

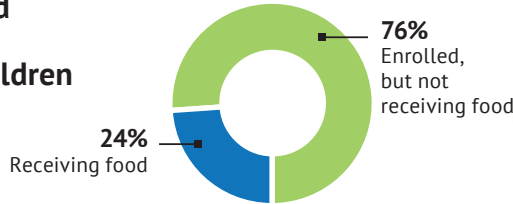


Canada

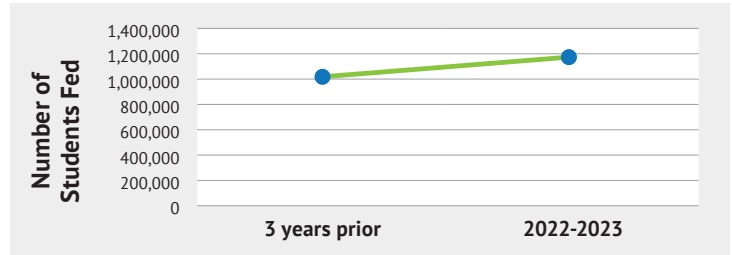


School Meal Coverage (2022-2023)

All Primary and Secondary School-age Children



School Level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Preschool	1,174,916	537,021	0
Primary School	2,486,341	2,387,118	Unknown
Secondary School	2,502,207	2,679,516	Unknown
TOTAL	6,163,464	5,603,655	1,173,731



National Laws, Policies, and Standards

National school feeding policy

Canada introduced a National School Food Policy in 2024. This was not yet developed during the 2022-2023 school year.

- Nutrition
- Health
- Food safety
- Smallholder farms
- Agriculture (apart from smallholders)
- Climate/environment policy
- Private sector involvement

The country had ...

- Inter-sectoral coordination committee for school feeding
- National system for monitoring school feeding
- Line item in the national budget for school feeding

Budget

Total: **USD 100,136,649**

- Government: 100,136,649
- International donors: 0
- Private sector: Unknown
- NGOs (domestic): Unknown
- Other donors: 0

Canadian provincial/territorial and municipal governments collectively provided over USD 100.1 million (\$133.7 million Canadian dollars) for school meal programs. A majority of Canada's 10 provinces and three territories partner with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and rely heavily on NGO staff and volunteers to implement their school food programs. The total budget for school feeding in Canada is not known.

School Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Blended grain-based products
- Legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Poultry and game meat
- Red meat
- Processed meat
- Fish and shellfish
- Deep orange vegetables and tubers
- White roots and tubers
- Fruits
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Cruciferous vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Deep-fried foods
- Sweets

- Liquid oils
- Semi-solid and solid fats
- Salt
- Dairy milk
- Yogurt drink
- 100% fruit juice
- Other fruit drink
- Tea
- Other sugar-sweetened beverages

Prohibited food items

Unknown

Food Sources

- Purchased (domestic)
- Purchased (foreign)
- In-kind (domestic)
- In-kind (foreign)

Special Notes

Population and school enrollment numbers from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) were used to complete this report. In 2022-2023, each province and territory in Canada contributed some funding for school food programs in their respective jurisdiction; however, these investments were not enough to feed all children and youth a nutritious meal each school day. In 2024, Canada first introduced a National School Food Policy and allocated funding for a national school food program.

Economic and Social Development Canada designated Dr. Amberley T. Ruetz to be the survey focal point as she has been collecting data on school meals in Canada since 2018 via the Canadian School Food Program Survey. Dr. Ruetz's data submission was supported by the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health and the (Canadian) Coalition for Healthy School Food.

Nutrition

School feeding program(s) include/involve the following

- Fortified foods**
- Bio-fortified foods
- Micronutrient supplements
- Nutritionists involved**
- Special training for cooks/caterers in nutrition**
- Objective to meet nutritional goals**
- Objective to reduce obesity

Limitations on food and beverage marketing...

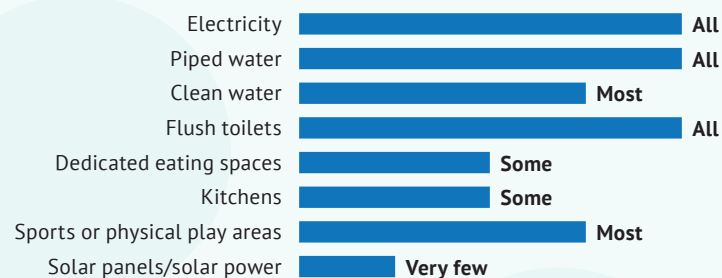
- On school grounds
- To school age children

Additional Information

Nutritionists and/or dietitians provided menu support for the programs. Fortified flour was served in school meal programs in Canada, and some foods in the programs were packaged/processed. Cooks/caterers received training in nutrition, menu planning, and food safety/hygiene.

Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

Share of Schools with ...



Employment

Total number of cooks/caterers: **Unknown**

- Percent paid: Unknown
- Percent women: Unknown

There was a focus on creating job opportunities for...

- Women
- Youth
- Other Groups

Complementary Activities

- Handwashing with soap**
- Height measurement
- Weight measurement
- Testing for anemia
- Deworming treatment
- Eye testing/eyeglasses
- Hearing testing/treatment
- Dental cleaning/testing
- Menstrual hygiene
- Drinking water**
- Water purification
- School gardens**

Complementary Education Programs

- Food and nutrition**
- Agriculture**
- Environment/climate/sustainability
- Hygiene**
- Health**
- Reproductive health
- HIV prevention
- Physical education
- Mental health

Additional Information

Since 2016, the national NGO "Farm to Cafeteria Canada" has been supporting schools across the country to purchase local food through a grants program. In some (not all) programs or schools, farmers supplied products such as roots/tubers, dairy, eggs, meat, poultry, vegetables and fruit. The private sector was engaged with school food programs through food processing, transport, catering, the sale or rental of supplies, the donation of supplies or funds, and the provision of technical expertise. In addition, thousands of volunteers supported the operation of school meal programs in Canada, including through fundraising, shopping, meal preparation, meal service, and delivery.

