

Public and Indian Housing

Expanding Summer Meal sites to housing developments is a priority for USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and a proven strategy to increase access among children in hard-to-reach communities. Here are tips on finding local housing sites and best practices that Summer Meal sponsors and partners can use to ensure their housing sites are a success!

Go to [Resources](#).

Find the Right Site!

The FNS Capacity Builder helps you locate USDA Rural Development (RD) and U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) properties in your community. Use the Capacity Builder to see how close existing Summer Meal sites are to public housing. If you see an unserved area near an RD or HUD property, that housing unit would be an ideal location for a Summer Meal site! You can also find information about each property's prior involvement with Summer Meal Programs and use this information to encourage sites to expand participation.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/capacitybuilder>

Once potential sites are identified, sponsors should consider the following questions before contacting property managers:

- Does the development serve families with children, or a different population?
- Is a kitchen available to prepare meals on-site, or will a vendor be needed?
- Does the housing unit have a community room available to host the Program? If not, could Summer Meals be served at a nearby park?
- Are staff members or volunteers available to run the site?
- Does the facility have adequate refrigeration, storage space, and other means to hold meal deliveries and leftovers?



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How HUD Works

HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all, by providing decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. HUD also ensures that safe, decent, and affordable housing is available to Native American families and creates economic opportunities for Tribes and Indian housing residents. HUD provides Federal oversight to over 3,200 public housing authorities, throughout the Nation.

<https://www.hud.gov/>

FNS partners with HUD to promote USDA nutrition assistance programs and share information with HUD's Federal and Regional offices, which then share information about Summer Meals with public housing authorities.

Why is HUD a Great Partner for Summer Meals?

- Many housing developments have community rooms or outdoor space available to host breakfast, lunch, supper, or snacks.
- Housing residents may be interested in volunteering to supervise meal services.
- State and local HUD offices can help get the word out about the problem of childhood hunger and share information about Summer Meal site locations and meal times.

Spotlight on Pennsylvania!

The Chester Housing Authority, a HUD operation, launched its first-ever Summer Meals Program in 2014. The Housing Authority provided breakfast and lunch to all resident children for eight weeks when school was out, serving nearly 5,700 meals! In addition to supporting good nutrition, the site also worked to fight the summer learning gap by providing books, puzzles, and other activities before and after the meals. Adult residents benefitted too. The Summer Meal Program created seven part-time jobs for adults working in community health and Program management.





Best Practices

After securing the right location, sponsors should incorporate the following best practices into their housing site operation. Sponsors can share these tips with property managers and other partners:

- **Don't Overcommit!** Sites should serve only the number of meals and snacks they have the capacity to serve, and meal service hours should be limited to hours that fit the management's schedule.
- **Be Reliable.** Encourage the management to serve meals at the same time every day and to clearly communicate serving times to families. Children will become confused and may not show up on the right day or at the right time if the Program schedule is unpredictable.
- **Invite the Neighbors.** Sponsors should ensure other children in the neighborhood are invited to attend. Outreach activities can include canvassing, posting flyers, and local media promotion.
- **Involve the Residents.** Encourage the management to seek input from residents when organizing the Program and to provide residents with meaningful volunteer opportunities.
- **Make it Fun!** Children are more likely to attend and engage in the Program if there is a designated activity along with the meal. Encourage housing sites to build in time for arts and crafts, a story, or a game.

Resources

USDA

- *Connecting the USDA Summer Food Service Program with Public Housing Authorities*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJJ1l4ByKs4>
- *Engaging Rural and Housing Communities*
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-engaging-rural-and-housing-communities>





- *How Housing Communities Can Feed Summer Meals to Children*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/how-housing-communities-can-feed-summer-meals-children>
- *USDA Rural Development*
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/mission-history>

HUD

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https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing

For Additional Information

Review these ideas and adopt the strategies that seem reasonable to you and achievable for your Program. The Summer Meals Toolkit has even more creative ideas and resources at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>

Do you have more questions? Sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for answers. State agencies should contact their Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/sfsp-contacts>

USDA and its recipient institutions share responsibility for compliance and oversight to ensure good stewardship of Federal funds.

