



USDA Grants Needed to Help Pennsylvania Serve Healthy School Meals

Only 38% of the state's districts have a budget for essential kitchen upgrades

This fact sheet is one in a 10-part series highlighting the need for more school kitchen equipment grants to help ensure that children receive healthy school meals.

Overview

The nutritional quality of school meals has a significant impact on the health of the children who eat them. Each day, the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs serve more than 30 million and 14 million children, respectively, providing healthy food for kids.¹ However, this frequently requires schools to work around equipment and infrastructure challenges in ways that are expensive, inefficient, and unsustainable.

Pennsylvania at a Glance

- 80 percent of school districts needed at least one piece of equipment to better serve nutritious foods as of the 2012-13 school year.*
- The median cost of equipment needs per school was \$29,000 in the 2012-13 school year, compared with approximately \$37,000 nationally.†
- The state received \$1,019,574 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for school kitchen equipment upgrades in fiscal year 2014.‡

* The Pew Charitable Trusts, "States Need Updated School Kitchen Equipment," accessed April 14, 2016, <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2014/03/26/states-need-updated-school-kitchen-equipment-b>.

† Ibid.

‡ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "Fiscal Year 2014 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities" (memorandum, April 18, 2014).

Although 38 percent of school districts in Pennsylvania have at least some budget for kitchen equipment upgrades,² U.S. Department of Agriculture grants are critical to helping schools with greater needs. Seventy-two schools in the state received funding in fiscal 2014 to purchase kitchen equipment.³ (See Table 1.)

Policymakers have a chance to make a big difference in many school systems by helping them purchase the new and better tools they need to serve healthier foods more efficiently. Congress has provided such support since 2009 in the form of grant funding through annual appropriations, including \$30 million in fiscal 2016, which is distributed to school districts via state agencies.⁴ For fiscal 2017, the president's budget includes \$35 million for the grants.⁵ Now Congress has the opportunity to match that request and make certain that more schools have access to these much-needed resources.

Additionally, the bipartisan School Food Modernization Act (S. 540/H.R. 3316) would maintain schools' access to modern kitchen equipment and infrastructure, and strengthen workforce training through the child nutrition reauthorization legislation.⁶ By co-sponsoring the act, members of Congress can help make upgrading school kitchens and ensuring that students receive the healthy meals they need a national priority.

Table 1

Congress Should Appropriate Funding to Help More Schools

USDA grants by Pennsylvania congressional district, amount, and items purchased, FY 2014

PA-1	School District of Philadelphia	James Sullivan School	\$10,014.09	Double oven
PA-1	School District of Philadelphia	Southwark School	\$10,014.09	Double oven
PA-1	School District of Philadelphia	Andrew Jackson School	\$10,014.09	Double oven
PA-1	School District of Philadelphia	Motivation High School	\$5,583.77	Single oven
PA-2	School District of Philadelphia	John Wister Elementary School	\$5,144.78	Single oven
PA-2	School District of Philadelphia	Benjamin Franklin High School	\$10,883.95	Double oven
PA-2	School District of Philadelphia	Elverson James Middle School	\$10,060.97	Double oven
PA-2	School District of Philadelphia	Philadelphia High School for Girls	\$10,883.95	Double oven
PA-2	School District of Philadelphia	Central High School	\$10,883.95	Double oven
PA-2	School District of Philadelphia	Bayard Taylor School	\$10,014.09	Double oven

