



## Food Insecurity in Alaska

## A Little History

- Students Living in Poverty
  - 2017 – 58,631
    - 51% of Alaska's student population
  - 2018 – 59,904
    - 52% of Alaska's student population
  - 2019 – 59,633
    - 52% of Alaska's Student population
  - 2020 – 57,032
    - 51.08% of Alaska's student population
  - 2021 – 47,063
    - 45.67% of Alaska's student population

This number is indicative of the thousands of students who've remained homeschooled due to pandemic recovery. Homeschooled students are not "counted" in the collection of income data for students who rely on access to free and reduced lunch at school.

## Why are we still here?

The World Health Organization considers hunger to be the single greatest threat to global health. Hunger is cyclical and generational: it inhibits children's ability to learn to their fullest potential, which can significantly curb their future and trap them and their families in more poverty — and more hunger.



We've succeeded in laying a solid and indispensable nutritional foundation for thousands of children facing food insecurity without which, we're in danger of losing an entire generation of leaders, innovators and problem-solvers.

## Prepared Meals - Summer

a Portion of costs reimbursed through USDA funding

### 47 CURRENT SITES

- ▶ Boys & Girls Club, Wasilla - Breakfast/Lunch/Supper
  - ▶ Boys & Girls Club, Eagle River - Lunch
  - ▶ Boys & Girls Club, Fairbanks - Lunch/Snack
  - ▶ Sutton Library - Lunch
  - ▶ Wasilla Public Library - Lunch
- ▶ Knik Tribal Council Summer camp programs - Breakfast/Lunch
- ▶ Denali Family Services, 2 locations - Lunch & Evening Snack
  - ▶ Goose Bay Elementary School - Lunch
  - ▶ Willow Food Pantry - Lunch
- ▶ Willow Community Center - Lunch & Evening Snack
  - ▶ Big Lake Library - Lunch
  - ▶ Big Lake Library - Lunch
  - ▶ John Bigge Lions Park, Palmer - Lunch
  - ▶ Palmer Museum and Visitors Center - Lunch
  - ▶ Trapper Creek Summer Camp - Lunch
  - ▶ Blood & Fire Food Pantry- Lunch
  - ▶ Royal Family Summer Camp, Willow - Lunch
  - ▶ First Baptist Church, Palmer - Lunch
  - ▶ A'Moosement Park, Palmer - Lunch
  - ▶ NextStep Program - Lunch
  - ▶ Nunley Park - Lunch
  - ▶ Big Lake site - Lunch

**PLUS**  
4 mobile child feeding  
"routes" providing  
distribution of fresh healthy  
meals

At 21 stops across the  
MatSu, Fairbanks,  
Anchorage and Sitka

The Number of meals we serve during the Summer is 2,360 each day!

## Prepared Meals - School Year

a Portion of costs reimbursed through USDA funding

### CURRENT SITES

- ▶ Wasilla Boys & Girls Club- Early Morning Breakfast & Afterschool supper - open to all
- ▶ Goose Bay Boys & Girls Club - Early Morning Breakfast & Afterschool supper- open to all
  - ▶ Co-Occurring Disorders Institute - Afterschool supper- enrolled site
- ▶ Denali Family Services, Wasilla - After school supper, Teen Groups-enrolled site
  - ▶ Sutton Library - After school supper- open to all
  - ▶ Big Lake Library - Afterschool supper-open to all
- ▶ MatSu Health Services - Spruce, Afterschool supper-enrolled site
- ▶ MatSu Health Services - Bogard, Afterschool supper-enrolled site
- ▶ MatSu Health Services - Big Lake, Afterschool supper-enrolled site
- ▶ Bright Minds Learning Center - Lunch/Snack-enrolled site
- ▶ Blood & Fire Food Pantry - Afterschool Supper-open to all
- ▶ Fairbanks Boys & Girls Club - Afterschool supper-open to all
  - ▶ Nunley Park - Afterschool Supper - open to all
  - ▶ Big Lake Site-Afterschool Supper -open to all
  - ▶ The YAK Teen Center - open to all
- ▶ YMCA Afterschool supper at Tanaina & Denaina Elementary-enrolled site
- ▶ Youth 360 Afterschool program at Wasilla and Houston High School - enrolled site

The Number of meals we serve during the school year is 380 each day!

