



Dear Action for Healthy Kids Team,

The Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Initiative is all about celebrating and supporting school nutrition professionals across the country. As part of this effort, the HMI grant program provides targeted support to small and rural school districts, helping them implement meaningful changes that improve the health of their students through better school meals.

Grantees are making incredible strides, and their stories show what's possible with the right support. Our Annual HMI Sub-Grantee Report captures their voices and the impact they're making.

Check out some of the highlights below!



Technical Assistance in Action

As part of the HMI Initiative and in cooperation with our partner Chef Ann Foundation, Action for Healthy Kids supported grantees across the country by providing technical assistance (TA).

This assistance was offered through various formats, including email, one-on-one

meetings, webinars, Communities of Practice, and specialized resources. The TA covered a range of needs, such as idea generation, reporting, finance and budgeting, and grant management.

Here's what some of our grantees had to say about their experience:

"The TA we have received in the last year have been very helpful for our transition into more scratch cooking. We got feedback and insight on how to bring more efficiency to our program and also ideas to raise participation that was specific to our site and menus."

"Training related to scratch meal prep and the current training our cafeteria staff is taking has been invaluable. Admin who attended the conference in Las Vegas returned with so many ideas that will inform our continued efforts to improve our breakfast and lunch offerings."

"Working with AFHK on this grant has been amazing! So many resources! I love that you provided a spend down plan for this grant. I've been writing grants a long time and I don't remember ever getting help with spend down plan. Like ever..."

"[AFHK staff] have been extremely helpful, quick to address concerns/responsive, and kind!"



School Nutrition Success Stories

With the passion and leadership of our grantees, and targeted support through funding and TA, schools have made lasting improvements in their meal programs. Together, we've helped small and rural grantees:

- Increase student participation and engagement

- Expand scratch cooking and nutrition education
- Upgrade essential kitchen equipment
- Strengthen community and family partnerships

These wins show what can happen when school nutrition pros get the support they need to serve healthy, delicious meals and are empowered to lead and create lasting change. Here's what our grantees had to say about the impact they've made in their schools and communities with help from the HMI grant:

"Some key highlights of our grant implementation include a fourfold increase in breakfast participation, thanks to the expanded program and mobile food truck. The food tastings and nutrition education tied to the salad bar have sparked interest in school lunch, resulting in a doubling of participation..."

"We[']re proud to share several key accomplishments that demonstrate the impact of these equipment upgrades and our team[']s hard work: Doubling Breakfast Participation: Last week, we officially doubled breakfast participation on one day compared to previous averages. This is a testament to the improved quality, variety, and appeal of the meals we[']re now offering..."

"Our most outstanding achievement was going from 15% student participation to 67% student participation. Students surprisingly enjoyed whole grain mushroom barley soup, fruit smoothies with no added sugars, and local farm fresh radishes and apples."

"90% scratch cooking breakfasts and lunches! We are now outsourcing to other local districts."

"... Breakfast is now completely scratched cook we are using no processed foods and it has been such a huge accomplishment. Lunch is a very close 2nd to being all scratched cook as well. The amount of new possibilities and time we have saved from not using outdated equipment not meant for our operation has made our programs completely different. I[t] has opened up so many new possibilities to move our program to complete scratch cooking."



What Our Grantees Are Saying

The overall feedback from HMI grantees was overwhelmingly positive. When asked what we could do to improve, one theme stood out: **don't change a thing!**

Grantees shared that the support they received was not only helpful, but truly transformative. From start to finish, they felt seen, supported, and empowered to make real change in their schools.

"All of the TA was outstanding. If anything, the only thing that could be improved would be how many hours in a day I had to take advantage of them all."

"In my opinion, no improvement is needed. The communication, resources, access and assistance has been great!"

"Over more than a decade, and managing dozens of grants, this grant implementation process and TA support has been - by far - the most helpful and inspirational."

"Personally I have nothing to say on this subject. I have been poured into by each of these entities that my cup runneth over. I am coming away from this grant better educated, better focused and ready to continue giving the students of my district what they deserve. The best I can give them."

.....
I'm so proud of what we've accomplished together and excited for all that's still

ahead. None of these great results would be possible without the incredible team we have.

Thank you for all of your passion, dedication, and hard work in furthering the mission of the HMI Initiative. It's making a real difference, and I'm truly grateful for everything each and every one of you do to further the mission of bringing health to children nationwide.

With deep appreciation,
Barb

ACTION
FOR HEALTHY KIDS



Barbara M

AFHK Program Director, USDA Programs

Phone: xxx.xxx.xxxx

Website: actionforhealthykids.org



Copyright © 2025 Action for Healthy Kids. All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because of your support for Action for Healthy Kids.

[Update Your Preferences](#)

Action for Healthy Kids

600 West Van Buren Street, Suite #720, Chicago, IL 60607

www.actionforhealthykids.org