

A School Nutrition Workforce for the Future

Hosted by **Senator Monique Limón (SD 19)**


November 2024 School Food Labor Legislative Briefing

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Important Information About This Webinar

This webinar is being recorded.

- Your microphone, video, and chat has been disabled and will remain so for the duration of this webinar, other than the question and answer section.

Have a question?

- Submit it using Zoom's Q&A function!

All information presented in this webinar is accurate as of this date.

A word from Senator Monique Limón (SD 19)



The Foundation of Improving School Food



School food professionals setting up a cafeteria serving station at Oxnard Union High School District's Channel Islands High School.

- Thanks to the visionary leadership of California's elected officials, our state has made historic investments in school nutrition.
- In order to leverage those investments, California needs a stable school food workforce with **capacity** and **skill**.



California's School Meals for All Program

“



Now that school meals are free, it's opened the door for everyone to participate. **We don't have to worry about not having enough money. My friends and I love the school lunch.**”

Kevin, Student
Fullerton Joint Union High School District

- **First-In-The-Nation:** In 2021, California became the first state to pass Universal School Meals, recognizing the benefits universal school meals provide to families and schools.
- **Proven Benefits:**
 - Alleviates food insecurity & poverty
 - Supports good nutrition & improves health outcomes
 - Improves attendance, student behavior and academic performance
 - Reduces stigma and eliminates meal debt
 - Supports regional agricultural economies and environmental sustainability

Going Beyond Access to Addressing Nutrition

A core tenet of **School Meals for All** is ensuring every child receives nutritionally adequate food to support their learning, growth, and development. To accomplish this, CA has implemented programs that work in tandem:

1. Farm to School Incubator Grant program
2. Kitchen Infrastructure and Training program
3. Healthy School Food Pathway program
4. School Food Best Practices Funds
5. Public Education Facilities Bond
6. Climate Bond
7. AB 2316 (Gabriel) School Food Safety



Demand for School Meals is Increasing

CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL PROGRAM PROVES MORE STUDENTS EAT WHEN MEALS ARE FREE

California Student's Participation in School Meals
Outperforms National Trends



- Data from the USDA shows that California students' participation in school meals **outperforms national trends** and those of other states.
- During the 2023-24 school year, California public schools served a **record breaking 872 million free school meals**, a 5% increase from the previous school year.

Source: Center for Ecoliteracy

Questions?



**To build the workforce, we have
to understand the workforce.**



The School Food Workforce: Who Are They?



School food service workers **are significantly older than the overall workforce** (median age of 52 compared to 28 for other food service workers) **and almost entirely female (93%). They are more likely to be Black or Latino than the overall workforce.**

(Hungry for Good Jobs: Food Service Workers in Public Schools, UC Berkeley Labor Center, 2024)

“

The vast majority of people cooking and serving meals to students are women earning some of the lowest wages not just among public sector workers, but across occupations and industries.

Hungry for Good Jobs: Food Service Workers in Public Schools
UC Berkeley Labor Center (2024)

California Has the Starkest Income Gap Between Latinas and White Men



In California, Latinas earn just **44 cents for every dollar paid to a white man**. California holds the distinction of the worst wage gap between Latinas and white men in the nation.

(California Budget and Policy Center, 2024)

Workforce Challenges Are Inhibiting Success



Nutrition departments are doing extraordinary work despite **immense challenges**:

- Staffing shortages and high turnover rates
- Underinvestment in professional career development
- Low pay & hours, lack of competitiveness







California school food service directors' and managers' **greatest concern** about implementing the state's universal meal program was **staffing shortages**.

(Nutrition Policy Institute survey, 2022)

Registered Apprenticeships Are a Proven Solution to Workforce Challenges



Registered Apprenticeships Have a Proven Track Record of Strong Results for Employers and Workers

 <p>Skilled Workforce Recruit and develop a diverse and highly-skilled workforce</p> <p>VIEW CASE STUDY</p>	 <p>Improve Productivity Improve profitability and positive impact to your bottom line</p> <p>VIEW CASE STUDY</p>	 <p>Reduced Turnover Minimize cost with reduced turnover and liability</p> <p>VIEW CASE STUDY</p>
 <p>Customizable Training Create flexible training options that ensure workers develop the right skills</p> <p>VIEW CASE STUDY</p>	 <p>Retain Workers 90% of apprentices continue employment after completing an apprenticeship</p> <p>VIEW CASE STUDY</p>	 <p>Diversity Foster a diverse and inclusive culture</p> <p>VIEW CASE STUDY</p>

Source: [U.S. Department of Labor](#)

Healthy School Food Pathway: Building the Workforce We Need



A program of the
Chef Ann Foundation

Healthy School Food Pathway supports K-12 school food programs in **increasing their scratch cooking capacity**. This process creates the conditions for California school districts to host Pre-Apprentices and Apprentices for a **first-of-its-kind workforce development pipeline program**.

The program creates **career ladders and advancement opportunities**, increasing job satisfaction and retention.

