

# CALCULATING FOOD COSTS

The cost of a school meal or snack program typically depends on attendance, geographic location, and total school population. You can use the numbers below as a guide but you may have different ways of calculating your food costs.

**When planning meals,** aim for a variety of healthy foods from Canada's Food Guide, including at least one vegetable or fruit, one whole grain food and one protein food.

**When planning snacks,** aim for a variety of healthy foods from Canada's Food Guide, including at least one vegetable or fruit, one whole grain food or one protein food.

## Guidelines for Determining Cost per Student:

Approximately \$1.30 per meal/snack for students grades K-6  
Approximately \$2.08 per meal/snack for students grades 7-12

**Sample calculation for a breakfast program serving 25 students in grades K-6, 3 days per week for the whole school year:**

$\$1.30 \times 25 \text{ students} \times 3 \text{ days} \times 37 \text{ weeks} = \$3607.50$

**Sample calculation for a lunch program serving 100 students in grades 10-12, 5 days per week for the whole school year:**

$\$2.08 \times 100 \text{ students} \times 5 \text{ days} \times 37 \text{ weeks} = \$38,480.00$

## Don't be afraid of big numbers!

You can find funding from many sources including local businesses, churches, parents/family members, fundraisers, community organizations, and funders like the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. You can also offset costs with in-kind support like donations of food, supplies, equipment, and volunteer time. For resources to assist with fundraising for your program, visit our [Additional Sources of Funding page](#)