

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR

FREE SCHOOL LUNCH CAMPAIGN



WE'LL TAKE THAT

Hunger Action Pledged

U.S. to Provide
School Lunch
For All Needy

By Spencer Rich

Washington Post Staff Writer

The President's special consultant on hunger pledged yesterday that the Nixon administration by next Thanksgiving would be providing free or reduced-rate school lunches to all of the nation's 6.6 million needy school children regardless of cost.

SAVE MONEY—

ORGANIZE A SCHOOL LUNCH CAMPAIGN!

Now is the time to organize your free school lunch campaign! Congress has passed a new law which says that all children who can't afford to pay for school lunches will get them for free. President Nixon's special consultant has said that by Thanksgiving 6.6 million poor children will be getting free or reduced price lunches. Right now less than ½ this number are receiving free lunches.

Why aren't our children getting these meals? Because the Department of Agriculture, the State School Lunch Directors, the school superintendents, and the school principals are not following the law! It is time for us to organize free school lunch campaigns and *get what the law has promised us!*

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How Much Do You Spend On School Lunches?

Why organize a free school lunch campaign? Because each year school lunches cost you hundreds of dollars. Most people do not stop to figure out how much it costs for school lunches for their children every year. Do you know how much you spend?

The chart below will help you figure out the total amount.

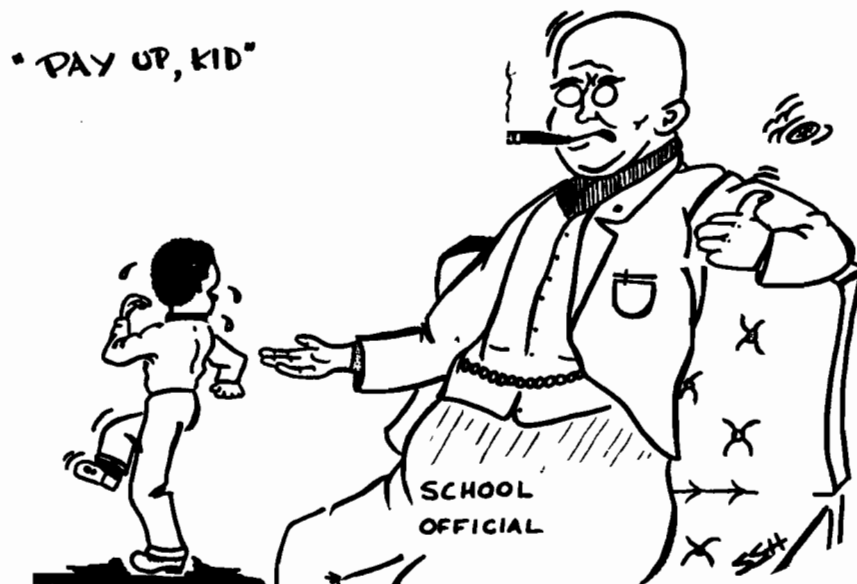
If your family has 3 children and they each spend 30¢ for lunch every day, circle the number \$162 in the third column. Your family spends this much for school lunches each year!

If your family has 3 children and 2 of them pay 40¢ for lunch each day and the other pays 50¢ for lunch, circle \$144 in the fourth column and \$90 in the fifth column. Add these two amounts and you get \$234. Your family spends \$234 for school lunches each year!

number of children in your family	Price of lunch	20c	30c	40c	50c
1		\$36	54	72	90
2		72	108	144	180
3		108	162	216	270
4		144	216	288	360
5		180	270	360	450
6		216	324	432	540
7		252	378	504	630
8		288	432	576	720
9		324	486	648	810
10		360	540	720	900

Add up the numbers you circled on the chart.
Every year your family pays.....for school lunches.

**SAVE THIS MUCH MONEY EACH YEAR
APPLY FOR FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES!!!**



Free School Lunch Campaign Victories

Across the country, WRO has been organizing to get free lunches. Many groups have already won victories. Some victories were in court, but many more have been through direct action. Here's what has been happening

DETROIT, MICHIGAN:

The Westside Mothers WRO sued the Detroit Board of Education because they found that 70 ghetto schools had no lunch program at all. Also, no poor children in any schools were getting free or reduced price lunches.