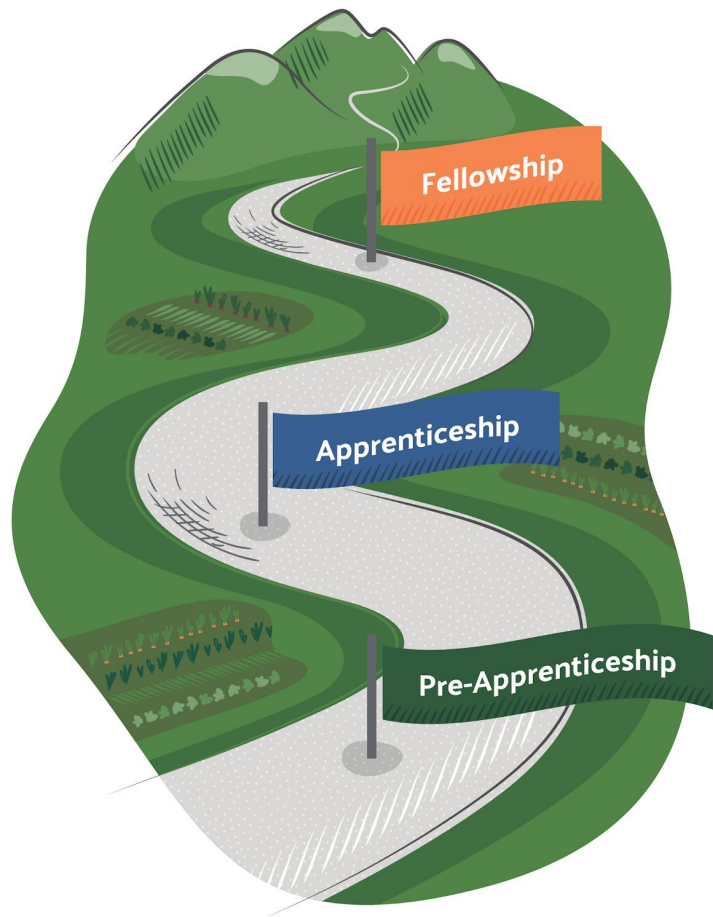
Healthy School Food Pathway currently operates in **71 California school districts**, with the potential to impact approximately **725,550 children**.



Designed by Industry Experts: Chef Ann Foundation

- National nonprofit founded in 2009
- Founder is Chef Ann Cooper, former Food Service Director
- Work to ensure that school food professionals have the resources, funding and support they need to provide fresh, healthy, delicious, cook from scratch meals that support the health of children and our planet.





Healthy School Food Pathway

Maximizing Impact Through Workforce Development

Pre-Apprenticeship

Online courses and paid on-the-job learning to expand the pipeline for careers in healthy school food

Apprenticeship

Additional virtual learning and paid on-the-job learning to train the next generation of school food changemakers

Fellowship

Onsite learning, virtual courses and a capstone project to support a successful transition into school food leadership

Program Components

Pre-Apprenticeship

- **Seven weeks** of paid, on-the-job learning (**12 hours per week**)
- **Three self-paced, online courses** through Chef Ann Foundation's School Food Institute (**15 hours**)
- **Two live virtual learning sessions** with scratch cooking and school food experts (**3 hours**)

Apprenticeship

- **Nine months** of paid, on-the-job learning over a full school year (**24 hours per week**)
- **Online courses** through the Institute of Child Nutrition (**59 hours**) and School Food Institute (**40 hours**)
- **18 live virtual learning sessions** with scratch-cooking and school food experts (**45 hours**)

Fellowship

- **13 months** of asynchronous learning and applied on-site work
- **Live virtual learning sessions** (**144 hours**)
- **Five online courses** through the School Food Institute (**11 hours**)
- **Five in-person trips**
- **Group policy project** (**25 hours**)
- **Self-led capstone project** (**50 hours**)

Healthy School Food Pathway In Action



HSFP Aligns with State Goals



- Helps achieve **Administration's Apprenticeship targets**, particularly for public sector apprenticeships
 - State goal: serve 500,000 apprentices by 2029
 - 5-Point Action Plan: expanding public sector apprenticeships is key strategy
- Improves meal quality associated with California's **Universal Meals Program**
- Supports **Farm to School Program**: helps school districts purchase from California's climate friendly farmers and ranchers
 - Increasing Farm to School participation is a success metric in **California Climate Adaptation Strategy**

31 Districts in Northern California– 71 Sites Total

- Albany Unified
- Alum Rock Union*
- Banta Unified
- Benicia Unified
- Brentwood Union*
- Calistoga Joint Unified*
- Castro Valley Unified
- Chicago Park School
- Del Norte Unified*
- Elk Grove USD
- Galt Joint Union HS District*
- Gridley Unified
- Healdsburg Unified
- Live Oak Unified (Live Oak)
- Los Gatos Union Elementary School District
- Marysville Joint Unified
- Morgan Hill Unified
- Mt. Diablo Unified
- Napa Valley Unified
- Nevada City School of the Arts
- Petaluma City Schools
- San Francisco USD
- Santa Clara Unified
- Tahoe Truckee Unified
- Turlock Unified
- Twin Rivers Unified*
- Ukiah
- West Contra Costa Unified
- Western Placer Unified
- Willows Unified
- YES Charter Academy

