



Major Budget Boost to Help Libraries Feed More Hungry California Kids During Summer Months

For Immediate Release: January 10, 2022

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[Sacramento, Calif.] More hungry California kids will receive meals as well as books and educational materials during the summer through a new state investment of \$5 million in the California State Library's Lunch at the Library program contained in Gov. Newsom's budget proposal released today for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022.

More than 200 of California's 1,130 libraries participate in Lunch at the Library, providing nutritious meals to hungry children and teens during summer months when school cafeterias are closed. In addition to meals, kids also receive books to take home and other (fun) tools to make them stronger readers.

"At least 2 million children in California do not have access to nutritious foods, which has serious implications for their physical and mental health, as well as their academic achievement," said First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom. "Lunch at the Library helps address this critical need by providing healthy summer meals and snacks to hungry children and teens and connecting their families to essential services and programs."

"This investment will also strengthen community-wide efforts to address hunger by connecting public libraries with local food banks, farm to school programs and others committed to increasing food access and nutrition security for California children."

The \$5 million ongoing investment will make it easier for more libraries to participate in the program and help create partnerships with other summer meal servers – hopefully increasing the number of hungry kids fed each summer.

Even during the height of the pandemic, when most physical libraries were closed, libraries served 300,000 meals and handed out 177,000 free books and 183,000 STEAM enrichment kits.

"With the pandemic in full force, you could see the needs of our community," said one Lunch at the Library librarian. "The long lines of families waiting for food only reinforced how essential this program is essential and made us proud that we could provide library programming on top of the food that was being distributed."

This year's proposed budget builds on that success, with the goal of at least doubling the number of participating libraries by 2026.

Lunch at the Library is one of the programs administered by the California State Library aimed at bolstering community libraries.

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About the State Library: Established in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for state government and the Legislature. The library collection includes more than 4 million titles, 6,000 maps, and 250,000 photographs, and includes an extensive collection of documents from and about the state's rich history. Around the state, the State Library also serves

California's local libraries, providing more than \$500 million state and federal funds to support public libraries and delivering statewide library programs and services. [State Library website](#)