



Climate-Friendly School Food Program

Vision

A climate-friendly school food system that is healthy, sustainable, and just. We help school districts and their communities create and promote healthy, climate-friendly menus that are dietarily and culturally appropriate for all students.

Defining Climate-Friendly

Climate-friendly food service achieves a lower carbon and water footprint by regularly offering healthy, plant-forward and plant-based menu options. It also cuts emissions by sourcing food from organic and regenerative farms; reducing food and packaging waste; and implementing energy and water saving measures in the cafeteria.

Plant-based foods are 100% sourced from plants and contain no animal products (e.g., beans, lentils, soy products, whole grains, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables).

Plant-forward foods swap out some of the meat and cheese for plant-based foods, resulting in plant-rich, lower-meat or lower-cheese recipes (e.g., bean and turkey chili, mushroom-beef burgers, bean cheese burrito).

Our Work

Friends of the Earth helps school districts make the shift towards climate-friendly food service by:

- Providing technical support for menu development and procurement of plant-based and organic foods.
- Providing educational presentations to food service staff, students and community members.
- Assisting with marketing strategies to increase participation.
- Linking school food service staff with grant opportunities, culinary training, non-profit partners and other resources.
- Conducting carbon foot printing analysis to demonstrate the climate benefits of plant-based and plant-forward menu items.
- Advocating for policy change and supporting school districts in advocacy activities that can bring more resources and support to their operations.

Our Impact

In partnership with school districts, we hope to achieve:

- Increased access to healthy school meals that meet dietary needs and are culturally appropriate for all students.
- Increased student demand for and consumption of climate-friendly food and beverages.
- Increased sourcing from local farms that use organic and regenerative, climate-smart practices.
- Reduced food waste.
- Healthier kids with a greater appreciation for the climate and health benefits of plant-based foods.
- Greater availability of climate-friendly products in school food supply chains, including USDA Foods.
- Increased access to resources that allow schools to make successful changes (e.g., farm to school and garden/nutrition education funding, kitchen improvement grants, staff trainings).
- Fewer greenhouse gas emissions and less student exposure to toxic pesticides.