*Only accepting current staff

24 Districts in Southern California– 71 Sites Total

- Azusa Unified
- Bear Valley Unified
- Burbank Unified*
- Capistrano Unified*
- Centralia Elementary
- Cypress Elementary School District*
- Fallbrook Union Elementary School District
- Fallbrook Union High School District
- Fillmore Unified*
- Fullerton
- Gonzales Unified
- Hacienda La Puente Unified*
- Magnolia Elementary School District
- Menifee Union School District*
- Norwalk-La Mirada Unified
- Oak Park Unified
- Ocean View
- Oro Grande*
- Oxnard Union High School District*
- Paramount Unified
- Rowland Unified
- San Bernardino City Unified
- Santa Paula*
- Sweetwater Union High

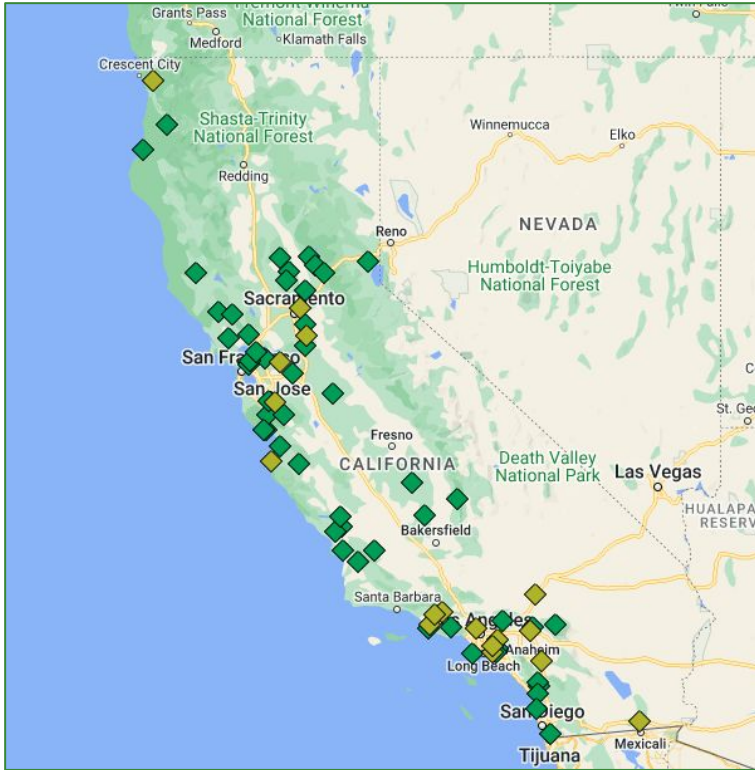
*Only accepting current staff

16 Districts in Central California- 71 Sites Total



- Atascadero Unified
- Carmel Unified*
- Greenfield Union
- Lammersville Unified*
- Live Oak Unified (Santa Cruz)
- Lodi Unified
- Lucia Mar Unified
- North Monterey County Unified
- Oak Valley Union Elementary School District
- Paso Robles Joint
- Porterville Unified
- San Lorenzo Valley Unified
- San Luis Coastal Unified
- San Miguel Joint Union
- Santa Cruz City Schools
- Wonderful College Prep Academy

*Only accepting current staff



- ◆ Current staff only
- ◆ Open to external applicants

Map: Current Host Districts

Technical Assistance to Prepare Worksites & Advance Scratch Cooking



Western Placer Unified School District (Lincoln)

Christina Lawson, Director & Fellow, worked with CAF to procure beef from Cream Co. Meats and with the help of CAF's team, prepared 100 servings of beef nachos for their high school students.

After the onsite visit, the item was then menued district wide where it was a featured item!



What's Plateful?
Plateful is the WPUSD Food & Nutrition Service own brand identity used to help exemplify their mission in providing balanced, locally-sourced meals that students enjoy.

The graphic includes icons of an orange, a fork, peas, a watermelon slice, and grapes, along with the Plateful logo for Western Placer Unified School District.



Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District (Humboldt County)

KTIUSD is a rural district on the Hoopa Valley Reservation located in Northern California. There is a strong interest in increasing scratch cooking with a special focus on Indigenous representation.

CAF worked in conjunction with Becky Woodman, Food Service Director, to prepare and serve Three Sisters Stew & Cornbread. Over 200 servings were served using locally sourced produce and beans from Karuk Tribe's Tishaniik Farm & Willow Creek.