NWRO attorney Ronald Pollack and Detroit WRO attorney Alan Houseman took the WRO case to court. The day before the trial began the School Board decided to give reduced price hot lunches to welfare and ADC kids.

In the end, the Westside Mothers *WON free or reduced price lunches for all welfare kids and lunch programs in all 70 ghetto schools!* This case sets a precedent that can lead to more victories in court.

CHELSEA, MASSACHUSETTS:

The mothers in Chelsea WRO took their complaints about the school lunch program to the Superintendent of Schools. When he didn't give them a direct answer they took their case to the School Board.

At the School Board meeting every member of the School Board voted for a new lunch program to give free school lunches to poor children. Free school lunches were given to all children from families on welfare as well as to children from other poor families that couldn't afford school lunches.

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN:

The Saginaw WRO confronted the School District with facts which showed that their children were not getting free school lunches and were being discriminated against. The school officials admitted that they were violating laws and changed their policies.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI:

Wyandotte County WRO also took their case to court against the Board of Education. They had found that there was *not one* school lunch program in any poor school. In addition to this, no free lunches were given to any poor children in any school in the city.

As a result of the WRO action, the School Board is now looking into giving free lunches to poor children and starting lunch programs in the poor schools in Kansas City.

PUEBLO, COLORADO:

In Pueblo a WRO group took their case to court, too. The school officials were really put on the spot by the findings of the WRO and they agreed to start school lunch programs in all the schools!

KEEP NWRO INFORMED! When your group starts a Free School Lunch Campaign you can help other WRO's by filling out the enclosed questionnaire and sending it in to National Headquarters.

School Lunch Bill of Rights

The school lunch program can be very important for poor people whether they are on welfare or not. Under the School Lunch Program all children have the right to a school lunch whether they can afford it or not. All poor children should receive lunches for free or at a reduced price. The reason why the School Lunch Program has not helped many poor people is because *school officials have broken the law*. **THEY HAVE TAKEN AWAY OUR LEGAL RIGHTS!!**

The following is a list of some of the most important rights that are ours under the School Lunch Act. If these rights are being taken away from us, someone is breaking the law and *there is something we can do about it*.

1. OUR CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO A LUNCH PROGRAM IN THEIR SCHOOLS.

Some schools have lunch programs; some have hot lunches; some have no lunches. All the schools should have **HOT** lunches. Schools can get federal money for lunchroom equipment or schools can have hot meals brought to the school from outside.

2. OUR CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE LUNCHES FOR FREE OR AT REDUCED PRICES.

To get federal money or food commodities, the local School Board signs an agreement saying that it will give all children of poor families free or reduced price lunches for no more than 20¢. We have the right to demand that these lunches be given **NOW!**

3. OUR CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST.

The law says that poor children who receive free or reduced price lunches *can not* be made to:

- A) work for their meals;
- B) eat at a different time or in a different place;
- C) use tickets or cards that are different than the ones used by children who pay for their lunches.

4. OUR CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO A GOOD AND NUTRITIOUS LUNCH.

The law says that each lunch must include

- ½ pint whole milk;
- 2 ounces lean meat, poultry or fish;
- ¾ cup serving vegetables or fruit;
- 1 serving bread, biscuits, rolls or muffins;
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine.

5. WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE TOLD THE RULES OF THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM AND HOW IT IS RUN.

The school officials must announce the rules of the program.

6. OUR CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES AS SOON AS THEY APPLY.

Under the new law our children should start getting free lunches when they turn in a form signed by an adult member of the family. This form should say that the family net income is below the income standards set by local officials.

7. OUR CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO FAIR REPRESENTATION.

If someone wants to stop our children from getting free lunches they must prove that our children do not need free lunches and that they are not eligible to get them. In this case we have the right to fair representation by a lawyer.

You are now ready to begin organizing your Free School Lunch Campaign. You know the facts and you know your rights.

Here are twelve steps to organizing a Free School Lunch Campaign.

