

Amendment 6 FEPP Levy Implementation Plan FAQ

Overview/What does the amendment do?

Council President Hollingsworth's amendment, co-sponsored by Councilmember Foster and Councilmember Juarez, will provide \$500,000 annually over the six-year levy period to fund weekend and school break food vouchers for low-income families to address gaps in our current food systems by making an entire line item dedicated to Food Assistance for the first time ever in the FEPP Levy.

Where does the funding come from?

To secure the \$3 million needed, the Mayor's EARLY implementation of Universal School Meals Program will be delayed until the 2027–2028 school year. This leaves \$4.7 million for a future launch. The one-year delay ensures 1) immediate aid reaches students in need while 2) allowing time to assess the long-term viability of the program's funding source, the "Millionaires Tax," which currently faces legal and ballot challenges.

Funding for the current universal meal program, which is provided by the state "Millionaires Tax," is currently threatened by uncertainty due to court challenges.

How does this amendment work?

Amendment 6 provides Food Assistance to low-income families on school breaks and weekends.

- This amendment would create a Food Assistance Program (at least \$3 million) or \$500,000 per year for the life of the levy (six years) for low-income families.
- This will be administered as grocery vouchers or grocery cards for SPS students over school breaks, spring break, mid-winter break, and winter break.
- The program will be distributed by family support workers, the McKinney-Vento program, and school administrators who know family needs firsthand.

Didn't Seattle voters approve universal meals through the 2025 FEPP levy renewal?

No. Universal meals were not a defined part of the FEPP levy package last year. Approved council language allows for dedication of resources for this purpose.

Does this take money away from universal meals?

Absolutely not. The proposal simply delays the program one year and provides our partner organization, Seattle Public Schools, additional time to plan for a successful implementation. With this amendment, the City will STILL begin Universal School Meals one year ahead of the state-wide implementation.

The critical issue is that the amendment immediately redirects funds to tackle food insecurity for low-income children during weekends and school breaks.

Why do you think this a better approach than universal school meals?

The proposed amendment is a “both/and approach” that we believe strengthens our shared goal *with the Mayor* of closing the food equity gap in Seattle.

The proposed amendment helps ensure that resources reach the children and families with the greatest need while building a strong, sustainable foundation for a citywide universal school meals program.

- If the proposed Millionaires Tax is delayed, challenged in court, or ultimately does not materialize, the City will need to identify another long-term funding source to sustain this program and commitment.
- A one-year implementation timeline gives us the opportunity to make a better-informed decision. It allows us to complete the upcoming budget cycle, understand the outcome of the November vote, and evaluate the City's long term revenue outlook to launch this program sustainably.
- *The program laid out in Amendment 6 does not require the passage of the Millionaires Tax and will provide a sure safety net for SPS students for the six-year life of the Levy no matter what.*

What's next?

The Select Committee on the FEPP Levy Implementation and Evaluation Plan will vote on amendments and the underlying bill on Wednesday, July 22 starting at 9:30 a.m. This bill will likely come to Full Council for a final vote on Tuesday, July 28 at 2 p.m.

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