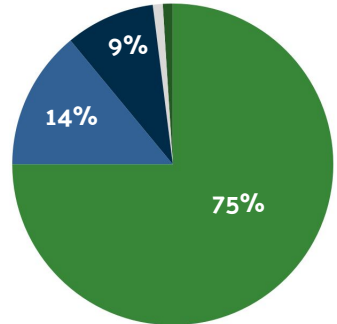
Early Evaluation Results



HSFP Participants are Mostly Women, Hispanic/Latino and Middle-Aged.

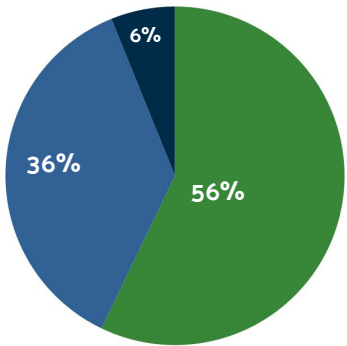
Gender

- Cisgender female
- Cisgender male
- Preferred not to respond
- Transgender female
- Non-binary/non-conforming

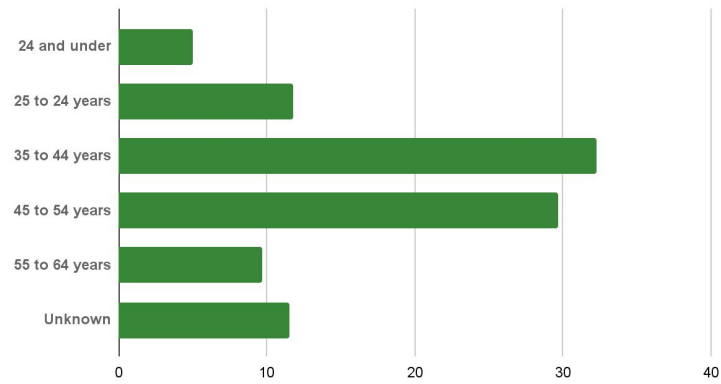


Ethnicity

- Hispanic/Latino
- Not Hispanic/Latino
- Prefer not to say

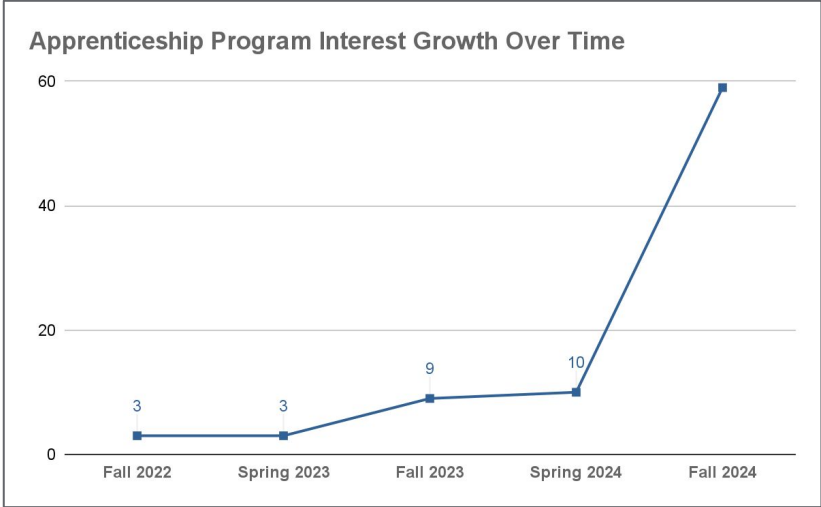
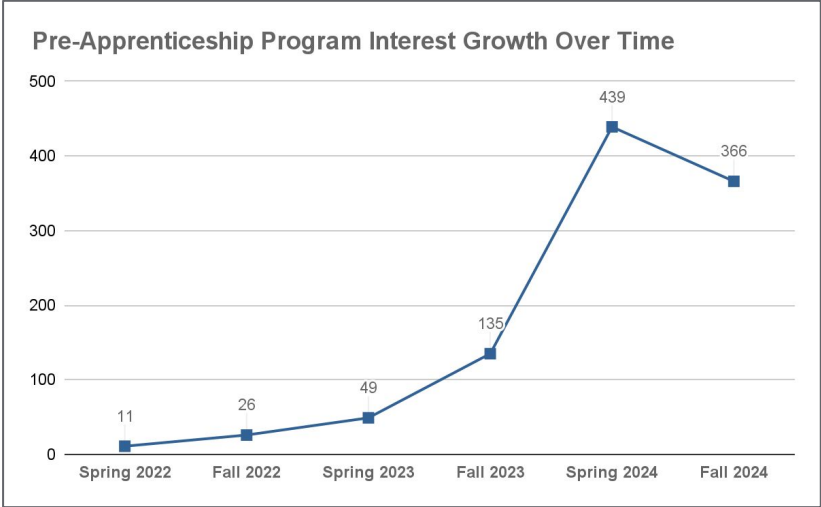


Age



Interest in HSFP is Continuing to Grow

Since 2022, 1180 people have applied to HSFP.



