



A Note From Our Founders



Dear partner in change,

One of the most rewarding things about being in the middle of our second decade of this work at the Chef Ann Foundation is witnessing the larger, systems-based change we once only dreamed of becoming reality. In 2025, that shift was undeniable.

We reached more than 1,476,400 students across 2,860 schools in 48 states in a single year. We achieved this by not only working with school districts, but also partnering with state agencies, legislators, farmers, unions, researchers, and parents. School food change truly takes a village.

At the local level, you could find our team on the ground in school kitchens from the East to the West coast, working hand-in-hand with the passionate school food professionals doing everything they can to replace ultraprocessed foods with fresh, scratch-cooked meals. In 2025, our team of school food experts with **nearly 200** combined years of experience managing school food programs delivered **1972 hours** of technical assistance to districts — the equivalent of **82 days!**

At the state level, we worked in policy coalitions to advance universal free school meals so every child has access to nutritious food; helped pass and uplift legislation to reduce ultraprocessed food in schools; and partnered with state agriculture agencies and farmers to help schools source more local

foods. In California, Colorado, and Virginia, we equipped **more than 700** apprentices with the skills they need to cook healthier meals for kids.

At the federal level, we advocated on behalf of the **30 million kids** who rely on school meals to ensure vital funding for school food programs remained secure. While there is bipartisan support for limiting ultraprocessed foods in schools, this expressed support must be backed by investments in school food programs and the people who power them for change to happen.

We couldn't do any of this without our dedicated team and supporters. We're deeply grateful for our funders' and donors' contributions this past year. And if you're new to the school food change movement or Chef Ann Foundation's community, we're so glad you've joined us at the table.

The scratch-cooked roast chicken that replaces an ultraprocessed chicken nugget on a school tray today has the power to stay there for generations. That is the lasting change we are building together.

With gratitude & determination,


Chef Ann Cooper
Co-Founder
& Board President


Mara Fleishman
Co-Founder & CEO

Mission

Ensure that school food professionals have the resources, funding, and support they need to provide fresh, delicious, cooked-from-scratch meals that support the health of children and our planet.



Vision

All children have equal access to fresh, healthy, delicious food providing them the foundation to thrive and meet their true potential.

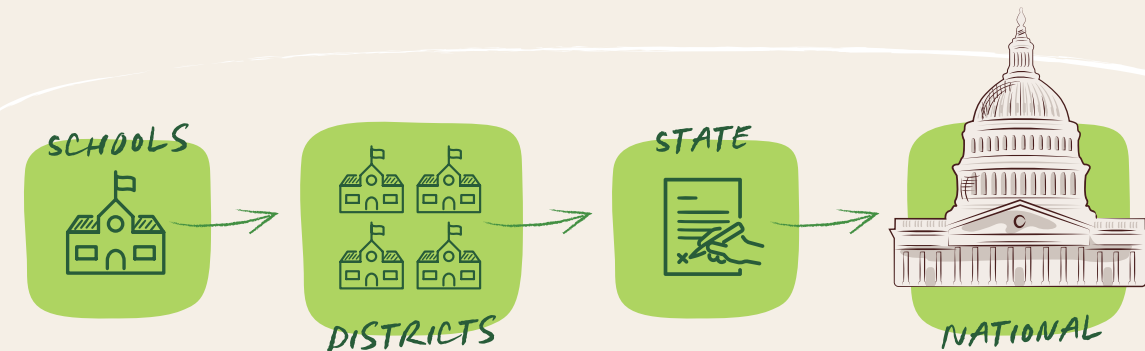


Who We Are

We're the Nation's Champion for Real Food in Schools

We help schools replace ultraprocessed foods with fresh and cooked-from-scratch meals that are healthy for kids and the planet.

Our team of school food changemakers includes school food service professionals, chefs, registered dietitians, sustainable agriculture and food systems specialists, public health experts, researchers, policy advocates, parents, and former kids who relied on school meals.



A Systems Approach to Change

We identify the barriers to scratch cooking in schools at all levels of the food system — from cafeterias to capitals — then design program and policy solutions to dismantle these barriers so fresher, healthier meals can reach all kids everywhere.



