# Ideas for Staffing Your Breakfast Program

Building a strong support network is key to sustaining a successful school breakfast program. By actively engaging parents, students, staff, and community members, programs can operate more smoothly while fostering a shared sense of ownership and connection to the school community. The strategies below are designed to help you recruit and retain help for your breakfast program creating a reliable and sustainable support system.

## REACHING PARENTS

- ☑ Present at school information sessions and open houses to highlight the school breakfast program and explain how families can get involved.
- ☑ Share photos and program updates in school newsletters and PTA agendas. Include a brief call for volunteers—such as how to sign up or who to contact—at the end of updates to encourage involvement.
- ☑ Use the Breakfast Program Information For Families form to recruit parent volunteers.
- ☑ Maintain an ongoing sign-up sheet that is visible in high-traffic areas of the school.
- ☑ Launch a Breakfast Buddies program for family members and students to volunteer together.

## HOW TO KEEP THEM ENGAGED

- Make it feel like a social opportunity by brewing coffee, so parents are encouraged to chat and meet other parents!
- Provide an easy online sign-up form or a QR code for information on how to help.
- Post the breakfast menu in advance, so families know what kind of support is needed in an upcoming month. Be specific in the requests (e.g, "We need one adult to help with the toaster from 7:45–8:15 a.m.").

## REACHING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

- ☑ Host an information booth at your school's annual open houses or at a community event that highlights the value and impacts of school breakfast and nutrition programs.
- ☑ Post volunteer opportunities at local government representative offices or ask if you can share a story in their community newsletter about the breakfast program, the impacts, and how people can get involved.
- ☑ Connect with community associations, cultural groups, or municipal departments.
- ☑ Partner with organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs, the YMCA, or city recreation programs that encourage community involvement.
- ☑ Post at your local volunteer bureau or community center.

## HOW TO KEEP THEM ENGAGED

- Have clear role descriptions available for each volunteer.
- Make sure there is a level of student interaction so that it feels meaningful to them.

## REACHING STUDENTS

- [x] Integrate the breakfast program into specialized or leadership classes (e.g., life skills, work-oriented training programs) so it's part of the curriculum.
- [x] Engage student leadership groups and school clubs by creating a student-led breakfast program.
- [x] When applicable, offer it as an opportunity to fulfill student volunteer hours.
- [x] Create volunteer calendars for high schools: let students book time slots independently or with friends to help serve or clean up.
- [x] Use rotating classroom helpers: each week, a class sends 4–5 students to help prep, clean, or pack bins.
- [x] Offer breakfast program support (any tasks suitable to be done during class hours) as a way for students that need a break from the classroom; it provides task-oriented goals and a movement break.
- [x] Offer incentives for volunteering (e.g., a certain number of hours leads to a reward or recognition).
- [x] Students who are on-site before and/or after classes may help prepare breakfast or carry out other tasks related to the breakfast program.
- [x] Start a Breakfast Buddies Mentorship program that matches older and younger students.

### HOW TO KEEP THEM ENGAGED

- Provide certificates, school recognition (e.g., at assemblies or through the PA system), or letters of recommendation.
- If your school has the budget, offer special Breakfast Club/Program T-shirts or other spirit wear for volunteers. Consider engaging students to design a program logo or come up with a fun program name —make it a challenge to submit ideas!

## REACHING STAFF

- [x] Create a rotating volunteer sign-up sheet for teachers and support staff.
- [x] Include the breakfast program as part of a shared school-staff initiative.
- [x] Host big-batch cooking or baking sessions on pedagogical days for team building.
- [x] Involve your community development leader if there is one.
- [x] Include your breakfast program in the list of extracurriculars where possible.

### HOW TO KEEP THEM ENGAGED

- Keep the breakfast program on your staff meeting agenda.
- Provide opportunities for teachers/administrative staff to view the breakfast program as an opportunity to build relationships with students.

## GENERAL TIPS

- [x] Offer flexible times of day, with shorter and more specific time slots, to allow volunteers to support the program (for example, by preparing the next morning's breakfast at various times throughout the day).
- [x] Recognize contributions publicly (e.g., thank people in newsletters, on social media, and in morning announcements).
- [x] Include small breakfast program tasks for people coming in to volunteer for other programs at the school (library, etc.).