How To Organize Your Free School Lunch Campaign

1. Form a committee
2. Build support
3. Have a group meeting
4. Prepare for the School Superintendent
5. Call the press
6. Confront the School Superintendent
7. Get a decision
8. Know what you want
9. Know what you will do
10. Meet with the School Board
11. Get it in writing
12. Keep organizing

FORM A COMMITTEE

This committee will deal with free school lunches. The committee should:

- a. *Find out* if there are any other WRO groups in your school district. If there are you might plan a coordinated action with them.
- b. *Learn and understand* the law on free school lunches. (See *What the Law Says*, page 8)
- c. *Investigate* the School Lunch Programs in your schools. (See *What to Investigate in Your School*, page 9)
- d. *Write* a formal Free School Lunch Plan to be given to the school officials. (See *Forming a Free School Lunch Plan* and *Sample Plan*, pages 10-11)

BUILD SUPPORT

- a. Visit all WRO members to explain to them their school lunch rights and the Campaign.
- b. Give members a copy of:
School Lunch Bill of Rights (See page 5)
How Much Do You Spend On School Lunches? (See page 3)
- c. Send members a letter and flier telling them about the Free School Lunch Campaign and give the date of your first group meeting.
- d. Contact Friends of WRO to support your Campaign. You can find such groups through P.T.A.'s and church groups in middle-class neighborhoods.

HAVE A GROUP MEETING

This meeting should be planned shortly before the monthly meeting of the School Board. If you are hooked up with other WRO's you could all meet on the same day. At the meeting you should:

- a. Fill out Request Forms for free school lunches. (See *Sample Request Form*, page 11)
- b. Determine how much a year your group spends on school lunches.
- c. Determine income standards for your district if you think that the national standards are too low. (See *What the Law Says B and C*, page 8)

PREPARE FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT

Role playing: Before your group meeting your committee should prepare for how it will deal with the School Superintendent. Go through the whole thing as if you were meeting with him.] Try will say.

CALL THE PRESS

Call the press to come to your meeting and to the meeting with the Superintendent. Your Free School Lunch Campaign is a just one which President Nixon says he supports. Good press coverage will get you support from the community. (See *Extra Tips*, page 13)

CONFRONT THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

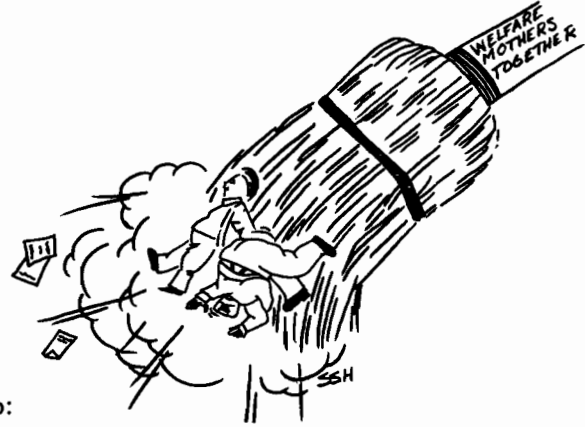
As a group, take your Request Forms and your Free School Lunch Plan to the School Superintendent.

GET A DECISION

As a group try to get a decision from the Superintendent. Pressure him to:

- a. Accept your individual requests for free lunches for your children.
- b. Accept your Free School Lunch Plan.

(The Superintendent has the power to put policies into effect. Since all your demands are *already law*, he should see that they are carried out! Push him hard! If he refuses, get him to put you on the agenda of the next School Board meeting.



KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

Decide before you go into the meeting when you will accept an answer from the School Board. (That night, in a week)

KNOW WHAT YOU WILL DO

Decide before you go into the meeting what you will do if:

- a. They will not give you an answer when you want it;
- b. They will not give you the answer you want; (Example: You can refuse to leave; picket; contact the State Lunch Authorities; or contact the Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford G. Hardin, Washington, D.C.)