Our Why



Nearly 62% of a typical child's diet is made up of ultraprocessed food, which are associated with more than 30 health conditions.



Up to 50% of students' daily calories are consumed at school.



7.3 billion meals are served at schools annually. School cafeterias are one of the nation's largest food providers.



Only 16% of school meals are cooked daily from scratch.



Collecting samples at Brownsville Independent School District (TX), for a Food and Drug Administration-funded study evaluating the safety and nutritional quality of school meals. This research will help schools shift toward whole-food, minimally processed menus while reducing potential contaminants, such as heavy metals.



One of our chefs at Howard Suamico School District (WI), helping transition from serving Domino's to pizzas made in-house.



Behind-the-scenes at one of our eight bootcamps in Virginia, where we gave hands-on culinary training to school food professionals.

Students Impacted in 2025

- Up to 2.4M
- Up to 45K
- Up to 12K
- Up to 3.9K

2,800 schools and 1.4M students in 48 states.

State	Students Impacted
WA	32,748
OR	59,942
MT	2,325
ND	345
SD	1,084
WY	35,244
NE	866
IA	17,236
IL	13,293
IN	34,668
OH	82,746
PA	30,258
NY	41,631
VT	11,484
ME	36,288
NH	4,124
MA	185,049
RI	9,113
CT	8,462
NJ	12,148
MD	538
DC	49,180
VA	331,783
NC	1,125
SC	6,474
GA	11,978
FL	89,054
LA	3,100
MS	4,329
AL	26,863
TN	9,100
KY	3,925
WV	7,637
MO	10,938
AR	3,875
OK	360
TX	134,981
NM	24,870
AZ	66,864
UT	
CO	155,919
NV	
CA	2,411,041
HI	24,507
AK	43,985

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5.9M+ kids

19K+ schools

35K+ school food professionals

IN ALL 50 STATES

8.9M+ kids

28K+ schools

46K+ school food professionals

IN ALL 50 STATES

Reducing Ultraprocessed Foods in Schools

Increasing local fruits & vegetables in Alabama



We partnered with the Alabama State Department of Education to provide culinary training to all **46 districts** in the state and reached **232 food professionals**. We also created **24 student-friendly recipes** that incorporate local produce. Here's a few seasonal examples:

- ✓ **Peachy Keen Green Smoothie**
- ✓ **Strawberry Sunrise Smoothie**
- ✓ **Southern Spice Sheet Pan Shawarma**
- ✓ **Garlic-Parmesan Roasted Green Beans**



From the cafeteria...

Our experts deliver custom, practical, and scalable solutions that any school can use to start or expand their scratch-cooking operations.

Technical Assistance to Show Schools How

Our team of 21 school food specialists, with more than 200 combined years of experience in school food service, delivered direct support to districts across the country.

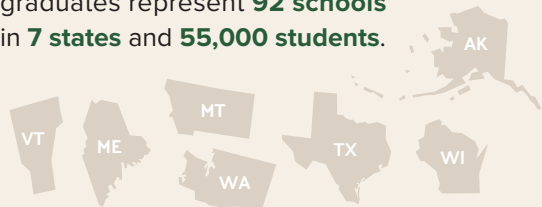


In 2025 we provided schools with **1,978 hours** of technical assistance. **That's equivalent to 82 days!**

Meeting Schools Where They Are

Seven school districts completed Get Schools Cooking, our flagship program, in which we work with them one-on-one to transition their meal programs from ultraprocessed "heat-and-serve" to cooking from scratch over three years.

Our 2025 Get Schools Cooking graduates represent **92 schools** in **7 states** and **55,000 students**.



...to the Capitol

We work with government and advocacy partners at every level to advance programs and policies that ensure better meals reach every kid everywhere.

Publishing a Policy Roadmap for Scratch Cooking in Schools

We published a policy roadmap outlining our priorities for increasing scratch cooking in schools.

"[This roadmap], while recognizing obstacles, explains why scratch cooking matters so much. Its food policy priorities are well worth attention."

– Marion Nestle



Above: Chef Ann Foundation Co-Founder and CEO Mara Fleishman in California with Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel at Governor Gavin Newsom's bill signing for the first-in-the-nation state law to phase ultraprocessed foods out of school meals.



