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## **Community eligibility to help high-poverty Kansas schools prevent hunger in the classroom**

TOPEKA—High-poverty schools in Kansas have a new opportunity to feed their students breakfast and lunch at no charge to their families.

“Community eligibility” will help to ensure that low-income Kansas children, whose families often struggle to put food on the table, have access to two healthy meals while they’re at school.

“Nearly 20 percent of Kansas children live in households that are food insecure, unsure where their next meal will come from,” said Benet Magnuson, executive director of Kansas Appleseed, an anti-poverty nonprofit advocacy organization. “Community eligibility is an opportunity to get good, nutritious food to hungry kids. That means they’ll do better in the classroom and have healthier lives.”

Community eligibility is available to Kansas school districts that have at least one school where 40 percent or more of the students are approved for free meals without an application because they have been identified as eligible by another program with a rigorous eligibility determination process, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP.

Community eligibility has already been successfully implemented in 11 states, serving nearly 1 million low-income children in more than 2,200 schools. This fall, the option will be available to eligible high-poverty school districts in all 50 states. School districts are required to make a decision regarding participation in community eligibility by June 30 for the 2014-2015 school year.

“This is a huge step in the fight to end child hunger in Kansas,” said Jannett Wiens, constituent relationship manager for Harvesters-The Community Food Network. “Adopting community eligibility can provide significant benefits not only to Kansas’s high-poverty schools, but to the many students that they serve who might otherwise struggle to get enough food to eat each day.”

For more information about community eligibility and a complete list of the 63 eligible Kansas school districts, visit [FeedKansasKids.com](http://FeedKansasKids.com).



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