprenticeship program this spring, and those that have already joined are seeing a positive impact in their districts.

“The biggest win was that everyone was engaged, and I truly believe that a small fire was kindled, even in the most hesitant of our employees,” said Judi Reynolds, Child Nutrition Services Director at Fallbrook Union High School District, which is a Pre-Apprenticeship host district.

Individuals interested in exploring a career in school food and making a difference in their local communities are encouraged to apply to the program. After completing the Pre-Apprenticeship, graduates can continue onto the nine-month Apprenticeship program at their district.

The program runs from March 31 to May 23, 2025. [Apply here](#) by **January 31, 2025**.

[Image](#)

Caption: Pre-Apprentice participates in on-site culinary training with a Chef Ann Foundation staff member.

### **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, healthy, delicious, scratch cooked meals that support the health of children and our planet. To date, the organization has reached more than 14,000 schools and 3.4 million kids with healthy school programming. Learn more on our [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#).