

Feeding Futures:

Information for B.C. food and beverage businesses interested in selling to Kindergarten to Grade 12 school food programs

What is Feeding Futures?

[Feeding Futures](#) is a Provincial Government investment of \$71.5 million annually for school districts to create and expand school food programs. Feeding Futures funding is primarily used to purchase food for students; however, school districts may also use funds to support things like purchasing equipment and supplies for programs or offsetting staffing costs.

How is B.C food being included in Feeding Futures?

The Feeding Futures [Guiding Principles](#) emphasize providing students in need with access to nutritious, culturally preferred, and local, B.C. foods in a way that is equitable and reduces stigma. To build opportunities for local, B.C. foods, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Child Care to integrate Feed BC into K-12 school food programs. Feed BC will support school districts to work towards 30% B.C. food expenditures over time, connect with B.C. food producers and processors, and enhance local food literacy.

How do K-12 schools source and use food and beverage products?

The approach being used by B.C.'s [60 school districts](#) to provide meals and snacks varies widely. Some districts have well developed, coordinated food programs and food supplier relationships. Others are still building capacity to deliver and expand programs through Feeding Futures. Depending on the program, districts may be sourcing food and beverage products through distributors, food service companies, or direct from producers and processors.

Many different models are being used to deliver school food programs including 'grab-and-go' programs, assemble-and-serve meals, cooked-from-scratch cafeteria meals, vending, and culinary arts programs. Food services may be managed directly by district or school staff or through agreements with private food service companies, caterers, or non-profit organizations. Food service preparation may take place on-site at schools, off site in restaurants or catering facilities, or in shared use facilities like community kitchens or food hubs.

How can B.C. food producers and processors prepare for opportunities to sell to K-12 schools?

While many school districts are in the early stages of developing their school food programs, here are some steps that interested businesses can take to prepare for future opportunities in this market:

1. Consider how your products can appeal to school food programs:

- What solution does your product and business offer to schools?
- Is your product priced appropriately and are you able to scale to demand?
- How can your business help school districts work towards the Feeding Futures Guiding Principles of providing nutritious, culturally preferred, and local/B.C. foods in a way that is equitable and reduces stigma?
- How can your product and business support schools in creating healthy food environments, as per guidance outlined in the Ministry of Health's [BC School Food Toolkit](#). See the *General Nutrition Information* and *Vending and School Stores* sections.
- Are there opportunities for your product or business to support learning about B.C. food and food systems in schools?

2. Conduct market research on your target school district's food needs:

- Develop an understanding of current school food programs by searching district and school websites and speaking with existing school food suppliers.
- Check out the Ministry's [market readiness resources](#) for more information about how to prepare to sell products to B.C. institutions including schools.
- Connect with your target [school district](#) to identify their School Food Coordinator, Feeding Futures contact, or other district staff focusing on food procurement. Please ensure ample lead time when communicating with school districts, as many staff wear multiple hats and are very busy; capacity for engaging with businesses may vary.