USDA Request for Public Comment: Requirements for National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

Download Material

Researchers at PolicyLab responded to a request for comment on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposed rule to simplify meal service and monitoring requirements in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

Under guidelines currently in place as part of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, schools are required to serve specific portions of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to students in order to meet important nutritional requirements as children grow and develop. The proposed rule would relax guidelines on the types of foods schools can serve to children, potentially leading to less-nutritious meals and weakened standards that could result in detrimental health outcomes for all children, with a disproportionate impact on those who need and utilize the program the most.

PolicyLab's response cites extensive research on nutrition and food insecurity to highlight the importance of school meals in supporting health, well-being and academic outcomes for children. While our experts welcome efforts to streamline the process for schools to administer these programs and increase participation, we respectfully requested that USDA consider additional evidence-based recommendations as they craft the final proposal. PolicyLab also welcomed a proposed change to make it easier for children to get meal accommodations, and encouraged adjustments to allow for other professionals involved in a child's care, such as social workers or nutritionists, to have the ability to request meal substitutions.

Authors: Danielle Cullen, Jennifer Robbins

Related Content

- Complete Eats: Summer Meals Offered by the Emergency Department for Food Insecurity
  Article
  Sep 2019
- USDA Request for Public Comment: SNAP Requirements for Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents
  Tools and Memos
  Apr 2019
- Food for Thought: A Randomized Trial of Food Insecurity Screening in the Emergency Department
  Article
  Jan 2019

- Hungry for Information: Lessons Learned from Food Insecurity Screening in Pediatrics
  Blog Post
  Oct 19, 2017