

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF ENHANCEMENT DEMONSTRATIONS ON PARTICIPATION IN THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM: FY 2012 (SUMMARY)

**Background**

The 2010 Agricultural, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Act enabled the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to initiate and carry out the Summer Food for Children (SFC) demonstration projects. The demonstrations were aimed at preventing food insecurity and hunger among children during summer months. The projects included the Enhanced Summer Food Service Program (eSFSP) demonstrations, which test the impact of a number of enhancements to the existing Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). There were four separate eSFSP demonstrations, two of which began in summer 2010 and concluded in summer 2011. This report presents findings from the evaluation of the other two demonstrations, which were launched in summer 2011 and continued in summer 2012 and 2013 in six States:

- The Meal Delivery demonstration offered meal delivery to homes or drop-off sites near homes of eligible children in rural areas;
- The Backpack demonstration provided weekend and holiday bags or packs with meals to SFSP children for consumption when SFSP sites were not open.

**Methods**

This report examines administrative data obtained from the six States that operated the 2012 eSFSP demonstrations to assess changes within demonstration sites compared to non-demonstration sites. Outcomes include the total number of meals served and the total number of children served (as measured by average daily attendance or ADA). The influences of the 2012 demonstrations on food consumption and food security, as well as a description of the implementation of the demonstrations, are examined in a separate report.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elinson, L., Bethel, J., Deak, M. A., Li, S., Koenig, T., Caperna, K., Palan, M. (2014). *Evaluation of the Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations: 2012 Demonstration Evaluation Report.*

**Findings**

**Meal Delivery**

The demonstrations were conducted in rural areas in Delaware, Massachusetts, and New York where children live far from traditional SFSP sites. The study examined participation in SFSP sites nearest to the meal delivery drop-off sites. The reach of the demonstrations was small (Figure 1) and did not seem to draw participants away from existing sites, suggesting that new children were reached.

Figure 1: Meal Delivery Sites, 2012

	Delaware	Massachusetts	New York
<b>Sponsors</b>	1	1	2
<b>Sites</b>	21	2	8
<b>Operating Days per Site</b>	72	25	10
<b>Total Meals Served</b>	89,544	23,966	17,896
<b>Total Children Served</b>	620	189	249

**Backpack**

The backpack demonstrations were conducted in parts of Arizona, Kansas, and Ohio. The results with regard to the number of meals served and ADA were inconsistent across the three States (See Figures 3 and 4):

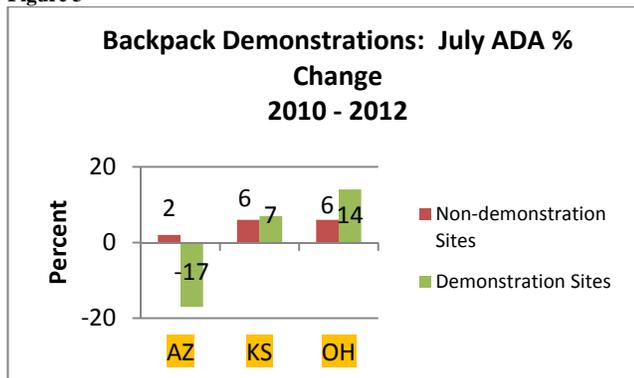
- *Arizona* showed decreases from 2010 to 2012 for demonstration sites in both the total meals served and July ADA (approximately 5 percent and 17 percent, respectively), while showing increases in both of these measures for non-demonstration sites (8 percent and 2 percent, respectively).

Figure 2: Backpack Sites, 2012

	Arizona	Kansas	Ohio
Sponsors	3	7	6
Sites	26	16	55
Days Backpacks Distributed per Site	6	8	7
Total Meals Served via Backpack	42,619	32,111	59,279
Total Children Given Backpacks	1,774	1,239	1,894

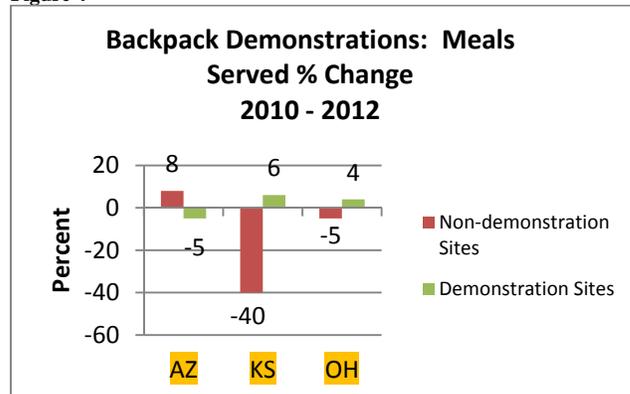
- In *Kansas*, total meals served increased at demonstration sites by 6 percent, but decreased at non-demonstration sites by 40 percent; July ADA increased by similar amounts at demonstration and non-demonstration sites (7 percent and 6 percent, respectively).

Figure 3



- Ohio* demonstration sites showed increases in both measures from 2010 to 2012. Demonstration sites increased 4 percent in total meals served and 14 percent in July ADA, while non-demonstration sites decreased by 5 percent in total meals served and increased by 6 percent in July ADA from 2010 to 2012.

Figure 4



Because site participation varies substantially from year to year, much of the participation change reflects the number of sites opening and closing rather than child participation at particular sites. This instability makes the results difficult to interpret.

### Summary

The 2012 evaluation of the eSFSP demonstrations showed mixed results. The Meal Delivery demonstration seemed to serve children who did not have access to existing sites, but the impact was small. The Backpack demonstrations varied across States, with sites in one State increasing the number of children and meals served, sites in another State increasing the number of meals served but showing no difference in ADA, and sites in the third State showing decreases in both measures. The study was not able to account for local conditions that may have varied and contributed to the differing results in the Backpack States.

### For More Information

Baldi, S., Suchman, A., Thorn, B., Tadler, C. (2014). Evaluation of the Impact of Enhancement Demonstrations on Participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): FY 2012. Prepared by Insight Policy Research. Project Officer: Chan Chanhatsilpa. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

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[www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis](http://www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis).