Project Bread 2023–24 Breakfast After the Bell Grant for Mandated Schools

Project Bread is pleased to offer a grant opportunity for schools who will serve school Breakfast After the Bell to children to support increased participation and quality of breakfast programs throughout Massachusetts for the 2023-24 school year. This grant program will support schools who are, according to An Act Regarding Breakfast After the Bell, passed in 2020 by the MA state legislature, mandated to implement Breakfast After the Bell. The grant seeks to support mandated schools to launch or improve Breakfast After the Bell programs in school year 23–24.

Individual schools are eligible for up to $3,000 for a school with fewer than 600 students and up to $5,000 for a school with 600+ students. School districts may apply for a maximum total of $12,000 for up to 5 schools.

Background

Project Bread is a statewide organization that ensures reliable access to food for Massachusetts residents through policy and programmatic solutions. For over twenty years, Project Bread has worked with Massachusetts communities to increase participation in school and summer child nutrition programs, in partnership with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Project Bread’s Child Nutrition team provides one-on-one assistance, outreach and marketing, grants, and innovative solutions to support schools that are implementing and expanding their breakfast programs. Each year, we work with school districts to help them start new programs or expand existing programs through adopting alternative breakfast models, engaging key stakeholders, and implementing strategic promotional tactics to increase student engagement and participation. Our goal is to ensure that all children in Massachusetts have reliable access to food, and start the day nourished and ready to learn.

Starting the day with a nutritious meal is important for every student—no matter their family’s income level—but for children who don’t eat breakfast at home, school breakfast is especially important. Children who eat a healthy breakfast are more likely to retain what they learn in class, behave better, and experience better health outcomes. With free school meals now permanently available for all students in MA, access to school breakfast is greatly improved. Pairing free breakfast with an After the Bell breakfast model served outside of the cafeteria can increase access even more. Offering Breakfast After the Bell (BATB) is an effective way to reduce barriers or stigma associated with traditional cafeteria breakfast, increase breakfast access to all students, and achieve higher participation rates.
Breakfast After the Bell Grant for Mandated Schools

The purpose of this grant is to support schools that are mandated to serve Breakfast After the Bell by MA state law to begin new or improve existing Breakfast After the Bell programs in school year 2023–24 in order to serve school breakfasts to more students and comply with the legislative mandate. Find an FAQ on this mandate here.

Breakfast After the Bell models include Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab & Go Breakfast, Second Chance Breakfast, and hybrid combinations of these three models. These alternative methods for serving breakfast allow all students to access a healthy morning meal, no matter when they arrive at school. It is important that each school chooses the model that fits their specific situation and the needs of their student body. The flexibility of alternative breakfast models makes it possible to cater to the needs of any type of school. More information and specifics on BATB models can be found at: https://www.projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources and at https://www.projectbread.org/start-or-expand-school-breakfast.

The intent of the legislative mandate is to provide access to school Breakfast After the Bell to all students in the school. Programs that make BATB available to tardy students only or to a subset of the student body do not meet the intent of the mandate. This grant seeks to support programs to implement robust BATB programming that is accessible daily to all students in the school, breaking down barriers to access and creating an environment where eating school breakfast is a routine part of each school day. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A school implementing Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) or Grab & Go Breakfast (G&G) for the first time needs start-up equipment such as BIC bags or G&G cart / equipment.

- A school has previously allowed tardy students to receive breakfast after the bell rings but has not implemented a BATB program that makes BATB available to all students. This grant could help buy G&G cart / equipment needed to serve all students in accessible locations (classrooms, hallways, lobbies, etc.) around the school.

- A school has previously served BATB as a Grab & Go from the cafeteria, and kids take food to class. This grant could help implement G&G cart locations that are more accessible in high-traffic locations outside of the cafeteria. Similarly, this grant could help larger schools purchase additional carts to allow for multiple G&G cart locations around the school.

- A large HS or MS is looking to add a Second Chance Breakfast after 1st period, but the passing period is short and multiple G&G locations would be needed in order to serve
students quickly and allow them to get to the next class on time. This grant could help with the equipment (and/or staffing start-up costs) needed to launch several 2nd Chance Breakfast locations.

Eligibility

- Schools located in Massachusetts operating the School Breakfast Program and mandated by the state of Massachusetts to implement a Breakfast After the Bell program. In addition to the schools included on this list, if a school can provide data demonstrating 60%* or more of the student population qualifies for Free or Reduced-price meals, and Project Bread can verify this data, the school will be considered eligible. (F/R data used must be from March 2023.)

- In order to be eligible for this grant, schools must be committed to either 1) launching a new Breakfast After the Bell program or 2) making significant improvements/expansion to their existing Breakfast After the Bell program. (*Improving/expanding an existing program could include: adding more grab & go cart locations within a school or adding classrooms to Breakfast in the Classroom, adding a 2nd chance breakfast or expanding breakfast serving times, increasing freshness/quality/appeal of BATB menu items served, etc.)

