



## GETTING STARTED WITH ADVOCACY

Understanding how the political process works is another important tool to ending childhood hunger. Here are some steps you can take as you break down the barriers to nutritious food for children

## IDENTIFY WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR SCHOOL

First, it's important to understand where your school and school district stands with regards to free and reduced lunch.

- You can look up your school district here: [http://dw.education.maine.gov/DirectoryManager/WEB/Maine\\_Report/StudentNeed-DTViewer.aspx](http://dw.education.maine.gov/DirectoryManager/WEB/Maine_Report/StudentNeed-DTViewer.aspx)
- Armed with the number of free and reduced children it's time to understand how many children in your school are participating in the four USDA programs: breakfast, lunch, after-school called CACFP and summer time.
- You can find this information here: [https://portal.maine.gov/sfsr/sfsrdev.public\\_reports.main\\_page](https://portal.maine.gov/sfsr/sfsrdev.public_reports.main_page)

A great next step with this information is learning more about your school's culture around food. To do this go talk to other parents, teachers, parent teacher organizations, school administrators, school board and food directors about your school's food programs.

A few more ideas on how to round out what's going on in your community:

- Does your school have any relationships with the businesses and nonprofits?
- Does your school actively work with any religious organizations?
- Does your school tap into any health care, hospitals, or healthy maine partnerships?

## RESEARCHING CHILDHOOD HUNGER

**Enriching Environment for Children:** Many children arrive to There have been legislative task forces and studies looking at the barriers of getting nutritious food to children. A recent legislative task force report is good resource:

- [http://digitalmaine.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=opla\\_docs](http://digitalmaine.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=opla_docs)

## NEED HELP?

At this point one might be inclined to call Full Plates Full Potential to think through next steps. We are here to help.

## TALKING TO YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

There are a number of local elected officials that can have a huge impact on hunger in your school district

- **School Board**
  - Your school board will be instrumental in setting district-wide policy on enrolling in the four USDA programs
  - Your school board can lead in creating the culture that all children will have access to nutritious food
- **Town Council**
  - Town Councilors can help lead the way in creating stronger programs for children.
- **State Legislators**
  - State legislators can help bring statewide attention to the problem and dedicate resources. Your elected can also introduce bills to help end childhood hunger.

## DEVELOP PLAN TO HIGHLIGHT THE FOOD ISSUES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Once you've enlisted the support of stakeholders there are many ways to move the dial to help children access food:

- Have an in-district meeting with elected about the urgency to create more access
- Host a community forum to end child hunger in your community.
- Contact Full Plates Full Potential and we can help you get started.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To improve advocacy and help end childhood hunger in your area, email us at [info@fullplates.org](mailto:info@fullplates.org).