MEET WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD

As a group, meet with the School Board whether or not you are on the agenda. Be sure to:

- a. Get as many members to come as possible. (Be sure you outnumber the School Board)
- b. Invite the press again.
- c. Meet as a group before you go to the School Board meeting.
- d. Present to the School Board:
 - 1) What you found when you investigated the schools
 - 2) Your Free School Lunch Plan
 - 3) The laws that support your demands (See *What the Law Says*, page 8)
 - 4) Your filled out Request Forms.
- e. Have fliers and samples of what you gave to the School Board to give out to the audience and the press. (See *Sample Flier*, page 12)

GET IT IN WRITING

When you get the decision you want, be sure to get it in writing. Remember: *Free School Lunches Are Your Legal Right!*

KEEP ORGANIZING

- a. If you don't get the decision you want, contact your legal aides. Contact NWRO, 1419 H St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, or call collect at (202) 347-7727 [or you can call Ronald Pollack, 401 West 117th Street, New York, New York, 10027, tele: (212) 280-4110]
- b. Take your case to court if you don't get your legal rights.
- c. Once you win in court, be sure that the court order is carried out in your schools!

What The Law Says About School Lunches

I. All schools which get aid from the federal government (either money *or* food) *must follow* certain rules called the National School Lunch Program Regulations [Federal Regulations, Title 7, Sec. 210.8d]

II. These rules are:

A. Schools must serve free or reduced price lunches at no more than 20 cents to your children if they cannot pay the full cost of lunch. [School Lunch Act, Sec. 9 and Public Law 91-248, Sec. 6.a]

B. *National standards* saying which families are eligible will be set by the Secretary of Agriculture each year. [Public Law 91-248, Sec. 6.b]

C. Your local school districts can set standards higher than national standards to make more school children eligible for free lunches. Note: See Page 10.

D. School officials *must let you know* how they decide who gets free lunches and who gets reduced price lunches. [Public Law 91-248, Sec. 6.b]

E. Your children should start getting free or reduced price lunches as soon as an adult member of the family signs a form which says that your family income is below the standards. No further investigation is necessary. [Public Law 91-248, Sec. 6.b]

F. If your income is above the standards and if you have a special hardship or emergency, your children may still be eligible for free school lunches — depending on your local school officials. [Public Law 91-248, Sec. 6.b]

G. Once your children begin receiving free or reduced price lunches, schools cannot stop serving them these lunches unless someone proves them ineligible.

If School Authorities challenge the eligibility of your children, you have the right to know why they are challenging you and where they got their information. You also have the right to have a lawyer help you. Your children *should continue to receive free lunches* during the time of the challenge.

H. When your children get free or reduced price lunches, they can't be discriminated against in any way. Your school is breaking the law if it makes your children work for their meals, stand in different lines, use different tickets or eat in a different lunchroom. [National School Lunch Act, Sec. 9 and Public Law 91-248, Sec. 6.d]

I. Your children must get a good nutritious lunch. Each lunch must have at least the foods listed on Page 5. [Federal Regulations, Title 7, Sec. 210.9]

J. By January 1, 1971 your state school officials have to make a plan saying how they will give free school lunches to *every poor child* in the state and how they will make sure *every school* in the state has a school lunch program. [Public Law 91-248, Sec. 11.h.1] *Your WRO should make sure that your state carries out this plan.*





What To Investigate In Your School

The law says that all poor children should receive free or reduced price lunches. Before you meet with the School Superintendent your committee should visit schools in your area to see if they are following the law. Tell the School Superintendent and School Board the facts. It would be good to ask some Friends of WRO or other middle class mothers from P.T.A.s and church groups to go with you so they can see for themselves how poor people are left out of good programs. Then they will be ready to fight with you.

Here are some suggestions of things to investigate at each school:

1. Is there a School Lunch Program? If not, has the School Board ever applied for one? If not, why not?
2. How many of the children in the school are poor?
3. How many children in the school get free or reduced price lunches?
4. Is there any discrimination against children who receive free or reduced price lunches?

Are they made to use different-colored tickets?

Are they made to eat in a different lunchroom? Or at a different time?

Are they made to work for their meals?

Is there any other way that the other children can tell that they don't pay for their lunches?

5. Do the lunches meet the nutrition standards of the National School Lunch Act? See Page 5.

How To Form Your Free School Lunch Plan

Here is a sample of a plan you can use to demand the rights that the law gives you. After each demand is the section of the law that gives you this right.

Your Free School Lunch Plan might be different because of a different situation in your school. For example, one WRO group did not demand hot lunches since all the schools in the district were already getting hot lunches. Instead, they demanded that the hot lunches be free for their children.

