



TALKING POINTS: School Food Pantry

Texas schools can now start their own food pantry program using leftover packaged food, thanks to a new law.

How can you start the conversation about School Food Pantries?

Here are some talking points:

Food Insecurity is a Critical Issue

- In the United States, [1 in 6 children](#) may not know where they will get their next meal.
- Food insecurity means a family has not enough access to affordable, nutritious food for an active, healthy lifestyle.
- Food insecurity impacts every community in the United States.
- In 2016, an estimated 1 in 8 Americans were food insecure, equating to 42 million Americans including 13 million children (according to Feeding America).
- Texas is one of the 15 states with higher food insecurity than the rest of the nation, in which 1.4 million Texas households were food insecure. That's 15.4% of all Texas households (according to Feeding America).
- Every day, children walk out of school when the last bell rings and worry about where and how they will find enough food to fill their bellies before the next school day. When the next morning rolls around, 13 million kids in the United States go to school hungry.



Why All Our Schools Should Have School Food Pantries

- A School Food Pantry is a unique type of food pantry within a school.
- It provides food-insecure students with easy access to nutritious food throughout the school day.
- In Texas, a state law took effect in September 2017 that allows a school to create its own School Food Pantry and donate certain leftover food to itself, and allow for storage and redistribution. A school can name a campus designee, such as a teacher, counselor or PTA member, as the designee of a third-party nonprofit, allowing the school to donate, receive, store, and redistribute the leftover food on campus at any time, under Texas law. Most foods are prepackaged drinks or foods, and uncut fruits and vegetables, allowing schools to meet local and state health codes.
- A School Food Pantry can be: a “food share table,” which is a place where students place unwanted or uneaten food items in the school cafeteria. From there, students can select these leftover food and beverage items at no cost during or after traditional school hours.
- A School Food Pantry can be “adding food storage to a classroom or other site.” For example, a classroom used by academic counselors also can serve as a place for food storage. A designated campus representative can distribute food from the pantry to students in need.
- The School Food Pantry aims to reduce food insecurity, provides food for low-income and hungry students, and prevent food waste. According to a [Harvard Public Health Study](#), 60% of fresh vegetables and 40% of fresh fruits in schools are wasted. Wasted food is wasted nutrition.
- A school pantry is a safe and supportive way to help struggling and hungry students, which in turn, helps the child become more successful in school.

The *Salud America!* School Food Pantry Action Pack

- The free *Salud America!* School Food Pantry Action Pack can help us start a School Food Pantry, including template materials and guides to starting a conversation, building support, and planning, implementing, and sustaining a school food pantry.
- *Salud America!* modeled its Action Pack after the successful implementation of 10 School Food Pantries at various campuses of San Antonio ISD. The nutrition leader of the school district, Jenny Arredondo, drove the change.
- *Salud America!* provides material customization and technical assistance along the way.

Salud America!

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