

ARKANSAS FOOD BANK

School Market Program

A School Market is a school-based pantry that operates as a neighbor-choice, market-style shopping experience. Located on or near school campuses, School Markets provide students and their households with convenient access to nutritious groceries in a familiar, welcoming environment.

By allowing families to choose their own foods, School Markets promote dignity, reduce waste, and help households access foods they will use.

Families shop according to their needs and preferences, selecting items such as:

- Fresh produce
- Dairy products
- Protein foods
- Shelf-stable and dry goods


1 in 4
or 25.5% of
Children are at risk
of going hungry

Backpack Program vs School Market

Backpack Program

- Provides pre-packed food bags for students.
- Focuses on weekends and school breaks.
- Serves individual students.
- Limited food choice.
- Short-term hunger relief.

School Market

- Market-style shopping experience for students and families.
- Serves students and household members.
- Families choose foods that meet their needs.
- Offers fresh produce, dairy, protein, and pantry staples.
- Provides ongoing access to nutritious food.
- Supports long-term food security and family well-being.

Backpack Programs help meet a student's immediate food needs, School Markets offer a sustainable solution that allows students and families to select the foods that best fit their household's needs, preferences, and dietary requirements. This family-centered approach reduces stigma, increases access to nutritious foods, and strengthens overall household food security.

Misti Mitchell

Community Programs
& Nutrition Specialist

501-569-4327

mmitchell@arkansasfoodbank.org

Shantal Brown

Community Programs Coordinator

501-569-4377

sbrown@arkansasfoodbank.org



What is a School Market Partnership?

A School Market Partnership is a collaboration between the Arkansas Foodbank and a school district or school through the Food for Kids Initiative. The partnership provides consistent, accessible food assistance to K-12 students and their families.

School districts are the preferred partners because they have the staff, resources, and systems needed to identify and respond to student needs across the district. In certain circumstances, an individual school may serve as the School Market partner.

A successful partnership includes:

- School administration support
- Designated staff to coordinate operations
- Safe food storage and distribution processes
- A grocery-style shopping experience for students and families
- Collaboration with community partners and volunteers



**Scan the QR code
to complete the
School Partner
Readiness
Assessment.**



Scan me

School Market Service Models

Why School Markets Matter

With 1 in 4 Arkansas children facing food insecurity, School Markets bring nutritious food directly to where children learn and grow, helping students thrive, easing financial stress for families, and strengthening communities.

Full Choice Market

- A fully stocked, school-based market where families choose the foods they need.

Home Delivery Choice

- Families select foods from an approved list and receive deliveries from volunteers or school staff.

Drive-Thru Choice

- Families pre-order nutritious foods and pick up packed orders at a scheduled school location.