Top: Advocating for universal free school meals in Virginia.
Bottom: Ensuring school food professionals are heard in Washington D.C.

Building the School Food Workforce

School food professionals have one of the most important jobs there is. They shape the health and support the success of our nation’s kids. Our work centers on building and upskilling this vital workforce — because when school food professionals thrive, so do our kids.

Arlene Perciavalle, 2025 Pre-Apprentice at Capistrano Unified School District in San Juan Capistrano (CA), showcases her freshly made taco salads for one of the middle schools.



Expanding Apprenticeship in California, Colorado, & Virginia

Our Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship provide school food professionals with hands-on experience and in-depth learning across a wide range of topics needed to operate a successful scratch-cooked meal program.

As of 2025, **754 emerging and experienced school food professionals** across three states completed our Pre-Apprenticeship. **Seventy-five went on to our Apprenticeship** to further advance their skills.

As a result, these program graduates are using what they’ve learned to prepare delicious, scratch-made meals for **1,705,976 students**.



“When Chef Ann approached us to invest in (workforce development), it was very clear that this was a renegade way to make long-term system change. We all agree that we need fresher, scratch-made lunch meals in our schools, and for that, we need investment in people. We need school food professionals to be well-trained and well-compensated.”

— Jane Schmitz, From Now on Fund

Cultivating visionary school food leaders across the nation

Our Fellowship program helps experienced school food professionals realize their visions for healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable school food — both locally in their home districts and at a national scale.

In 2025, 25 Fellows from eight states, plus the District of Columbia, graduated.

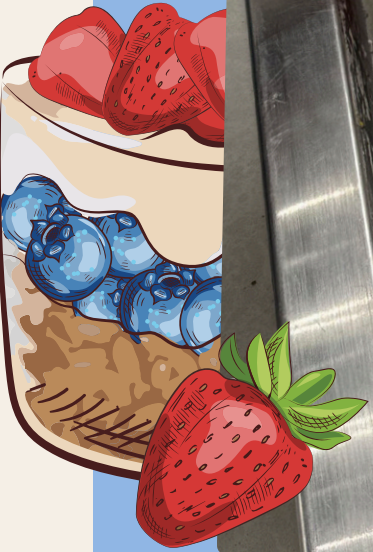
That’s **66 graduates** from **20 states**, plus the District of Columbia and Northern Mariana Islands since the program launched in 2023.



Fellowship graduation

“I have learned an incredible amount from this Fellowship; it’s pretty indescribable. My confidence when speaking about child nutrition has gone up, especially when addressing new developments or training my staff...These may seem like small things, but in seven months in my role, there’s no way this would have happened without the opportunity from Chef Ann Foundation. You all are fostering progress that will change lives.”

— Claire Nielsen, Wayzata Public Schools (MN), 2025 Fellow



2025 Fellow Jennifer Konish, at D.C. Public Schools in Washington, D.C., increased high school breakfast participation by nearly 10% as part of her capstone project. She introduced four “build-your-own-breakfast” items, empowering students to customize their meals while fostering healthier eating habits. Students can now choose local ingredients, such as turkey bacon, for their breakfast bowls and scratch-made granola for their breakfast parfaits.

Making School Meals Better for the Environment & Communities

It matters where food comes from — and where food waste goes. We connect schools with farms, food hubs, and food vendors that share their commitment to sustainability and strengthening local economies. We help schools cut food, plastic, and packaging waste. And we center plant-forward menu options.

Reducing milk & carton waste

We granted **23 bulk milk machines** and supporting materials to **eight districts across four states**. All grantees report that their packaging waste and fluid milk decreased after implementing bulk milk machines.

“We hope that with the success of this program, other funders will join us in supporting this unique opportunity to tackle food waste, educate children, and support our regional food systems.”

— Hana Uman, The Posner Foundation

Installing salad bars

We granted **166 salad bars to 81 districts across 32 states** and Washington, D.C. Ninety-two percent of grantees reported that fruit and vegetable selection increased after adopting salad bars!