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Congressional district	School food authority	School	Grant	Item purchased
PA-3	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Keystone Education Center Charter School	\$5,577.40	Heated holding unit
PA-3	Northwestern School District	Northwestern Middle/Senior High	\$13,581.90	Combi oven
PA-3	Summit Academy	Summit School	\$19,078.10	Combi oven*
PA-4	Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School	Holy Family Campus	\$7,370.00	Milk cooler
PA-4	Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School	Cathedral Campus	\$5,020.00	Refrigerator
PA-5	Corry Area School District	Columbus Elementary School	\$18,627.00	Combi oven
PA-5	Corry Area School District	Corry Area Middle School/High School	\$18,627.00	Combi oven
PA-5	Forest Area School District	East Forest Elementary	\$5,597.00	Hot serving counter [†]
PA-5	Huntingdon Area School District	Standing Stone Elementary	\$20,466.34	Convection steamer [‡]
PA-5	Keystone Central School District	Central Mountain Middle School	\$16,735.00	Convection steamer
PA-5	Titusville Area School District	Titusville High School	\$16,784.00	Combi oven
PA-5	Warren County School District	Youngsville Elementary	\$5,310.00	Hot serving counter
PA-5	Warren County School District	Sheffield Middle School/High School	\$5,310.00	Hot serving counter
PA-6	Coatesville Area School District	Caln Elementary School	\$7,738.20	Refrigerator
PA-7	Chichester School District	Chichester High School	\$14,695.70	Vending machine
PA-7	Coatesville Area School District	Friendship Elementary	\$7,738.20	Refrigerator
PA-7	Coatesville Area School District	Reeceville Elementary	\$38,365.18	Combi oven

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Congressional district	School food authority	School	Grant	Item purchased
PA-8	North Penn School District	Oak Park Elementary	\$29,200.00	Combi oven
PA-9	Altoona Area School District	Altoona Area Junior High School	\$9,379.00	Convection oven [§]
PA-9	Altoona Area School District	Logan Elementary	\$18,382.00	Combi oven/steamer
PA-9	Connellsville Area School District	West Crawford Elementary	\$14,450.00	Convection steamer
PA-9	Hope for Hyndman Charter School	Hope for Hyndman Charter School	\$9,313.00	Heavy-duty range
PA-9	Laurel Highlands School District	Marshall Elementary	\$15,170.36	Combi oven
PA-10	Families United Network	Families United Network	\$12,137.86	Range
PA-10	Williamsport Area School District	Stevens Primary	\$18,334.90	Dishwasher
PA-10	Williamsport Area School District	Curtin Intermediate	\$17,174.16	Convection steamer
PA-10	Williamsport Area School District	Williamsport Area Middle School	\$30,524.19	Dishwasher
PA-10	Williamsport Area School District	Jackson Primary	\$71,182.10	Dishwasher
PA-10	Williamsport Area School District	Cochran Primary	\$18,334.82	Dishwasher
PA-10	Williamsport Area School District	Lycoming Valley Intermediate	\$18,334.90	Dishwasher
PA-11	Central Dauphin School District	Swatara Middle School	\$6,241.00	Serving counter
PA-12	Forbes Road Career and Technology Center	Forbes Road Career and Technology Center	\$19,152.00	Combi oven
PA-12	Midland Borough School District	Midland Borough Elementary School/ Middle School	\$24,264.18	Dishwasher
PA-13	School District of Philadelphia	A.L. Fitzpatrick Elementary School	\$5,144.78	Single oven

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Congressional district	School food authority	School	Grant	Item purchased
PA-13	School District of Philadelphia	James R. Lowell Elementary School	\$10,014.09	Double oven
PA-13	School District of Philadelphia	J.H. Brown Elementary School	\$5,583.77	Single oven
PA-13	School District of Philadelphia	Northeast High School	\$10,883.95	Double oven
PA-14	Clairton City School District	Clairton Middle/High School	\$19,501.00	Dishwasher
PA-14	Western PA School for the Deaf	Western PA School for the Deaf	\$7,238.00	Convection oven
PA-15	Bethlehem Area School District	Marvine Elementary	\$9,191.25	Hot/cold cabinet**
PA-15	Bethlehem Area School District	Lincoln Elementary	\$9,191.25	Hot/cold cabinet
PA-15	Bethlehem Area School District	Northeast Middle School	\$31,607.33	Combi oven
PA-15	Bethlehem Area School District	Thomas Jefferson Elementary	\$9,191.25	Hot/cold cabinet
PA-15	Bethlehem Area School District	Clearview Elementary	\$9,191.25	Hot/cold cabinet
PA-15	Bethlehem Area School District	James Buchanan Elementary	\$9,191.25	Hot/cold cabinet
PA-15	Catasauqua Area School District	Catasauqua Middle School	\$6,876.80	Convection oven
PA-15	Catasauqua Area School District	Francis Sheckler Elementary	\$6,876.80	Convection oven
PA-15	Lehigh Career and Technical Institute	Lehigh Career and Technical Institute	\$8,428.30	Roll-in refrigerator
PA-16	Ephrata Area School District	Highland Elementary	\$29,273.89	Dishwasher
PA-16	Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center	Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center	\$12,085.00	Range
PA-17	Minersville Area School District	Llewellyn Elementary	\$15,590.11	Combi oven/steamer

