

Beyond the Backpack

The Backpack Program: Sacred Cow or Fatted Calf

<http://hungerintohealth.com/2012/06/20/the-backpack-program-sacred-cow-or-fatted-calf/>

Drawbacks to Backpack Programs

- Child is carrying hunger on their back
- Small amount of food (kids can only carry so much)
- What is return on investment? Backpack programs are a lot of work, expensive and not much food is actually provided.
- Sometimes only feeds one kid, not whole family or other kids
- Food bank inventory not conducive i.e. single serve, easy items, pop-tops, etc. are not donated and expensive to purchase
- May be hard to find healthy items.

On the other hand

- Usually easy to find funding or sponsors
- Popular

Must haves

- 501c3/faith-based organization (not school) to be responsible for the program
- School buy-in, need reliable champion to make program sustainable

What are other solutions?

- School pantry
- Distributions (one-time, once a week, once a month, etc.) at school
- Collaboration/partnership with local food shelf or food assistance program
- Active referrals to local food shelf
- [SNAP outreach](#)
- Increasing access to federal nutrition programs
- [SHH resources on child hunger](#)