HSFP is building knowledge and skills essential to scratch cooking, while increasing commitment to school food



Knowledge & Skills Gains

Pre-Apprentices showed significant gains in school food knowledge during the program, with 58% of Pre-Apprentices increasing or sustaining a high pre/post assessment score.



Career Interest & Commitment

Most Pre-Apprentices (80%) and Apprentices (60%) state that they're likely to start or continue working in school food over the next five years. Apprentices and Fellows report improved job performance, especially leadership skills for Fellows.



Motivations for Participation

Participants are motivated by a desire to improve skills, advance careers, and make a positive impact on school food systems, with a focus on nourishing children and community contributions, as well as seeking career and salary growth.

HSFP is Highly Popular

Satisfaction is consistent across participant groups, including community members and Spanish speakers:

93%

of Pre-Apprentices
were satisfied with
their experience

100%

of Apprentices
would recommend
the program

100%

of Fellows expressed
satisfaction with the
program

94%

of Fellows would
recommend the
program

School Districts Benefit from HSFP

Participation in the Healthy School Food Pathway (HSFP) program led to several positive outcomes for school districts:

91%

of districts reported a sense of community and collaboration

89%

of districts reported improved culinary skills

87%

of districts reported an increase in technical skills and knowledge

86%

of districts reported improved morale and engagement

HSFP is Contributing to California's Vision for School Food

These gains can contribute to the overall effectiveness of school food programs by improving meal quality, ensuring compliance, facilitating communication, improving morale and promoting career advancement.



“[I like] being able to see how food brings joy to our students with the food choices we provide.”

- Pre-Apprentice

“Schools are one of the best ways to educate children about nutrition and health. Putting into practice whole food scratch cooking is a way to ensure the health and therefore prosperity of the next generation.”

- Pre-Apprentice

Participants' Concerns Reflect Documented Systemic Labor Challenges in School Food

When thinking about continuing to work in school food service, Pre-Apprentices and Apprentices are concerned about:

- low pay
- adequate staffing
- limited kitchen resources
- perception that school meal regulations restrict their ability to be creative

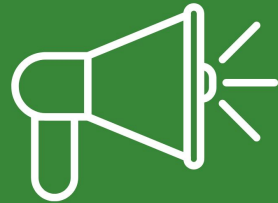
“[My main concern about working in school food is] the pay. It’s horrible that our state makes it mandatory that fast food workers get \$20/hr while our school food workers still make minimum wage. Overall funding is lacking to get these schools the resources they need to be successful.”

–Pre-Apprentice

Questions?