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Congressional district	School food authority	School	Grant	Item purchased
PA-17	Minersville Area School District	Minersville Elementary	\$15,590.11	Combi oven/steamer
PA-17	Panther Valley School District	Panther Valley Middle School	\$5,088.91	Merchandise ^{††}
PA-17	Pocono Mountain School District	Clear Run Intermediate	\$14,007.71	Combi oven
PA-17	Pocono Mountain School District	Clear Run Elementary	\$14,007.71	Combi oven
PA-17	Pocono Mountain School District	Pocono Mountain West Junior High	\$14,007.71	Combi oven
PA-17	Pocono Mountain School District	Pocono Mountain West Senior High	\$15,826.50	Tilting kettle [¶]
PA-17	Pocono Mountain School District	Tobyhanna Elementary	\$19,992.99	Dishwasher
PA-17	Wilkes-Barre Area School District	Martin Mury Elementary	\$5,640.00	Steam kettle
PA-18	Gateway School District	Cleveland Steward Elementary	\$22,201.10	Dishwasher
PA-18	The Bradley Center	The Bradley Center	\$17,981.00	Combi oven/steamer
PA-18	Yough School District	West Newton Elementary	\$8,477.00	Convection oven

Notes: Total dollars allocated from the USDA to states and from states to schools may be different because of variation between projected and final equipment costs.

* Combination (combi) ovens bake, roast, grill, steam, braise, blanch, and poach foods in shorter cooking times, preserving vitamins and nutrients at higher levels than traditional ovens.

† Hot-food serving line counters hold foods at safe, warm temperatures.

‡ Convection steamers use internal fans to circulate steam and air around food to cook it more quickly than a traditional steaming method.

§ Convection ovens use internal fans to circulate dry heat to cook foods more quickly and evenly than traditional ovens.

¶ Tilting kettles simmer soups and stews and tilt forward for easier pouring than stationary kettles.

** These cabinets keep food hot or cold for hours, allowing meals prepared in advance to be served at the proper temperature.

†† Cold-food merchandisers are enclosed refrigerated display cases that are used for serving foods such as fruits, vegetables, and dairy items at safe temperatures.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "National School Lunch Program: Participation and Lunches Served (Data as of April 8, 2016)"; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "School Breakfast Program: Participation and Meals Served (Data as of April 8, 2016)." <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>.
- 2 The Pew Charitable Trusts, "States Need Updated School Kitchen Equipment," accessed April 14, 2016, <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2014/03/26/states-need-updated-school-kitchen-equipment-b>.
- 3 Pennsylvania Department of Education, pers. comm., April 1, 2016.
- 4 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "2016 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants," last modified Feb. 1, 2016, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/2016-nslp-equipment-assistance-grants>.
- 5 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "2017 Explanatory Notes," accessed April 14, 2016, <http://www.obpa.usda.gov/32fns2017notes.pdf>.
- 6 The Pew Charitable Trusts, "Give Schools the Tools to Prepare Healthy, Delicious Meals" (Feb. 20, 2015), <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2015/02/give-schools-the-tools-to-prepare-healthy-delicious-meals>.

For further information, please visit:

pewtrusts.org/kitchen-equipment

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