



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Danielle Chandler

Email: danielle.c@chefannfoundation.org

Tel: 410-812-2948 (MT)

First K-12 Scratch-Cook School Food Focused Fellowship: Developing the next generation of diverse school food leaders

Boulder CO - Chef Ann Foundation (CAF) announces the Healthy School Food Pathway (HSFP) national Fellowship program to develop the next generation of school food leaders. CAF is accepting applications now through October 23rd, 2022 for the first ever scratch-cooked school food focused fellowship.

School districts serve about 31 million children every day, providing an opportunity to improve nutrition across the country with healthier ingredients and scratch-cook recipes. Skilled labor is one of the key challenges to implementing a scratch-cook school food program. Simultaneously, school food department labor shortages have only become exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Disruptions to the routine of school food during the pandemic introduced new challenges that required innovative approaches and a deeper understanding of procurement, facility, and finance processes. School food has the power to support the reduction of childhood diet related illness, increase more sustainable environmental outcomes related to food production, and create jobs that are mission driven, culinarily creative and an essential part of school districts priorities for achievement outcomes. This fellowship aims to help school food operators understand the food system they are part of, and harness the power they have to pave a path of change in school food. Based on [research](#), key challenges to expanding scratch cooking are skilled staff and necessary facilities and equipment.

Over the course of 12 months, Fellows will become leaders with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and vision to improve school food through self-operated, scratch-cook meal programs that serve healthy meals to students. Fellows will be ready to not only lead their own teams, but also cultivate transformative change within the school food system.

"This is so critically needed!" stated a Food Service Director as part of planning research. "The culture around real food knowledge, background on food preparation techniques and ability to really understand food is moving forward, but not fast enough. This type of program is exactly what is needed to build the K-12 profession."

As individuals begin to complete the Fellowship, the group of Fellow alumni will continue to grow. CAF will stay engaged with alumni and draw on their expertise to support other districts and leverage the collective voice to advocate for healthy school meals, efficient scratch cooking operations, climate positive food system solutions, and an equity-driven, valued workforce.

"We need to provide better training and support for school food professionals," says Chef Ann Cooper, CAF Founder/Board President and former Food Service Director at Boulder Valley School District. "Scratch cooking is extremely important to the health of our children, the right training can transform our school food system from highly processed to cooked from scratch and positively impact student wellness far into the future."

The Fellowship is part of the HSFP program, a work-based learning experience that aims to increase capacity and prepare individuals for job opportunities in healthy, scratch-cook school food programs. Thanks to our founding partners, Whole Kids Foundation and the state of CA, Fellowship is open to school food professionals across the country.

For more information about the fellowship program, visit www.chefannfoundation.org/fellowship.

About the Chef Ann Foundation

The [Chef Ann Foundation](http://www.chefannfoundation.org) 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 13,500 schools and 3.3 million kids with healthy school programming. Learn more at chefannfoundation.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).