

Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH join The White House in their strategy to End Hunger and Build Healthier Communities through a commitment to expand SnackTime Explorers to 2.7 million students nationwide

Pilot Light and our partners at FRESHEALTH are thrilled to announce that through the support of **The Savage Family Office**, we are joining **The White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities** through the expansion of SnackTime Explorers!

The [SnackTime Explorers](#) expansion plan will grow the reach of the educational toolkit to include all 2.7 million students participating in the USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) by 2030.



What is The White House Commitment?

In 2023, The White House called on public and private organizations and businesses to commit to [their challenge](#) to end hunger and build healthy communities through innovative approaches to eliminate disparities and support communities most impacted by hunger and diet-related diseases.

Now, Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH are proud to answer this call to action through the **expansion of SnackTime Explorers**. This initiative will benefit not just students inside the classroom but also

shift mindsets in cafeterias, families, and communities nationwide. Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH's White House Commitment will expand the offerings of the SnackTime Explorers program and **extend access to the toolkit and a new digital learning platform to all schools eligible for the USDA's FFVP - over 16,000 elementary school districts nationwide.**

How will the SnackTime Explorers Expansion Commitment work?



Through the support of The Savage Family Office, Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH's commitment will invest in the future of SnackTime Explorers and the FFVP through a multi-tiered approach, including:

- **Expanding** SnackTime Explorers content for all eligible grade levels, plus the creation of new educational content to maximize the toolkit's effectiveness in the classroom
- **Translating** instructional resources into Spanish language for increased accessibility
- **Growing** the geographical reach to FFVP schools in all participating states and territories
- **Building** asynchronous educator professional development resources, allowing SnackTime Explorers teachers to participate in their professional growth on their own schedule
- **Launching** a digital learning platform for educators to access SnackTime Explorers content as well as connect with other participating teachers for peer-to-peer support
- **Investing** in the long-term success of SnackTime Explorers through new evaluation practices, site visits, and educator leadership.

*"Integrating Food Education into the classroom equips young learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to become informed leaders of tomorrow," said **Alex DeSorbo-Quinn, Executive Director of Pilot Light.** "SnackTime Explorers provides teachers with the tools necessary to create this long-lasting change in student mindsets that transfers out of the classroom and into their families and communities. We are honored to join this national movement to end hunger and build healthier communities through our expansion to all teachers and schools enrolled in the FFVP."*

Why is SnackTime Explorers important for FFVP classrooms?



The USDA FFVP (Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program) provides funding to eligible elementary schools to purchase fresh produce served during classroom instructional time. Before SnackTime

Explorers was created, the USDA recognized the benefit of an educational resource for teachers participating in the FFVP. Their research found that **students were the most likely to consume more fresh fruits and vegetables when the produce snacks were distributed and consumed inside classrooms, and when teachers included an educational component related to the daily snack.** (Source: [FFVP website](#))

Accordingly, Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH recognized the potential of an integrated Food Education model to support educators and promote student learning through their experiences with FFVP produce.

During the SnackTime Explorers pilot program in 2023, Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH quickly realized that the SnackTime Explorers toolkit had additional benefits for classrooms: the toolkit was promoting classroom engagement, while also **inspiring curiosity** in students, **promoting connection** between classmates and teachers, and **increasing consumption** of FFVP produce – exceeding initial expectations for the success of the program.

“SnackTime Explorers has been a refreshing and multifaceted approach to nutrition education for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program at CPS schools,” said Ariana O Luster, MS, RD, LDN, School Nutrition Specialist for Chicago Public Schools. “It’s exciting, as administrators, to be able to offer a resource that guides our teachers and revitalizes a key aspect of this beloved program, which adds to the educational and social experience of our students. The lessons, aligned with Pilot Light’s Food Education Standards, serve as a reminder that food represents daily interconnectedness to our internal and external environments.”

Where will SnackTime Explorers become available?

The SnackTime Explorers expansion aims to reach all participating FFVP elementary schools: currently over 9,350 across all fifty States in addition to the District of Columbia and the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. By 2030, all schools that receive FFVP produce will also have access to the SnackTime Explorers resources which have been proven to increase student participation in FFVP snack time as well as promoting classroom-wide social development and engagement throughout the school day.

At the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, we are working alongside our partners such as Pilot Light to meet the goals of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health and to advance nutrition security. We cannot do this important work alone, but together we can make progress that will change lives and ensure a healthier, more prosperous future for everyone in this country,” said Dr. Caree Jackson Cotwright, Director of Nutrition Security and Health Equity for USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

Who are Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH?

Pilot Light, a [Food Education](#) nonprofit based in Chicago, IL, and [FRESHEALTH](#), a Columbus, OH-based produce provider, originally teamed up in 2022 to co-create and distribute SnackTime Explorers. When our partnership began, Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH realized that there was an opportunity to **add an educational component to the FFVP**.



FRESHEALTH's dedication to increasing access and consumption of fresh produce and Pilot Light's dedication to supporting educators and students through comprehensive Food Education blended together to leverage the power of the FFVP and resulted in **SnackTime Explorers**. By introducing elementary students to fresh produce through engaging, multisensory learning experiences, SnackTime Explorers **connects classrooms** and provides educators with key resources that support the successful implementation of the FFVP.

The initiative launched in January 2023 in Chicago Public Schools and is currently operating in three midwest school districts in the 2023-24 school year.

When and where will SnackTime Explorers expand?

"The way we feed people in this country is changing. With the endorsement of the White House, we are more motivated than ever to transform classrooms, cafeterias, and communities with the power of fresh produce," said **Alex DiNovo, President and Chief Operating Officer of FRESHEALTH**. *"Our partnership with Pilot Light is a strategic collaboration, drawing on the strengths of both the nonprofit and private sector. Together, we leverage existing USDA programs and draw upon the deep knowledge of classroom educators to make the maximum impact. This noteworthy endorsement fuels our mission to shape a healthier future for children across our nation."*

Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH project that the expansion will begin summer 2024. Interested educators, administrators, and school nutrition professionals can start registering their interest in bringing SnackTime Explorers to their FFVP school [here](#).