“Students love having choices. They eat a lot more fruits and veggies when they can pick what they want. Even our youngest students are able to pick up items from the bar.” — Carrollton City Schools (GA)

Increasing Local Food

Our Partnerships for Local Agriculture & Nutrition Transformation in Schools (PLANTS) program supports schools in developing and buying ingredients that align with their sustainability goals.

Farm-fresh ingredients in Iowa

We worked with Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development to support four school districts to select recipes that feature local ingredients. After getting students’ thumbs up from **39 taste tests on 11 recipes**, districts worked with food hubs across the state to purchase ingredients from **33 local producers** to serve students new scratch-cooked menu items like butternut squash soup and pico de gallo.

PLANTS is funded by the USDA Food & Nutrition Administration Healthy Meals Incentive. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Better tortillas in Washington

NorthEast Washington ESD 101 connected with a local tortilleria to craft a new tortilla that meets the whole grain-rich criteria for school food and is made with locally milled flour.

This led to regional districts serving **30,000 tortillas** — that’s **5x more** than anticipated!

“The tortillas are so good. Fresh, never frozen, and that’s not something we can find. Kids have often complained about the whole-grain tortillas, so being able to make them fresh has really improved the quality and made kids more excited about their school meals.”

— Abby Miller, Director of Nutrition Services, NorthEast Washington ESD 101 (WA)

Lead Supporters



See all of our current supporters



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“Through Chef Ann Foundation’s dynamic programs, cafeteria staff are changing what’s on school lunch trays and helping kids develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime. We’re proud to support Chef Ann Foundation in its mission to transform school food systems and ensure that every child has the healthy food they need to learn and thrive.”

– Alex Amouyel, President & CEO, Newman’s Own Foundation

If you would like to learn how you can support the Chef Ann Foundation, contact Managing Director of Development Willa Antczak at willa.antczak@chefannfoundation.org.

Our Financials

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$5,248,864
Contributions receivable	\$3,943,992
Prepaid expenses	\$77,944
Total Current Assets	\$9,270,800

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	\$897,297
Accrued compensation & benefits	\$552,834
Total Current Liabilities	\$1,450,131

Net Assets

Net assets, without donor restrictions*	(\$1,218,752)
Net assets, with donor restrictions	\$9,039,421
Total Net Assets	\$7,820,669
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$9,270,800

The negative amount is due to a time restricted grant receivable of \$3,242,625 for costs incurred but not reimbursed (cash in hand) until the following year.

Statement of Activities

Operating Support & Revenue

Support Contributions & grants	\$20,588,935
Revenue Enrollment fees	\$28,107
Total Operating Support & Revenue	\$20,617,042

Operating Expenses

Expenses	
Programs services	\$14,887,326
Supporting services:	
general & administrative	\$1,575,808
Supporting services: fundraising	\$1,093,613
Total Operating Expenses	\$17,556,747

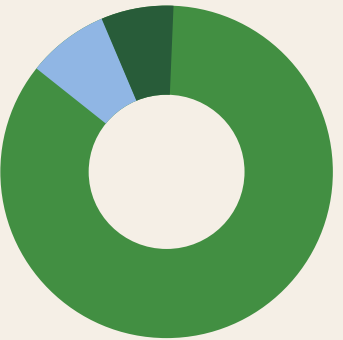
Operating Support & Revenue in Excess of Operating Expenses	\$3,060,295
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Other Changes	
Interest & other income	\$188,284

Change in Net Assets	\$3,248,579
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Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$4,572,090
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Net Assets, End of Year	\$7,820,669
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85% Program Services
\$14,887,326

9% General & Administrative
\$1,575,808

6% Fundraising
\$1,093,613

Major Program Expenses

CA Healthy School Food Pathway Implementation	\$7,908,032
USDA Partnerships	\$1,267,355
National HSFP	\$2,264,859
Get Schools Cooking	\$982,565
Equipment Grants	\$669,010
	\$1,432,148



Mara Fleishman
Co-Founder & CEO

"Every donation is an investment in children's health, educational success, and future well-being. Together, we're not just changing school lunch, we're building a movement that recognizes every child deserves nutritious, delicious food that will build habits to support life-long health."

Thank you for believing in this work and for understanding that school food professionals deserve our support as they serve millions of students daily."