

# Get Schools Cooking

## “A Systems Approach to Change”

A program of [Chef Ann Foundation](#), [Get Schools Cooking](#) is an intensive 3-year assessment and strategic planning program that provides school districts with comprehensive support to transition from a heat-and-serve to scratch cook operational model. Get Schools Cooking is open to school districts across the country thanks to generous support from the program’s partners, including Whole Kids Foundation, the Rachael Ray Foundation, and an Anonymous Funder.



## Program Targeted Outcomes

1. Increase knowledge surrounding scratch cooking
2. Assist with implementing operational changes to support scratch cooking
3. Support districts working towards a scratch-cook meal program centered around fresh, whole foods

## Eligibility

To apply, school districts must meet the following criteria:

- Be firmly committed to working towards a scratch-cook meal program centered around fresh, whole foods
- Demonstrate support for improvement from district leadership
- Participate in the National School Lunch Program and run a self-operated food service program

“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 made so far.”

- Amber Watson,  
Marysville Joint Unified School District

## Previous Participants Have:

- Introduced new scratch-cook recipes
- Installed salad bars
- Added new vendors to procure local products
- Eliminated highly processed products such as chicken nuggets, pizza, and packaged sandwiches
- Gained significant community support
- Introduced raw proteins such as whole muscle chicken, as well as expanded fresh fruit and vegetable procurement and variety
- Implemented software systems to create program efficiencies



## Key Program Steps

- Workshop
- [School Food Institute](#) courses
- On-site assessment
- Assessment report
- Strategic planning
- Technical assistance (TA)
- Support
- System assistance grant
- Evaluations
- Connect & reflect

## Timeline

- Application opens: August 3, 2026
- Application closes: September 30, 2026
- Selected districts notified: November - December 2026
- Workshop: February 2027
- On-site assessments: March 2027 - November 2027
- On-site TA visits: Fall 2027 - Spring 2028
- Final Evaluation: Spring 2028

Learn more at  
[thelunchbox.org/gsc](https://thelunchbox.org/gsc)

The Chef Ann Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit dedicated to promoting whole-ingredient, scratch cooking in schools. We help school districts replace ultraprocessed food with fresh, healthy, and delicious scratch-cooked meals that nourish kids and protect the planet. Since 2009, our programs have reached more than 19,000 schools in all 50 states, bringing better meals to 5.9 million kids.