Your basic demands should probably include *free hot lunches* for *all* poor children. Remember that national standards will be set for which families are eligible. The law also allows for children from families with higher incomes to get free lunches in "emergency" and "hardship" cases. (You can use the standards in your Free School Lunch Plan OR you can push for NWRO standards which are listed in the box below.)

You should also demand that the program is run in such a way so that your children aren't embarrassed or made to work for their lunches. Finally, demand that free lunches be given *immediately* to those who turn in their filled out request forms.

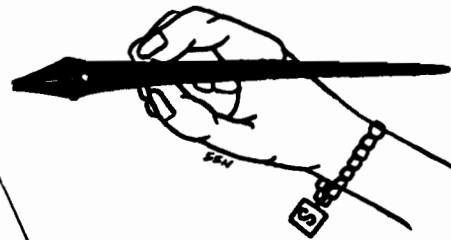
Before your school district decides on the income level that makes families eligible for free school lunches, your group should deal with the local school officials to make them know that they should set income standards higher than the national standards. Here are the income standards which NWRO supports:

NWRO Standards

Family Size	Income Per Year
One Person	\$2,000
Two People	\$3,500
Three People	\$4,500
Four People	\$5,500
Five People	\$6,500

These numbers are based on government surveys of what it costs a family to live, eat, and be healthy.

NWRO is campaigning for a guaranteed adequate income of \$5500 for a family of 4. Because the government won't guarantee an income we must fight for other programs such as Free School Lunches.



FREE SCHOOL LUNCH PLAN:

Submitted by: (name of local group) WRO
To: (name of Superintendent and the School Board)
In accordance with: Public Law 91-248

We demand:

1. That every school in (name of district) have a HOT School Lunch Program. (Section 2.a)
2. That all poor children be given free hot lunches. (Section 11.a)
3. That children who get free lunches are not made to work for their lunches. (Section 6.d)
4. That children receiving free lunches are not discriminated against in any way, such as separate lines or different tickets. (Section 6.d)
5. That those who turn in Request Forms at this meeting be given free school lunches immediately.
6. That other applications for free lunches be accepted any time in the school year.

REQUEST FOR FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES

According to Public Law 91-248 and the National School Lunch Program established under federal statute (Title 42, Section 1758 of the U.S. Code) and federal regulations (Title 7, Section 210.8 of the Code of Federal Regulations and Volume 33, pages 207 of the Federal Register) all school children of low income families are entitled to free or reduced price lunches upon presenting a non-legal affidavit signed by an adult member of the family.

The Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford G. Hardin, has set minimum national guidelines which are listed below (to be filled in when the standards are announced). In accordance with these guidelines, I hereby request free school lunches for my children. I understand that no further questions will be asked of me and that my children will receive free or reduced price lunches immediately.

TOTAL YEARLY INCOME:

SOURCES OF INCOME:

TOTAL MEDICAL EXPENSES FOR YEAR:

NET INCOME (YEARLY INCOME LESS MEDICAL EXPENSES):

Number of people in family: School
Names of all children
in school:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

Signature
Name: (print)
Address: (print)

Grade.

Here is a sample of a flier given out by one WRO group at their meeting with their School Board.

Your flier should tell the facts about your group's Free School Lunch Campaign and the conditions you found in your schools.



HAVERHILL WELFARE RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

Why We Are Here Tonight

1/21/70

- + We are here because people eligible for Medicaid should be eligible for free hot lunches for their children. This includes welfare recipients and anyone else receiving Medicaid. People get free Medicaid because they cannot afford to pay for their medical care. These same people should get free hot lunch for their children for the same reason: **THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY.**
- + We are here because Haverhill is **BREAKING STATE CONTRACTS** regarding free lunches.
- + We are here because only 68 children **IN THE ENTIRE CITY** get free hot lunch each day.
- + We are here because these children **WORK** for those "free" lunches. **THIS BREAKS FEDERAL LAW!**
- + We are here because "free lunch" children eat at a different time so that they can work in the cafeteria. **THIS BREAKS FEDERAL LAW!**
- + We are here because **WE KNOW** how much reimbursement Haverhill is entitled to for free *and* paid-for lunches and **THIS MONEY IS NOT BEING SOUGHT.**
- + We are here to make sure that Haverhill begins to obey the state and federal laws which they are bound to obey if they are to get any assistance.
- + **WE ARE HERE BECAUSE THERE IS HUNGER IN HAVERHILL AND THE TIME HAS COME TO END IT. A FREE HOT LUNCH MAY BE THE BEST MEAL A CHILD HAS HAD ALL DAY.**