- Schools who received a Project Bread School Breakfast Grant in the 2022-23 school year *must* reach out to Project Bread’s Child Nutrition team prior to submitting an application to gain approval to apply. Your application will not be reviewed without prior approval.

Award Range and Allowable Expenses

- Up to $3,000 for schools with fewer than 600 students or up to $5,000 for schools with 600+ students. The maximum total for a school district applying for multiple schools is $12,000.

- Grant funds may be used to purchase equipment needed to launch or expand Breakfast After the Bell programs (durable, reusable equipment only, no disposable packaging or disposable supplies are allowed). All equipment expenses must be clearly connected to increasing participation in the breakfast program.

- Grant funds may be used to support the start-up staffing costs of launching or expanding the Breakfast After the Bell Program, such as providing additional hours to an existing staff member to staff a new breakfast cart (*Ongoing personnel costs past 2 months are
not allowed. This is meant to address temporary/start-up personnel costs in an attempt to increase participation, and become solvent, over time.)

- A portion of grant funds may be used on promotion / marketing expenses to promote the new or improved BATB program and ensure students are aware and excited to participate.

- Funds may not be used for retroactive expenses incurred prior to receipt of the grant award.

- Funds may not be used for food costs or for packaging costs.

Priorities for funding

All schools meeting the eligibility criteria will be considered for funding. However, the following priorities have been identified and applications that meet one or more of the below will receive priority for funding.

- Project Bread is aware that some high-need schools have experienced participation declines over the past several years, due to challenges connected to the COVID-19 pandemic, staffing shortages, supply chain challenges, difficulties maintaining BATB models post-COVID, and other issues. Project Bread is committed to helping these schools regain, and exceed, prior participation highs. As such, individual schools who, as of data from March 2023, had experienced a participation decline of more than 5 percentage points* compared to any year between 2019–2022 will be prioritized for funding, provided their proposed BATB plan is strong. (*Participation decline to be measured at individual school level, not at district level)

- Project Bread is aware that some schools subject to the BATB mandate are currently not operating a BATB program (either have never operated BATB, or a prior BATB program has been eliminated in recent years). Project Bread is committed to supporting these schools in launching (or re-launching) new robust BATB programs that provide all students daily access to school breakfast after the bell rings in easily accessible locations. Schools applying to implement these new BATB programs will be prioritized for funding, provided their proposed BATB plan is strong.
Criteria Used for Grant Review

All applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Strength of applicant’s proposed plans for launching new or improving existing Breakfast After the Bell program(s) and plans for increasing breakfast participation at proposed school(s).

- Applicants meeting one or more of the priorities for funding listed above will be prioritized accordingly.

- Applicant’s track record of reporting for any prior Project Bread grants, responsiveness, and ability to achieve measurable results.

- Level of need within the schools as demonstrated by the percent of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals and available community-level data.

- Applicant’s commitment to provide equitable services that support their students’ dignity and rights.

Program and Reporting Requirements

- Implementation of new Breakfast After the Bell program or expansion of existing Breakfast After the Bell program between November 2023 – May 2024.

- Promoting and marketing meal programs is essential to increasing participation. As such, all grant recipients are required to execute a School Breakfast promotion/marketing strategy as part of this grant program. (*Project Bread’s Child Nutrition team is available to consult and provide guidance, and has created many free breakfast promotional resources for schools to use, including printed materials that you can order from us for free.)

- Monetary awards are accompanied by comprehensive technical assistance and support from Project Bread’s Child Nutrition team. Mid-program (February/March) in person visit with Project Bread Child Nutrition staff is required, as well as routine check-ins and communication.

- Completion of a final grant report is required in June 2024, including submission of breakfast participation data.
• Funds must be spent by May 31, 2024. Grantees must contact Project Bread immediately if the funds will not be fully spent or if grantees wish to spend on something other than what was approved in the grant approval process.

Application Process and Deadline

• All applications must be submitted online by October 13th. Complete and accurate application materials must be received by the deadline in order to be considered for funding. **Applicants are encouraged to submit applications before the deadline in order to expedite the grant award timeline.**

• Apply for the grant online using this link: [https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6036&fid=35204](https://us.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?sid=6036&fid=35204). If this is your first time applying for a grant with Project Bread, please create a new account. If you have previously applied for grants with us, please use the same email address as before. If you have forgotten your account password, please contact cnop@projectbread.org

• Applicants that have not recently or previously applied to Project Bread’s Child Nutrition Grant Programs are strongly encouraged to apply.

• Please feel free to contact us (cnop@projectbread.org) as you complete your application if you would like technical assistance in deciding which Breakfast After the Bell models would work best for your schools or for advice with program expansion planning.

Contact Information

• Please contact the Child Nutrition Outreach Program at cnop@projectbread.org or at 617-239-2543 with any questions or if you have difficulty submitting your application.