Building the Workforce While Addressing Barriers

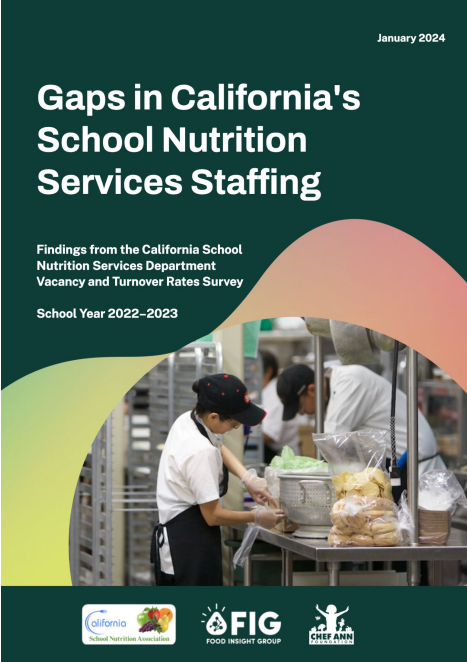


Research

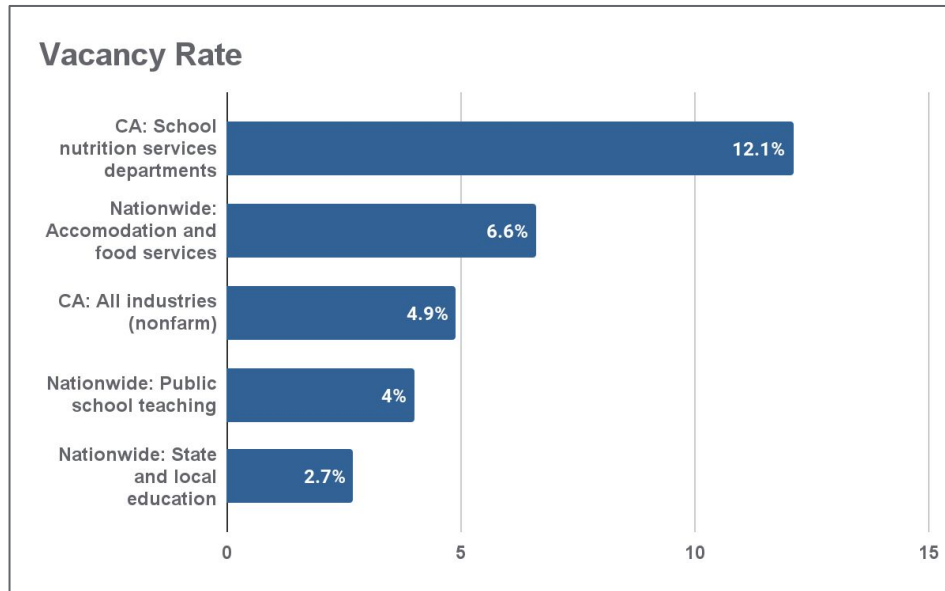


Advocacy

California Vacancy and Turnover Rate Survey: Seeking Answers



The Impact of Vacancies on School Food Programs



The first study of K-12 school food staff shortages in California revealed the rate of unfilled positions in the state's school food programs is **three times higher than unfilled positions for U.S. public school teachers.**

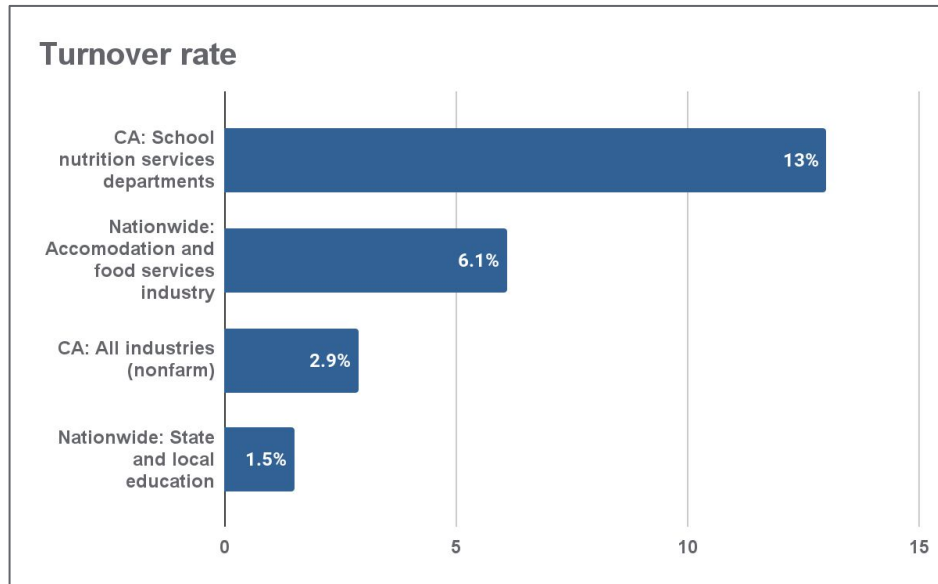
Source: California School Nutrition Vacancy Rate Survey: Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, June 2023 rates (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023); School Pulse Panel (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

“

Short-staffing greatly impacts the ability to feed students. Unlike other departments, the amount of work cannot be reduced if staff are missing. We can't just “put off” the work, students still need to eat and we cannot turn away students because we don't have enough staff. Having more staff also allows for meals to have better quality and the capability to create more scratch items and rely less on pre-packaged items.

California School Food Service Director

Reported turnover rates for California school nutrition departments exceed turnover rates of relevant state and national industries.



Source: California School Nutrition Vacancy Rate Survey: Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, June 2023 rates (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023); School Pulse Panel (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

“

Our staff are tired because of serving 40% more meals due to universal meals [while] being understaffed. They also served all during COVID. Morale is not what it used to be. We increased wages to some of the highest in the area [within school nutrition departments] but still can't compete with Target, etc.

California School Food Service Director

First of Its Kind School Food Workforce Compensation Study



Nathan Sick and Julia Payne
URBAN INSTITUTE

Beth Katz and Debbie Friedman
FOOD INSIGHT GROUP

November 2024



Primary Findings

Entry level school food professionals struggle to afford housing:

94%

urban/suburban districts have entry level jobs that pay less than the cost to afford housing in their area.

