School Food Funded Campaign Priorities

More than 30 million children participate in the National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP), and three-quarters of children in the school lunch program are from lower-income families. Improvements to school food are a key strategy to support every child's health. The COVID-19 pandemic is increasing national attention on the critical role that school meals have in feeding children in the United States. We are seeking proposals for state or local campaigns in **Arkansas, California, Michigan, New York** and **North Dakota** that aim to ensure healthy, equitable, school meals for all students.

Funded campaigns must do the following:

(1)   **Policy intervention:** Seek to secure a policy (including, for example, a bill, executive order, school board policy, etc.). Voluntary or programmatic initiatives are not eligible. Policies must feature the following provisions:

      a.   **Meal Patterns and Quantities:** Require at a minimum, the nutrition standards and meal patterns, including food components and quantities, established in the 2012 school meals final rule, Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

      b.   **Competitive Foods**: Require at a minimum, the 2016 national competitive foods standards (Smart Snacks), the *National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program - Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School*.

      c.   **Sodium**: Re-instate the tiered sodium-reduction targets within a feasible timetable and include a "Target 4" for school meals consistent with the National Academies of Sciences Engineering, and Medicine's Dietary Reference Intakes for Sodium (issued March 2019).

      d.   **Whole Grains**: Establish a timetable for all grains offered to be whole-grain-rich (51 percent whole grain; consistent with the 2012 school meals final rule, *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs*).

      e.   **Added Sugars**: Establish an added sugar limit for school meals and competitive foods in alignment with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans and strongly encourage barring the use of unsafe non-nutritive sweeteners.

Funded campaigns are strongly encouraged to also address:

(1)   **Universal free meals**: Contingent upon state funding, require all students, regardless of household income, be eligible to receive a breakfast and/or lunch at school (or from the school for those using e-learning approaches) free of charge.

Additional areas strongly encouraged:

(1)   **Increased Reimbursement and Technical Assistance on nutrition standards**: Contingent upon state funding, provide increased reimbursement to incentivize schools to meet stronger nutrition standards and provide robust state agency technical assistance.

(2) **Seat time/mealtime requirements:** Require minimum seat time or meal period to ensure sufficient time to eat (e.g. 20 minutes in seat), and reasonably timed meal periods (e.g. lunch after 11am and before 2 pm).

(3) **Eliminate artificial food dyes:** Require phasing out of artificial food dyes which cause adverse behavioral effects in children.

(4) **Funding for kitchen equipment**: Contingent upon state funding, provide kitchen equipment grants for upgrades, repairs, and maintenance.

(5) **Summer Meals:** Require all summer meals meet standards consistent with those for breakfast and lunch served during the school year.

CSPI also has limited lobbying funds available to support engaging legislators on Child Nutrition Reauthorization. Activities may include sending action alerts, placing an op ed or letter to the editor in strategic publications, and participating in grasstops meetings. Interested organizations are encouraged to include such activities in their proposals.

To be eligible, applicants must be tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or have a fiscal sponsor; demonstrate a proven track record of passing state/local policies; and a clear and compelling strategy for success.