



Sanders Announces Launch of School Food Pantry Toolkit

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture today announced the launch of the School Food Pantry Toolkit.

The toolkit - created by Governor Sanders' Faith-Based Initiatives office – provides school districts with step-by-step instructions, quick tips, and supplemental resources to assist them with establishing school-based food pantries, ensuring no food goes to waste.

The development of this toolkit is part of Governor Sanders' ongoing strategy to ensure every child in Arkansas has access to nutritious meals – both at school and at home.

“Combatting childhood hunger is a top priority for my administration and this toolkit helps Arkansans make a difference in their own communities,” **said Governor Sanders.** “I am incredibly proud of our faith-based initiatives office, the Department of Education, and the Department of Agriculture for working together to develop this one-of-a-kind toolkit that will not only equip Arkansas’ school districts but can also serve as a blueprint to fight food insecurity everywhere.”

“Addressing the needs of the whole child is essential to ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed,” **said Arkansas Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva.** “The School Food Pantry Toolkit empowers districts to take meaningful steps in supporting students and families, and it represents another important stride in fostering healthy, thriving school communities across Arkansas.”

“Arkansas is blessed with a diverse agriculture industry with some of the best farmers and ranchers in the world,” **said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward.** “From the Department of Agriculture to our many agricultural organizations and associations, we are thankful for the Governor’s leadership on this critical issue and we are ready to engage with students, families, schools, and communities across the state to help end childhood hunger in Arkansas.”

School-based food pantries were given major assistance from Arkansas’ Good Neighbor Act, signed

by Governor Sanders earlier this year. The Act expands liability protections for food bank donors, encouraging schools, restaurants and other potential food donors to reduce food waste and support those in need across our state.

Governor Sanders also signed [SB59](#) this past legislative session, requiring all Arkansas public schools to provide one free breakfast to students per school day, regardless of their federal eligibility for free meals. Arkansas is the first state in the South to implement such a program.

Additionally, Governor Sanders previously signed legislation providing free school lunches for eligible students who qualified for reduced-price meals, and announced Arkansas will continue its Summer EBT program this year, ensuring Arkansas' students have access to food in the summer months.

Governor Sanders launched Faith-Based Initiatives to unite Arkansas' diverse faith communities around issues facing the Natural State. Since its inception, the faith-based initiatives team has hosted roundtables and fostered important conversations with faith communities that have led to the development of critical programs to address issues like childhood hunger, maternal health, foster care, and more.

The school food pantry toolkit is available [here](#).

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CONTACT:

Sam Dubke: sam.dubke@governor.arkansas.gov

Rebekah Howell: rebekah.howell@governor.arkansas.gov
