



REAP Reporter

Newsletter from REAP Food Group • Spring, 2023

ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL

During the current 2023-2024 state legislative session, REAP Food Group and other organizations advocated to include Governor Evers' Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids plan in his biennial budget. The plan proposed to increase state school breakfast reimbursement to \$.15 per meal served, appropriate state dollars to provide free school breakfast and lunch meals to all Wisconsin K-12 students (also known as Healthy School Meals for All), and reimburse school districts \$.10 per meal for those including locally sourced foods.

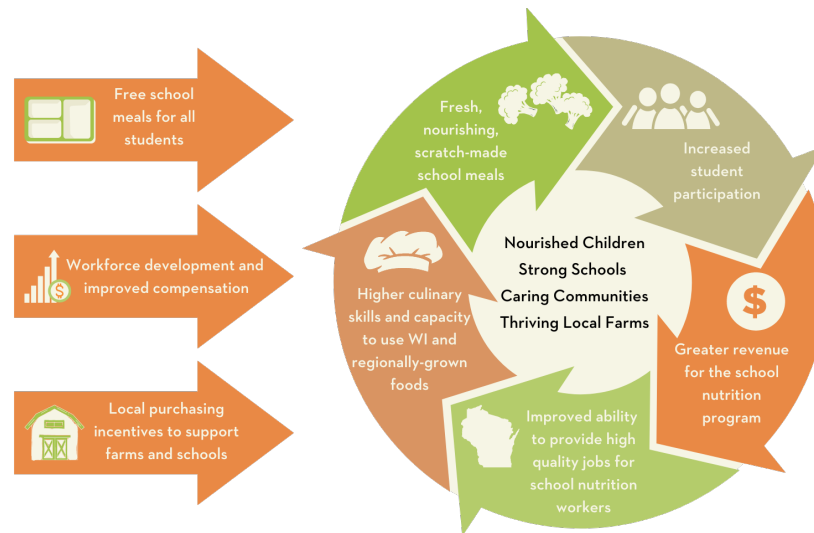
REAP is disappointed that the Joint Committee on Finance removed both Healthy School Meals for All (HSMFA) and the \$.10 local food reimbursement incentive from the budget. The \$2.75 million allocated in the Governor's budget for schools to serve local foods, out of an historic one time state budget surplus of approximately \$7 billion, would have grown markets for Wisconsin farmers, stimulated the local economy, and provided all children access to fresh local foods through school.

Even though breakfast reimbursement is still in the budget, a majority of the Joint Committee on Finance members must vote to approve including it in the committee's budget bill, when they vote to approve the Department of Public Instruction's budget.

REAP and the Healthy School Meals For All Coalition continue to advocate for Healthy School Meals for All as well as the local food reimbursement when these items are re-introduced as stand-alone bills this fall. With these provisions in place, schools can truly support our local food producers and give students access to fresh, local foods.

Meanwhile, REAP Food Group commits to using the platform we've built over 25 years in the community to push even past budget approval. We will:

- Connect schools with local farmers and growers.
- Listen to voices from around the state to understand needs and solutions.
- Educate our audience on the urgency of free school meals for the health of our children and local economy.



REAP will also continue to advocate for additional support for school nutrition programs, including kitchen equipment to process local products, culinary training for school nutrition professionals on how to use local products, and wage increases.

There is still time to contact your representatives to discuss Healthy School

School Nutrition Programs are an integrated system. By removing a barrier to access...we're providing all students with the opportunity to eat a nutritious breakfast and lunch, along with freeing up time for school nutrition professionals to do what they do best - feed and care for kids.

-Allison Pfaff Harris

Meals for All Wisconsin and the Local Food Reimbursement Incentive. Meanwhile, you can continue supporting our efforts towards a more equitable food system by donating today at reapfoodgroup.org/give/ and join REAP and the entire Healthy School Meals for All Coalition on the Capitol Square for a rally on June 12 from 11:30am-1pm.

Above: Graphic by REAP Farm to School interns Lilly Scott and Amanda Jacobson.

Below: Noah Bloedorn of REAP speaks in support of Gov. Evers' plan at a Joint Committee on Finance meeting in April.



A LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PHIL KAUTH



As I look back and reflect on my one year at REAP, I am so proud of the work this staff has done. They have done so much to advance REAP's mission, and are constantly striving to evolve and grow, all with an eye on building an equitable food system.

We have had some exciting things happen recently. After years in the making, REAP moved to Garver Feed Mill. While we are still working on organizing and getting the space just right, working at Garver brings a new found excitement. The community feel at Garver is amazing, and the other businesses there have embraced us. We are already talking with a few businesses about collaborating on grants and projects this year. The potential is endless for REAP at Garver. If you are visiting Garver, stop by and say Hi!

And if you stop by, we'd be happy to introduce you to our new development director, Katie Rozas. Katie joined REAP as a staff member in April, but has been involved with REAP for several years as a board member. Her perspective on food systems work, community engagement, and storytelling will get us all excited about the work REAP is doing. We are thrilled to welcome Katie!

