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 footprinting 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.

For more information, contact us at climatefriendlyfood@foe.org