

Every Meal Matters

FAQ for Partner Organizations and Community Members

What is Every Meal Matters?

Every Meal Matters is a pilot project supported by Hunger-Free Oregon to engage local community members in decisions made about their school's meal service programs.

At Hunger-Free Oregon, we believe communities know best how to nourish their kids. But it can be hard for families to know where to start to change a child's school meal. The federal child nutrition programs ("school meals") can be tough to understand for families wanting to provide input on how or what meal is consumed. Meanwhile, school nutrition staff are increasingly stretched, having to do more and more complex work with fewer resources and support systems.

Our goals for Every Meal Matters are to (1) implement a minimum of one community-driven change in its meal service program, and (2) strengthen relationships between community members and school nutrition staff.

To do this, Every Meal Matters first connects with families and students to identify the changes their school's meal program needs to be best for the entire community. Hunger-Free Oregon will support school nutrition staff to make these community-driven changes in their meal service. Finally, in building relationships between school nutrition staff and community members, Every Meal Matters hopes to leave the entire school community better situated to continue making decisions together that center the community's needs.

Who can participate in Every Meal Matters?

Hunger-Free Oregon is seeking to work with one school community in the Reynolds, David Douglas, or Portland Public school districts. Ideally, the participating school will have:

- Need for better access to school meals (for example: the surrounding community has higher than average rates of food insecurity, and/or the school has lower than ideal student participation in school meals);
- High potential for change (for example: a family or student group is already interested in taking action to make change on school meals, and/or the school nutrition staff are interested in making community-driven changes to their program)

When is Every Meal Matters taking place?

Work will begin in March 2020, with the goal of having one community-driven school meal change implemented by December 2020.



What kind of support is available for people participating in Every Meal Matters?

Every Meal Matters will require a significant commitment of time, resources, and expertise from those who choose to participate in the project. We anticipate holding three to five community gatherings of some kind, and we will be looking to a community organization to partner in hosting the gatherings and fostering connections to the school community.

Hunger-Free Oregon has dedicated the following resources to compensate participating school community members:

- Individuals: Compensation of \$50 per two-hour meeting attended, plus transportation and childcare reimbursements. Meals and translation will also be provided at community meetings.
- Community Organization: A small grant of \$7,000 to support a community-based organization in their work time and resources needed to facilitate community members' involvement.
- School Meal Program: A small grant of \$5,000 awarded to the school or district to support community-driven changes to school food program.

What will happen after Every Meal Matters ends?

Hunger-Free Oregon is supporting this pilot project to learn more about how school communities can make decisions in their school meal programs that reflect the needs of students and families. Our hope following this project will be to share what we've learned with other school communities to increase access to and improve school meal programs using community-centered approaches.

The goal of this project is to have a community-based decision implemented by the end of the calendar year. If there is still lingering work to be done, Hunger-Free Oregon commits to equip the school community on completing the work.

How do I learn more about getting involved in Every Meal Matters?

If you are interested in how your school can get involved with Every Meal Matters, contact Alison Killeen at Hunger-Free Oregon: alison@oregonhunger.org or (503) 595-5501 x305.

Or, you can set up a time to talk with us at this link: <https://bit.ly/37ZSuws>

If you schedule a time to speak with us, we will ask you some background questions about your school community. It's not necessary to have all the answers, but they are helpful to our staff in selecting a school community to work with and understanding your specific school environment. [You can find the list of questions we will use in selecting a school community here.](#)

