



# USDA Grants Needed to Help Mississippi Serve Healthy School Meals

95% of districts need at least one piece of kitchen equipment

*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.<sup>1</sup> However, this frequently requires schools to work around equipment and infrastructure challenges in ways that are expensive, inefficient, and unsustainable.

### Mississippi at a Glance

- 95 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 \$63,000 in the 2012-13 school year, compared with approximately \$37,000 nationally.†
- The state received \$177,938 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 77 percent of school districts in Mississippi have at least some budget for kitchen equipment upgrades,<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture grants are critical to helping schools with greater needs. Twenty-four schools in the state received funding in fiscal 2014 to purchase kitchen equipment.<sup>3</sup> (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.<sup>4</sup> For fiscal 2017, the president's budget includes \$35 million for the grants.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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 Mississippi congressional district and school food authority, FY 2014

Congressional district	School food authority	School
MS-1	Coahoma County School District	Jonestown Elementary School
MS-1	Lee County Schools	Plantersville Middle School
MS-2	Canton Public School District	McNeal Elementary School
MS-2	Canton Public School District	Nichols Middle School
MS-2	Clarksdale Municipal School District	Booker T. Washington Elementary School
MS-2	Clarksdale Municipal School District	Myrtle Hall IV Elementary School
MS-2	Coahoma County School District	Coahoma County Jr./Sr. High School
MS-2	Greenville Public Schools	Armstrong Elementary School
MS-2	Jackson Public Schools	Hardy Middle School

Continued on the next page

Congressional district	School food authority	School
MS-2	Jackson Public Schools	Wilkins Elementary School
MS-2	Jefferson County School District	Elementary, middle, and junior high schools
MS-2	Jefferson County School District	Jefferson County High School
MS-2	Leflore County School District	Leflore County Elementary School
MS-2	North Bolivar School District	Broad Street High School
MS-2	North Bolivar School District	Brooks Elementary School
MS-2	North Panola Consolidated	Como Elementary School
MS-2	North Panola Consolidated	Green Hill Elementary School
MS-2	Quitman County School District	Quitman County Elementary School
MS-2	Quitman County School District	Quitman County Middle School
MS-2	Yazoo County School District	Linwood Elementary School
MS-3	Kemper County Schools	East Kemper Elementary School
MS-4	Hattiesburg Public School District	Hawkins Elementary School
MS-4	Hattiesburg Public School District	Lillie Burney Elementary School
MS-4	Picayune School District	Nicholson Elementary School

Source: Mississippi 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 Mississippi 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>.

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## For further information, please visit:

[pewtrusts.org/kitchen-equipment](http://pewtrusts.org/kitchen-equipment)

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