



News Release

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Schools Nationwide Can Now Apply to Receive a Bulk Milk Grant

Chef Ann Foundation program paves way for less waste, increased nutrition, and freshest milk possible

BOULDER, CO - Last year, more than 95,000 schools across the U.S. served K-12 students [approximately 4.6 billion lunches and 2.4 billion breakfasts](#). Making relatively small changes to the way these meals are served can drastically reduce food and packaging waste while simultaneously lowering long-term costs and improving student nutrition. One such change schools can make is transitioning from serving milk in single-use cartons or bottles to serving it in bulk.

The [USDA requires](#) all K-12 schools to offer students milk as part of school breakfasts and lunches. Today, approximately [275 million single-serve cartons of milk are served to K-12 students every school day](#). Serving students milk using bulk dispensers and reusable cups can cut both packaging and fluid milk waste, which is one of the [single largest sources of school food waste](#).

To help schools transition to using bulk milk dispensers, [Chef Ann Foundation](#) created the [Bulk Milk](#) program. Launched in 2023, Bulk Milk provides the equipment, materials, and training schools need to implement a bulk milk serving system. The Chef Ann Foundation announced a new round of grants today, and school districts can [apply now](#).

To date, the Chef Ann Foundation has awarded [43 Bulk Milk grant packages to 18 school districts in 11 states](#). “We have seen success in reducing milk and packaging waste since transitioning to bulk milk at [our] pilot sites,” said Austin Independent School District’s Food Service Director Ryan Mikolajcik. The Texas district was awarded Bulk Milk grants for **three** schools in 2023.

By switching to a bulk milk system, [schools could save 30 pounds of carbon dioxide per student annually](#) – the equivalent of taking 145,000 gas-powered vehicles off the road. Bulk milk dispensers

have also been shown to cut costs for waste hauling, milk purchasing, and refrigeration. “Switching to bulk milk is a high-impact opportunity for school districts to create huge sustainability savings – both fiscally and environmentally,” said Chef Ann Foundation Executive Director of Programs Laura Smith.

According to a World Wildlife Fund [study](#) on school milk waste and consumption, schools using bulk milk dispensers found that students are consuming more milk, supporting improved nutrition. Dispensed from a temperature-controlled bulk milk bib, students also experience improved taste. “Our long-term goal is to serve more [USDA] reimbursable meals including bulk milk, which tastes better than milk from a carton,” said Trenton Special School District Food Service Director Lisa Seiber. The Tennessee district received Bulk Milk grants for three of its schools in 2023.

U.S. schools participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply to receive a [Bulk Milk grant here](#). The grant application closes June 27, 2024.

This round of Bulk Milk grants was made possible thanks to funding support from [Elevance Health Foundation](#).

The Bulk Milk program pilot and launch was made possible thanks to funding support from the [Posner Foundation](#).

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 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](#).