Haverhill Welfare Rights Organization
409 Washington St.
374-8662

ADEQUATE INCOME, DIGNITY, JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY—NWRO

Extra Tips

A. SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO GET PUBLICITY

1. Write up a press release and send it to local newspapers, radio and TV stations, as well as national wire services — like Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI). Be sure to include:

What is happening

When it is happening

Where it is happening

Why your WRO is taking action

How your WRO action is connected to similar NWRO actions across the nation.

2. Be sure to put the name of your group, telephone number, and the name of the group member who will be your spokesman at the top of your press release. This will help the reporters get in touch with you.

3. Call in to local talk shows and tell it like it is about your WRO action.

4. The day of the action, make sure someone is assigned to telephone the papers, radio, and TV stations and to make sure reporters get an accurate story. Be sure to have extra copies of the press release for reporters at the action.

5. Publicize your action and keep it going by distributing fact sheets and talking to welfare recipients on check day at check-cashing places, food stamp points, food distribution depots, etc., asking them to come and fight for their rights.

B. KEEP THE NWRO CHAIN STRONG

1. Fill out and return the Free School Lunch Questionnaire.

2. Send copies of all leaflets, fact sheets, forms, etc., that your WRO uses in the action to NWRO headquarters.

3. Clip out and send copies of all newspaper articles about your group action to NWRO headquarters.

4. Watch for news (TV or newspaper) of other WRO's action across the country. Clip any such newspaper articles and send them in.

5. Use NWRO banners in all your actions. (We can send you all the banners you need.)





Other Programs

There are other programs besides the Free School Lunch Program that your group can get for your community. You should find out if your school has these programs and if they don't have them, start a campaign to get them.

Remember: **GROUP ACTION WINS VICTORIES!**

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Your school can get money from the federal government for a Breakfast Program. This is a *volunteer program*, so your group might have to pressure your local school officials to join it. Let them know that *your children need free breakfasts!*

States are supposed to give the breakfast program first to schools with a large number of poor children and schools where the children have to travel a long way to get to school.

All schools with a breakfast program **MUST SERVE FREE AND REDUCED PRICE BREAKFASTS** to children who can't pay the full price of the meal.

The same rules that protect your children from discrimination in the School Lunch Program apply to the Breakfast Program.

To organize a Free Breakfast Campaign, find out:

1. Does your school have a breakfast program? If not, why not?
2. Does the breakfast your school serves meet the nutritional standards? Each breakfast must include at least:
 - ½ pint whole milk
 - ½ cup serving fruit or juice
 - 1 serving bread, biscuits, or rolls
 - and as often as possible:
 - 1 egg *or* 1 ounce meat *or* 2 tablespoons peanut butter
3. Are all poor children getting free or reduced price breakfasts?



SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM

Schools, kindergartens, camps, day centers, and other child care centers can also get money for milk programs from the government. The total cost of this program is paid by the federal government. Direct application for this program can be made by the child-care center.

For further information write NWRO headquarters in Washington, D.C.





Let NWRO know what you are doing! Fill out this form and send in as soon as you start your campaign. We can send you more information and news of what other groups are doing.

FREE SCHOOL LUNCH CAMPAIGN QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Group
2. Office Address
3. Telephone Number and Area Code
4. Name of Coordinator of WRO's Free School Lunch Campaign
.....
5. Address
6. Telephone Number
7. Name of Coordinator of Friends' Action
8. Address
9. Telephone Number
10. We are making the following plans for a Free School
Lunch Campaign:
.....
11. We are making the following plans for a Free School
Breakfast Campaign:
.....
12. We are making other plans:
.....
13. What other WRO's are involved?
14. We need the following advice or help from NWRO:
.....
.....

Date

Signature of Person
filling out form



National Welfare Rights Organization

1419 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 347-7727



National Welfare Rights Organization
1419 H Street, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 347-7727

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