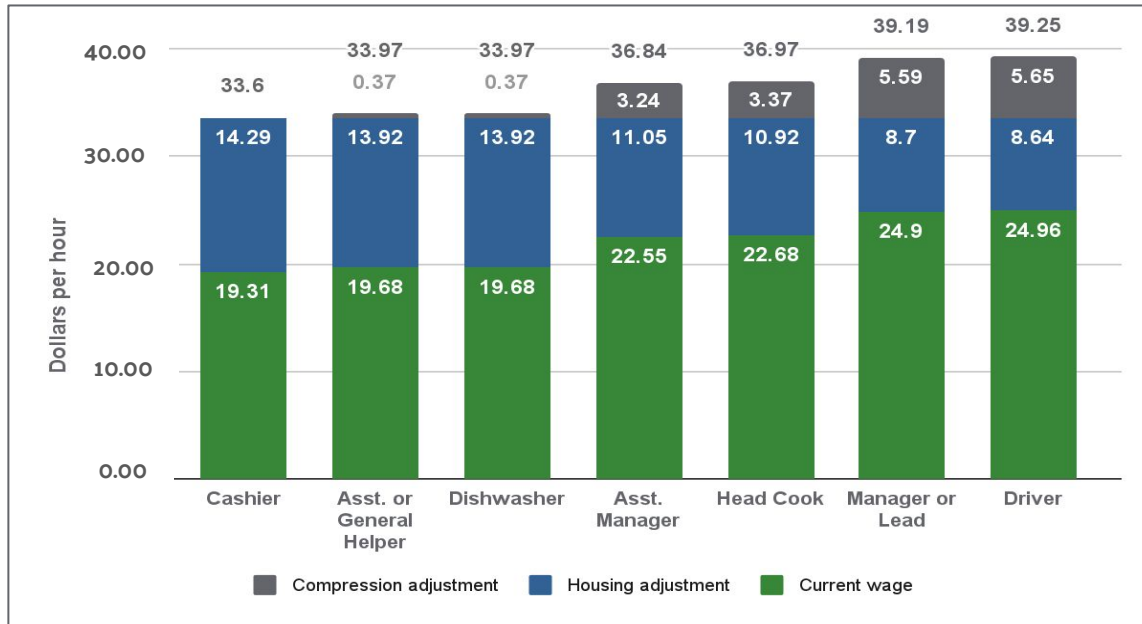
55%

town and rural districts have entry level jobs that pay less than the cost to afford housing in their area.

Most

School Nutrition jobs are entry level positions.

The Living Wage Gap is Greatest In Urban and Suburban Areas



Wages in 2023-2024 and Wages Needed to Afford Basic Housing in School-Based Foodservice Occupations in City and Suburban California Districts

Working for Workers

Fast Food: \$20 per hour minimum wage for all fast-food workers beginning April 2024 (California Assembly Bill 1228).

Entry Level Healthcare Workers: \$25 per hour minimum wage for all workers in the healthcare field beginning October 2024 (Senate Bill 525).

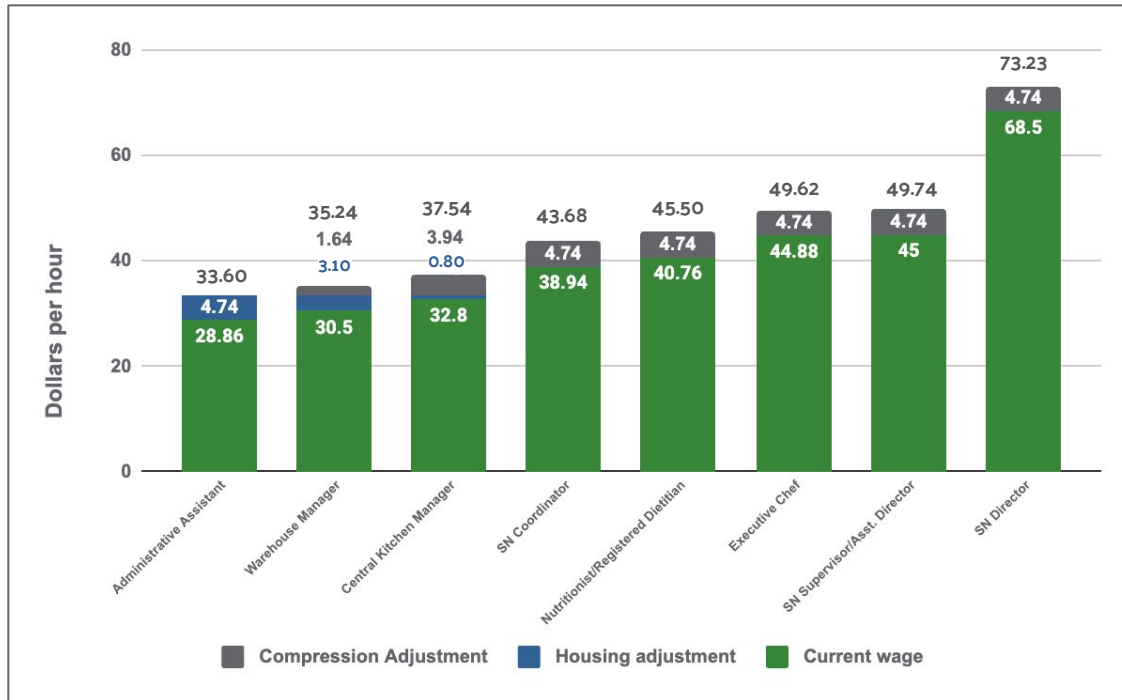
- Some entry-level healthcare occupations, such as certified nursing assistant, require less than 2-months of training and no academic degree.

Entry Level School Food Service Workers (CA): \$18.63 (rural and town) \$19.68 (city and suburban)



Source: Jae C. Hong/AP

School Food Career Path → Economic Mobility



School food workers at leadership levels have family sustaining wages, good hours, benefits and job satisfaction.