Environmental Sustainability

Targeted climate-friendly foods

- Yes No

Steps taken to limit food waste

- Sealed food storage**
- Fumigation/pest control in storage area
- Use of hermetic bags or larger hermetic storage system
- Routine testing/monitoring of dry food storage
- Use of nearly-expired food
- Use of usable but “imperfect” commodities or produce
- Campaign to reduce how much food students throw away

Steps taken to limit package waste

- Re-use of bags/containers**
- Recycling**
- Use of compostable materials**
- Use of “bulk serve” containers**
- Prohibiting specific types of packaging

Additional Information

While efforts were made to limit both food waste and packaging waste, school food programs in Canada did not program specifically target “climate-friendly” foods.

Emergencies

Experienced disruptions to school feeding due to emergencies

- Yes No

Strategies to address the impact of emergencies

- Seek alternative food sources or suppliers
- Changes in numbers of students fed**
- Negotiate better prices with existing suppliers
- Establish alternative supply routes or transportation methods
- Source different or alternative food**
- Release of food reserves
- Increase funding or budget allocation for school feeding
- Collaborate with local producers or suppliers to reduce dependence on global supply chains
- Changes in delivery method
- Changes in feeding modality**
- Changes in feeding frequency**
- No particular strategy was used

Additional Information

Canada experienced high food inflation in the 2022-23 school year. Due to a significant rise in food costs and increased demand from students and families, some school food programs in the country had to reduce the number of meals served or portion sizes, and in some cases, they had to close their programs before the end of the school year as their yearly funding had run out.

Successes and Challenges

Successes

The Government of Canada conducted a consultation on developing a National School Food Policy for Canada in 2022-2023, with the goal of funding a National School Food Program as per ministerial commitment mandates. On April 1, 2024, the Government of Canada announced there would be allocating \$1 billion over five years (2024-2029) in Budget 2024 to develop a National School Food Program. On June 20, 2024, the National School Food Policy was released. More information can be found at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/school-food/reports/national-policy.html>.

Challenges

1. Though each province and territory invests some money in school food programs, these investments are not enough to feed all children and youth a nutritious meal each school day.
2. In 2022-2023, Canada experienced particularly high food inflation, which made it challenging for its school food programs to operate as planned.
3. Until 2024, Canada had not had a national school food program or policy. This gap has made it difficult to monitor, track, and evaluate programs across the country.

Province/Territory-level school meal programs

Management

- Lead implementer(s): Not reported
- How is the program managed: Not reported
- Individual schools and NGO implementing partners procured the food

How Many Students Received Food

School Level	# of Students	% Girls	% Boys
Preschool	0	—	—
Primary School	*	—	—
Secondary School	*	—	—
TOTAL	1,173,731	—	—

* The numbers fed at the primary and secondary school level were estimated based on the total (aggregate) number fed and with reference to the distribution of enrolled students in the country at each school level. The precise breakdown according to age or school level is not known.

Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Poultry and game meat
- Red meat
- Processed meat
- Deep orange vegetables and tubers
- White roots and tubers
- Fruits
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Cruciferous vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Liquid oils
- Semi-solid and solid fats
- Salt
- Dairy milk

Elements of Home-Grown School Feeding

- Objective for small-scale farmers to benefit from access to a stable market
- Local food sourcing
- Small-scale farmers involved by selling directly (or through their farmer organization) to the program or the schools
- Additional support provided to small-scale farmers
- Country had a law/policy/standard related to small-scale farmers and school feeding programs
- Preferential treatment for small-scale farmers/small farmer organizations/small companies in tendering procedures
- Effort is made to reduce food miles

Objectives

- To meet educational goals
- To provide a social safety net
- To reduce hunger
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals

Modalities of Providing Students With Food

- In-school meals
- In-school snacks

Frequency and Duration

- 1-5 days per week
- During the school year (with some remote regions in Canada's north offering meals year round)

Targeting

- Targeting varies across Canada's regions. Most programs promote being "universally accessible" (all students welcome), though there is not enough funding for programs to have "universal participation" (all students participating). Many programs receive funding based on the socio-demographics of the school community, and some programs target based on geography.

Food Sources

Yes - Purchased (domestic)

Yes - In-kind (domestic)

No - Purchased (foreign)

No - In-kind (foreign)

Additional Information

In the 2022-2023 school year, the various province/territory-level school meal programs in Canada operated in 7,576 schools. A few schools in remote regions of the country—namely Canada's three territories—provided meals year round. In addition to in-school meals and snacks, a few schools and NGOs provided take-home meals year-round. Breakfast and snacks were most commonly served, however, lunch is beginning or expanding in several jurisdictions. In some provinces, lunch programs followed a "pay-what-you-can" (PWYC) model in which students' guardians anonymously opt to pay the amount they find to be feasible for their household.

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs® collects data from government sources and is funded, in part, by the United States Department of Agriculture. Contact info@gcnf.org for more information.

Citation: Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF). 2024. Global Survey of School Meal Programs Country Report, Canada.

<https://gcnf.org/country-reports/>