



CHILDREN & YOUTH REPORT CARD REVIEW

AFFORDABLE AND HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES IN ALEXANDRIA/ACPS

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TOPIC

Cheap and Healthy Food Access

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Who is affected?
Many students at Alexandria City High School are affected, especially those from low and middle income families. These students may not qualify for free or reduced price meals but still struggle to afford healthy food options. The issue also impacts their families, who may worry about their children’s nutrition at school.

How does it affect them?
Students who can’t afford healthy meals often skip lunch or choose cheaper, less nutritious foods. This can lead to poor nutrition, stomach issues, and difficulty focusing in class. Over time, it may hurt their academic performance and overall health.

Why does it matter at ACHS or in Alexandria?
This issue matters because every student deserves access to affordable, healthy meals to help them learn. Without good nutrition, students are at a disadvantage both in and out of the classroom. Solving this problem would make ACHS and Alexandria more healthy, and supportive places for all students and the city.

BASELINE DATA & GOAL

Recent Titan Data shows that 64% of ACHS students do not buy health food because it is too expensive.

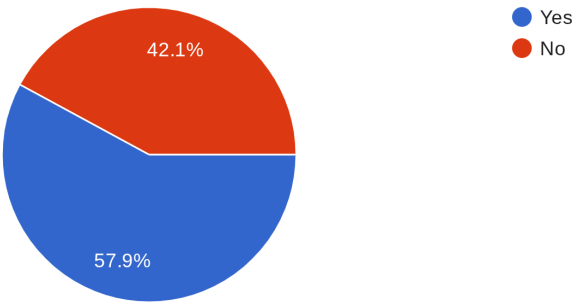
Goal:
Increase the percentage of students who can afford and buy healthy meals at school and outside of it from 36% to 70% by the end of next school year.

CYCP GOAL & STRATEGIC AREA

CYCP Goal: Physical, Mental, and Behavioral Health
Explanation:
This issue fits the goal because affordable, healthy food helps students stay physically healthy, improves their mental focus, and supports their overall well being. By making nutritious meals accessible to all, ACHS directly supports the CYCP’s commitment to student health and success.

WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?

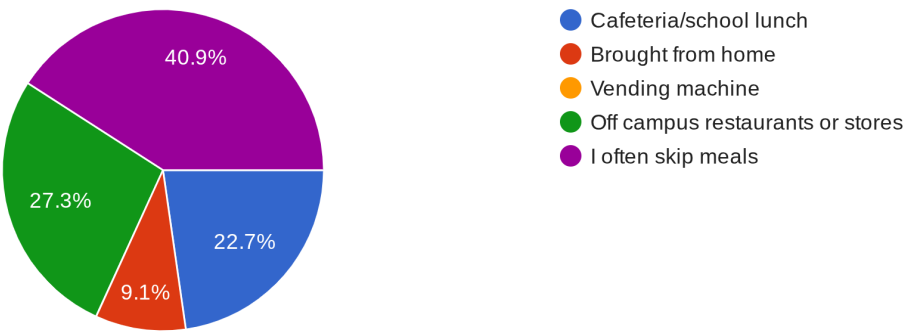
Do you think healthy food options at school are affordable for most students?
19 responses



THIS GRAPH IS SHOWING THAT 42.1% OF KIDS ARENT GETTING A MEAL DUE TO PRICING

THIS GRAPH IS SHOWING THAT 40.9% OF KIDS ARE SKIPPING MEALS DUE TO TASTE OR PRICE

Where do you usually get your meals during the school day? (Select all that apply)
22 responses



WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN TRIED?

Alexandria hosts several farmers markets, such as the Old Town Farmers' Market and Del Ray Farmers' Market, where you can find fresh, local produce at reasonable prices. Shopping toward the end of the market can sometimes lead to discounts.

- **ALIVE! Food Distributions:** Provides free food to Alexandria residents in need.
- **Community Lodgings:** Sometimes offers food pantries and cooking classes.
- **Food Rescue US – Alexandria:** Connects surplus food from businesses with families who need it.

WHO CAN HELP?

ALIVE! is a local nonprofit organization focused on fixing food insecurity in Alexandria. They do food distributions, pantries, and programs that provide free or low cost groceries to residents in need. By expanding their food distribution events and partnering with local farmers, ALIVE! can reach more families and supply nutritious options.



WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

- The City of Alexandria DCHS connects families to SNAP and WIC benefits, supports local food pantries, and promotes nutrition education programs.
- Local farmers markets accept SNAP/EBT and sometimes offer matching programs to stretch food budgets.
- Community gardens and nonprofit initiatives have increased opportunities for residents to grow their own produce.

The current actions are effective for many residents, but gaps remain. Expanding resources, but removing issues would help these programs work even better and reach more people in need.

IS IT ACTUALLY HELPING?

Yes, data suggests that the efforts are having a positive impact, although there is still work to be done.

According to Feeding America, Alexandria's food insecurity rate dropped to 9% in 2026, down from 11% in 2022. This downward trend suggests that local food programs are successfully helping more people meet their needs.

WHAT SHOULD CHANGE? (YOUR SOLUTION)

- Increase the frequency and locations and the way that people get the news about the help of all food, ALIVE! food distributions, focusing on neighborhoods identified as having the greatest need in the survey.
- Survey data shows that 64% of respondents struggle to access healthy food nearby, highlighting the need for more convenient distribution points.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

If a system is set up to effectively spread news about all free food resources in Alexandria, and the proposed solution is used, several improvements will occur: More residents will know when and where free food distributions

- **Participation:** With better communication, attendance at food distributions and enrollment in SNAP and other programs will increase, making food assistance more successful.
- **Low Income Families:**
- They will have clear, regular updates on where to get free, healthy food, reducing stress and uncertainty about where their next meals will come from.
- **Seniors and People with Disabilities:**
- These groups often face mobility and information barriers. A well designed system (including phone hotlines, flyers, and community outreach) will make it easier for them to access food resources.

CITATIONS

feeding America. (2026). Map the Meal Gap: Alexandria City, Virginia County Food Insecurity.

<https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2026/overall/virginia/county/alexandria-city>

City of Alexandria, VA. (2026). Food Assistance Resources.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/food>

Alexandria Farmers' Market.

(2026). SNAP & EBT at Alexandria Farmers' Markets.

<https://www.oldtownfarmersmarketalexandria.org/snap-ebt>

LEARN MORE

ALIVE! operates food distributions, pantries, and meal programs throughout Alexandria. Residents can access free groceries, including fresh produce, pantry staples, and sometimes prepared meals. This resource is especially valuable for families and individuals facing food insecurity, offering regular, reliable support to meet basic nutrition needs.