Our Farm to Business team has been dreaming up ideas on food systems infrastructure, buying, and marketing. April 19th, we hosted an event focusing on institutional buying. About 40 people attended and engaged in meaningful conversations. The farm to business team has also expanded the Farm Fresh Atlas in 2023 to incorporate farms and businesses from the southeast part of the state. As we look into the possibilities of the next evolution of the Farm Fresh Atlas, our goal is to market it as the premier search engine for local foods in the state of Wisconsin.

For 25 years REAP has been champions for healthy school meals and supporting our local farms. For this reason, we advocated for the inclusion of Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids plan on the Governor's two year budget. A few staff testified at the Joint Committee on Finance at Wisconsin Dells on April 12 advocating for healthy meals for all students. Even though the full Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids plan did not make the budget, REAP will continue to partner with other organizations to advocate for passing legislation for universal school meals. You've sustained REAP's work for 25 years, and we continue to need your support to keep advocating for food systems change!

Peace and Love,
Phil

FARM FRESH ATLAS EXPANDS TO SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN

Fresh off the presses, the 2023 Farm Fresh Atlas hosts an expanded roster of farmers, food businesses, farmers' markets, and organizations. After two years without a print directory, the Southeast region of WI joins the Southern WI-focused Farm Fresh Atlas, adding members from seven additional counties to its pages, including Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Walworth, Waukesha, and Washington Counties. That represents 2 million residents, which means our reach in the Southern half of the state comes to a total of 3.3 million potential readers, or over 55% of the population!

Explore local food options via the online Farm Fresh Atlas:



*Telderer's Rainbows End
Farm of Neosho, WI.*



LOCAL PROCUREMENT ROUNDTABLE

In April, REAP hosted around 40 farmers, institutional purchasing directors, and local food organizers to brainstorm ways to increase local food procurement in Southern Wisconsin. REAP asked participants to focus on key variables: logistics, capacity, product demand and availability, and processing.

Participants agreed on a need for more central processing facilities and food hubs, while food purchasers

in particular stressed the importance of “one stop shopping” where they can easily access products that meet their needs in terms of quantity, quality and safety.

Also on the top of attendees’ wish lists: connectors between buyers and suppliers, and mentors for new farmers. On the ground, farmers need equipment to scale up, storage space, reliable

Finally, attendees craved a richer, more interconnected food community, by growing and serving culturally responsive foods, and building producer-buyer relationships so that together they can plan ahead for growing and menu planning.

The ideas that emerged from discussion closely reflected the findings of the 2022 Dane County Pandemic Food Study, a rigorous primary data collection commissioned by Dane County and City of Madison to explore the food system gaps that the pandemic exposed, and the interim solutions that were created in response to the crisis.

The report similarly cited capacity, planning, and connectivity, while also stressing the need to “involve the communities most impacted by structural racism in the creation and implementation of food and agriculture policies and programs that impact their lives.”

Both the roundtable and the report suggest a next step forward: a comprehensive food study that engages all stakeholders, aligns values and goals for our food system, and coordinates policy, community programming, and the actions of individuals to execute on these community needs and build a better local food system in Southern Wisconsin.

Scan to read the full Dane County Pandemic Food Study:



distribution, staff, and funding.

NEW DIGS, NEW DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

In early spring, the REAP team packed up our downtown office and moved to the historic Garver Feed Mill on Madison’s east side. REAP joins a roster of fourteen other entities specializing in food production and food systems, health/wellness and hospitality.

“As Garver continues to find innovative ways to support the local food system, we are incredibly excited to bring our work assisting in creating a more equitable food system straight to them,” Executive Director Phil Kauth said. “The timing of the move is perfect for REAP, not only is the space inviting, but the possibilities for REAP to collaborate to host and participate in community events at Garver will help us fulfill our mission to transform lives through the power of healthy, local food.”

At the same time, REAP also welcomed new Development Director Katie Rozas. A member of the REAP Board of Directors since 2021 and once member of the Development Committee, Katie has an intimate understanding of REAP’s work. She oversees a growing portfolio of stewardship efforts including grants management, fundraising events, and donor relations.

Prior to joining REAP, Katie spent



over 15 years in multilingual learner education, strategic communications, and marketing. She was introduced to REAP six years ago by her then-four year old daughter who came home describing her new love for jicama sticks, which she tasted through the REAP Farm to School snack program.

“I understand firsthand how the REAP mission, vision, and dedication of the organization has made an incredible impact in my community and beyond. I am thrilled to now dedicate myself to extend that impact and ensure REAP secures the funding and resources necessary for its programs and services to grow and flourish for many years to come.”

SUMMER GIVING

As we head into sun-filled days and the bountiful season of summer, we are feeling grateful for our community. REAP’s programming exists because of YOU-the people and partners who generously give their time and money. We cannot do this important work without you!

In June we kick off our Summer Giving fundraising campaign. By making a gift to REAP this season, you’ll ensure that we can expand our work throughout the year and continue to make a difference in the lives of local farmers, businesses, families, and children. To learn more and donate visit the QR code or visit reapfoodgroup.org/give/.



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REAP Food Group's mission is to transform communities, economies and lives through the power of good food. You can support our mission by making a donation online at reapfoodgroup.org/give/.