# Our Services

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Kids Kupboard staff prepares and provides fresh healthy meals free to children who have been identified as food insecure based on school district and income data. These children live in households where income levels are below poverty and parents are struggling to provide enough food for their families. Our meal programs are provided in safe community site environments, include enrichment activities and are monitored by caring adults. Kids Kupboard continues to provide thousands of meals each day at our own year-round site locations and in partnership with 14 other community organizations who make our meals available to children in their afterschool and summer programs. As a state approved sponsor of federal USDA, CACFP and SFSP programs since 2010, we provide free meals to children from birth to 18yrs. year-round, additionally, we provide meals to pregnant mothers and any individuals with disabilities.

In addition to our fresh meal programs Kids Kupboard regularly provides;

- Food boxes to families with children who contact us needing help
- Shelf stable snack items to school district nurse's offices who need a supply on-hand for children coming to school hungry vs. ill
- Sack lunches for many homeless students
  - Teachers actually come by our kitchen each weekday and pick these up.
- Free community dinners during Thanksgiving and Christmas for families in need

# Policies/Regulations – The Good

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## ASSISTS OUR WORK


- Federal USDA programs exist to reimburse sponsors of child feeding programs for a portion of their food costs.
- The attention to improve food insecurity policy and regulation is well intended however, most new legislation surrounding child nutrition applies to School Food Authorities only.
- Many social safety net programs exist to help families access food
  - SNAP
  - TFAP
  - Free and Reduced Lunch Program
  - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program



# Policies/Regulations – The Bad

## FRESH

SIGNIFICANT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS, TIME CONSUMING, ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN




Boars Head roasted turkey on whole wheat bread, whole Swiss cheese, banana, 1/2 cup of fresh snap peas, skim milk

This meal requires significant administrative time in gathering documentation from Boars Head in order to "prove" that the portion is credible. This meal requires a "recipe" in order to "prove" that we provided 1/2c of vegetables and 1/4c of fruit. This meal requires a posted "menu" noted if there are any substitutions. This meal requires a production record in order to "prove" we used enough product to meet portion sizes.

## SHELF STABLE

LESS HEALTHY, ZERO COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS, PREPACKAGED



This meal comes preserved and PREPACKAGED in a plastic bag. 1oz. Cheez-it crackers, 1oz. Sunflower kernels, 2oz. Chicken jerky, 4oz. Raisins, 4oz. Fruit punch and milk.

It has 850mg of sodium. This meal requires no administrative time gathering any and documentation as the USDA has deemed this a credible meal. This meal doesn't require recipes or production records and this "credible" meal does not provide/require fresh fruits or vegetables—EVER! This meal does not require any food service staff as it's shelf life is one year.

## HINDERS OUR WORK/DETERS NEW SPONSORS

- The Administrative burden required for federal and state compliance in child nutrition programs is outrageous – especially given the disparity in oversight between social safety net programs (SNAP, TFAP, etc.)
  - Allocation Plans (and regulations) that EXCLUDE allowable use of funds if children are not enrolled in public school – This is discriminatory
  - Trainings with volunteers and partners
    - 3+ Visits (in just 10 weeks of summer) to every site we serve at to monitor
  - Menu, Working Menu, Production Records, Bin Tags, Mileage logs, Delivery Logs, Daily Meal Count forms, Every label for every food item we use, Recipes for every dish we prepare (even for a turkey sandwich), Receipts
- There is a disconnect between federal regulations and state agency enforcement.

# Policy Changes and Recommendations

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- Regulations governing the USDA child nutrition programs were established 40 years ago and should be updated to not only consider today's climate but also to motivate civic organizations to engage as sponsors to **change** the statistics of childhood hunger.
  - The Summer Food Service Program is the most under-utilized federal feeding program in the country
- It needs to be easier for agencies to work with those who have the power to effect change