

New Kitchens Feed a Community

A project to upgrade the school kitchens in Springfield, MA served up more than nutritious food for hungry students.



Background:

Through the 2021 American Rescue Plan, the Springfield School District received funding to invest in their facilities. With 67 schools serving nearly 26,000 students, many of whom live below the poverty level, the school administrators decided to update school kitchens. By investing in their kitchens, the district purchased the necessary equipment to serve their students better food, more easily and affordably. Springfield educators know that their kids learn better when they are well fed. The district was the first in the Commonwealth to institute a universal breakfast in the classroom model which cut down on hunger visits to the nurse and improved time on learning.

The Springfield School District is the second largest in Massachusetts, and Springfield is a diverse community of over 155,000 people – with 45% identifying as Hispanic or Latino and over 20% as Black or African American. It also experiences a significantly higher rate of poverty than the state overall. According to census data, over a quarter of its residents are living in poverty compared to less than 9.4% statewide. Over 80% of Springfield students automatically qualify for free school meals because of their family's economic status. Most students eat more than half of their meals each week at school, as Springfield Public Schools serve breakfast, lunch, snack, and dinner through federally funded Child Nutrition Programs. Springfield purchased a machine that makes empanadas (a type of savory Spanish turnover) to better reflect students' cultural diversity and food preferences on the school menu.

Opportunity:

With the decision in place, administrators saw a major opportunity in a program sponsored by Eversource MA, called **Instant Rebates**. Instant Rebates, implemented by Energy Solutions, provides incentives on energy-efficient commercial foodservice equipment to customers receiving their energy from Eversource MA. By purchasing energy-efficient equipment for their kitchens through a participating foodservice dealer, the administrators knew that they would not only save money upfront, they would also get high quality equipment that would continue to save money on their ongoing energy costs, which they could then reinvest back into the schools.

\$194,200
saved on
equipment costs

\$1.8
million
in lifetime energy
cost savings

Results:



Equipment cost savings added up to a brand new kitchen for a kindergarten. In a significant upgrade to their kitchen facilities, Springfield School District worked with Kittridge Appliances to purchase 198 new units of energy-efficient equipment, including combination and convection ovens, hot food holding cabinets, steamers, refrigerators, dishwashers – and that empanada maker. Their Instant Rebates savings totaled \$194,200. The district is reinvesting those savings to build a brand-new kitchen in a local kindergarten so that its young children can have delicious, nourishing meals at school.



More savings means more meals for Springfield students and their community. Springfield School District is looking to expand after-school meal programs for students in tutoring, mentoring, sports, and other extracurricular activities. The upgraded kitchens will also allow the schools to be a site for FEMA in case of emergency.



Less budget spent on energy bills means more budget for teachers. Based on energy cost savings estimates, the district expects to see savings of up to \$1.8 million over the lifetime of their new equipment, enough to support a boost in staffing.



Energy Savings & Environmental Benefits:

251,950 kWh

*(that's like charging
16,408,625 smart phones)*

119,286 therms

*(that's like growing 8,156
tree seedlings for 10 years)*



“The customer is getting better equipment, at an equal or lower cost. Springfield schools are the big winners here.”

– Al Fratini
Singer Kittredge

Instant Rebates was designed to help customers save energy by making high-efficiency foodservice equipment as affordable as standard equipment. But, as the Springfield School District learned, the benefits can go way beyond that to make significant improvements for their students and the surrounding community.

instant rebates™

 Energy Solutions

energy-solution.com/foodservice-programs