Wages in 2023-2024 and Wages Needed to Afford Basic Housing in District-Based Foodservices Occupations in City and Suburban California Districts

Addressing Wage Equity



HSFP Pay Equity Initiatives: *Diversified Pay Working Group*

Members: 7 California Food Service Representatives (Directors & Chef)

Goal: To create precedent and establish best practices for how to increase pay for Certified Apprentices (Apprentices that receive a Certificate of Completion) so it becomes replicable and a best practice for districts across the state hosting Apprentices to implement beginning September 2025.

Partners: CSEA, CSNA Policy Chairs

HSFP Pay Equity Initiatives: *Stakeholder Engagement*

Step One: School Food Workforce Compensation Study Phase Two

- Identify labor models that ensure school nutrition departments have the labor needed to source, prepare and serve freshly prepared meals
- Identify the gap between current compensation levels and family sustaining wages across all California school districts

Step Two: Build consensus around policy solutions that can address these challenges, supporting California's larger vision for school food

2025-26 Healthy School Food Pathway Budget Request



2025-26 Budget Request & 3-Year Program Goals

Request **\$59 million** over three years to **support the HSFP Program**:

Program Goals:

- Train an estimated **2,500** Pre-Apprentices, **725** Apprentices, and **36** Fellows while partnering with nearly **200** school districts.
- This represents over a 100% increase in participants compared to the original funding, allowing us to leverage our initial capital investment and enhance return on investment outcomes.

New Program Components

Youth Apprenticeship

- Specifically designed for ages 16-24
- Will provide work experience in school meal programs and the opportunity to learn about school food operations
- **Goal = train 45 youth apprentices**

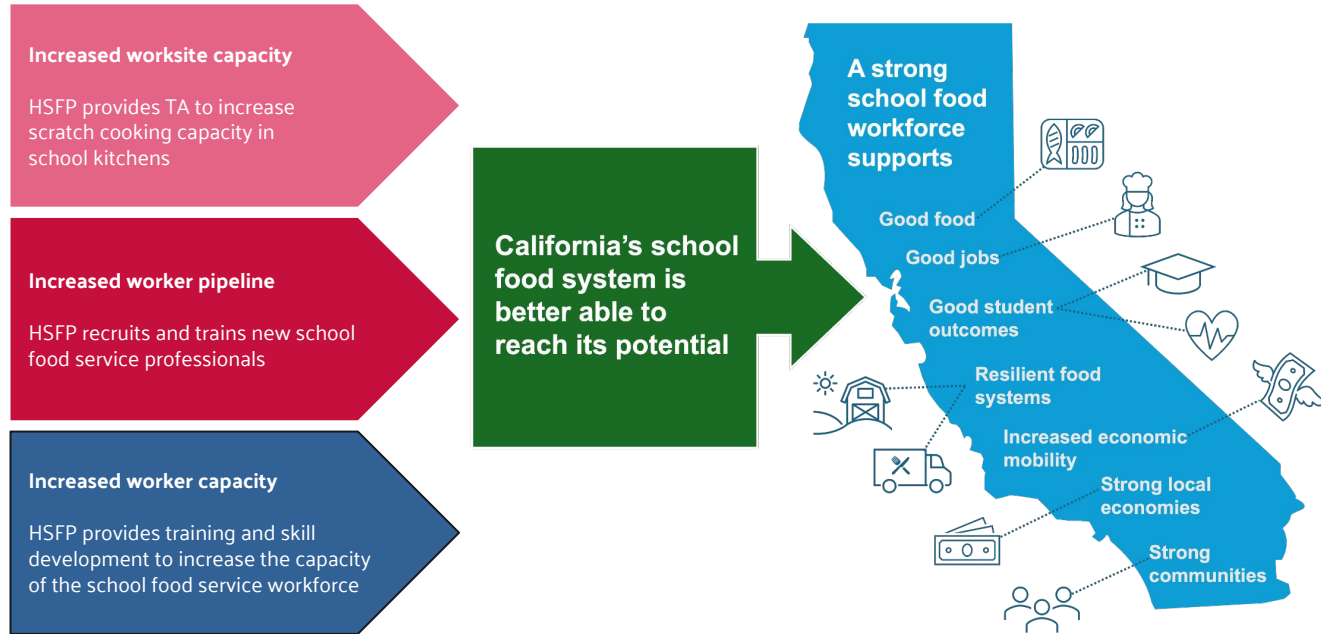
Chef Apprenticeship

- Provides a pathway to school nutrition for chefs in different industries (e.g., other institutions such as hospitals, restaurants)
- **Goal = train 30 chef apprentices**

Retention Program

- Provides financial incentives to individuals that complete a Healthy School Meals Registered Apprenticeship program and commit to working in school food for three years
- **Goal = Retain 234 graduated apprentices within the California school system.**

Theory of Change



Questions & Discussion





Thank you!

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