



Report Highlights Ways States Can Maximize National School Lunch Program

The NGA Center has released a new issue brief designed to help



states maximize the effectiveness of their National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and deliver high-quality nutrition to students. [State Strategies to Help Schools Make the Most of Their National School Lunch Program](#) looks at the challenges states face with respect to the program—such as improving the quality of meal offerings, increasing enrollment rates and making the most of limited funds—and highlights ways states can address them. Strategies include strengthening nutrition standards; providing food preparation and menu planning training to food service personnel; facilitating the use of electronic payment systems; and using "cooperative agreements" for food purchasing. NSLP is the country's second largest food program and serves 31 million school children each day. To learn more about NGA Center Health Division initiatives, visit www.nga.org/center/health.

NGA Center Brief Summarizes 2009 State Foreclosure Laws



A new NGA Center issue brief, [2009 State Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Laws](#), highlights legislation enacted by states in 2009 to prevent and mitigate foreclosures. States have been at the forefront of addressing the nation's foreclosure crisis, and in 2009, 33 states and Puerto Rico enacted at least 99 laws that respond to evolving challenges related to foreclosure. Specifically, many of the 2009 laws focus on strengthening existing programs and borrower protections or setting new requirements for lenders that are designed to mitigate the risks and consequences of foreclosure, stabilize neighborhoods, and prevent bad loans from occurring in the future. More publications and resources on foreclosure are available on the NGA Center's [Foreclosure Web page](#).

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NGA in the News:

- [Bleak Outlook for State Finances](#)
- [State Budget Pictures Bleak as Lawmakers Head Back](#)
- [DHS Extends Deadline for State ID Compliance](#)
- [States Scramble to Close New Budget Gaps](#)

Dear Friend:

As a new year unfolds, NGA is at work building on the momentum of efforts begun in 2009. While the House and Senate work to produce a final health reform bill, work continues on this year's NGA Chair's Initiative, Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas' [Rx for Health Care Reform](#), which is focused on a timely topic: providing governors with the information they need to implement health care reform by transitioning to a new system that provides state-based system improvements and cost containment measures. Look for more news and publications related to the initiative in the coming weeks.

In addition, the NGA Center is continuing its efforts to help states develop innovative policies and recently launched two new efforts in the areas of energy and education. One is a [Policy Academy](#) that will help states develop building retrofit programs to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings and reduce costs and emissions. The other, the [State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All](#) initiative, will help states develop comprehensive dropout prevention and recovery policies. Six states have been selected to participate in each of these programs, and the strategies they devise will help inform the policies and best practices of other states.

As always, you can learn more about the wide array of projects NGA and the Center are working on at www.nga.org. We look forward to a productive 2010.

Sincerely,

Raymond C. Scheppach
 Executive Director

Federal Focus:

[NGA Comments on Proposals to Address USPS Challenges](#)



News Releases:

- [Effective State Strategies Help Schools Make the Most of Their National School Lunch Program](#)
- [Six States to Develop Comprehensive Action Plans to Improve Energy Efficiency of Existing Buildings](#)
- [Six States to Develop Policies to Fight High School Dropout, Achieve Graduation for All](#)

State Innovations:

- [Georgia Launches Health IT Initiative](#)
- [Florida Uses TANF Stimulus to Create 25,000 Jobs](#)
- [Pennsylvania Outlines Approach for Health Information Exchange](#)

Get to Know the Governor:

[Maine Governor John E. Baldacci](#)



JOHN E. BALDACCI was born in Bangor, Maine. While working at the family restaurant in his hometown of Bangor, he earned a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Maine in Orono. Baldacci began his political career at 23 when he was elected to the Bangor City Council. In 1982, he was elected to the Maine State Senate, where he served for twelve years. Baldacci was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1994 and reelected by wide margins in 1996, 1998, and 2000. During his service in the House, he was a member of the Agriculture, Small Business, and Transportation Committees. Baldacci was sworn in as governor of Maine on January 8, 2003. [Read More...](#)

Founded in 1908, the National Governors Association (NGA) is the collective voice of the nation's governors and one of Washington, D.C.'s most respected public policy organizations. Its members are the governors of the 50 states, three territories and two commonwealths. NGA provides governors and their senior staff members with services that range from representing states on Capitol Hill and before the Administration on key federal issues to developing and implementing innovative solutions to public policy challenges through the NGA Center for Best Practices. For more information, visit www.nga.org.

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