



Transportation Challenges

Summer Meals are congregate meal service programs. In order for sponsors to receive reimbursement, children must remain at the site while eating their meals. A challenge commonly identified by sponsors is transportation that helps bring children and meals together. Whether it's getting the meals to children or children to the meals, drivers, well-functioning vehicles, and a coordinated system are necessary keys to success.

Go to [Resources](#).

Innovative Models

Many sponsors throughout the country have developed innovative approaches for bringing children to congregate meal sites, or delivering meals to sites. Early planning, collaboration, and creativity have helped these sponsors to address transportation challenges. The models highlighted below were developed through community-based partnerships, proactive planning, volunteer involvement, and utilization of grant funding.

Mobile Meals

This model is used where populations of children are scattered, and a single location to serve meals would not reach all the children in need. A sponsor delivers meals to an area, using a route with stops at approved sites in the community. Each site is approved as an area-eligible open site. The meal service takes place on approved days and the sponsor serves reimbursable meals during approved service times. The meal service is supervised and all meals are consumed at the site, on the bus or near the drop-off location. Learn more about mobile meal delivery in the Summer Meals Toolkit at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>

Buses and Shuttles

In contrast to turning a vehicle into a mobile meals site, sponsors can use vehicles to collectively move children to a site. One way in which schools implement summer transportation is through partnering with local government and non-profit organizations to operate buses used during the school year, but idle during the summer.

Sponsors can also use public transit systems to connect children with summer meal sites. Children can be offered bus tokens or passes at the end of the school year, so that they can ride city buses or private shuttles for free during the summer.



11/01/20

Other Collaboration Models

Private businesses can provide resources and cost-efficient methods for meal delivery. Many private businesses look for philanthropic opportunities to give back to their communities.

For example, in Humboldt County, California, the Food for People Food Bank partners with the United Parcel Service (UPS) to serve summer meals in rural areas of the county. In collaboration with the Humboldt County Transit Authority, Food for People contacted the local UPS, explained the transportation challenges the food bank faced, and UPS offered to transport the meals for free. After Food for People loads meals, packed in coolers, onto UPS delivery trucks, UPS delivers the meals to rural locations over an hour outside the city. The coolers are then returned to the food bank. UPS donates 225 miles a day to the food bank, for a total of 12,000 miles during the summer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwp0udYzPzQ>

Community Volunteerism

It is important to consider the roles parents, young adults, and youth can play in transporting summer meals. Although finding a committed group of people to be drivers, carpoolers, and collectors of food can be a challenge, early planning can make a big difference in the success of volunteer recruitment. Examples of successful volunteer involvement include:

- *Little River Baptist Church*
In Ware Shores, South Carolina, the Little River Baptist Church recruited parents and volunteers for their summer meal program. The sponsor initiated the *Partnership, Outreach, and Parent Involvement Initiative*, and began sending bi-weekly newsletters home with the children, inviting parents to drop in at the sites, volunteer to serve as drivers, and forming a parent advisory board.
- *N.E.W. Calvary Chapel*
In Colville, Washington, the N.E.W. Calvary Chapel was able to secure rental for a kitchen to prepare Summer Meals at a very low cost. The sponsor received support from volunteers to monitor the Program, supervise, prepare the meals, and transport the supplies needed to the feeding sites.



Grants

Additional funding opportunities are available to support Summer Meals that may be able to help with transportation and other administrative expenses.

- **USDA Rural Development (RD)**

- *Community Facilities Grants*

- RD grants are available for applicants who are assisting in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. These funds may be used to assist in the development of essential community facilities, including capital expenditures for vehicles, and are available on a rolling basis. Check the website for specific deadlines and grant periods as they are subject to change annually.

- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

- **Share Our Strength**

- *Community Investment Grants*

- Share Our Strength provides grants for nonprofit organizations, schools, and other eligible organizations who are involved in advocating for and increasing access to Summer Meals, as well as other Child Nutrition Programs funded by USDA.

- <https://www.nokidhungry.org/what-we-do/summer-meals>

- **Costco Wholesale**

- *Charitable Giving Grants*

- These grants support programs focused on children, education and health and human services. Costco Wholesale is committed to supporting charitable and community activities in the areas where they conduct business, accepting and reviewing requests throughout the year.

- <http://www.costco.com/charitable-giving.html?ddkey=http:CatalogSearch>

- **The Kroger Company Foundation**

- The Kroger Company Foundation makes grants to non-profit organizations that address a clearly identified need in the community; organizations should reflect a strong base of community support and be located in a State with a Kroger location. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

- <https://www.thekrogerco.com/community/>



- **Bank of America Charitable Foundation**

Economic Mobility Request for Proposals

Bank of America's Charitable Foundation provides grants to organizations seeking to improve access to critical food supplies and services that feed individuals, children and families, with a particular focus on helping create opportunity for people and communities of color. Check the website for specific deadlines and grant periods as they are subject to change annually.

<http://about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/global-impact/charitable-foundation-funding.html>

- **ConAgra Foods**

Community Impact Grants

ConAgra Foods provides grants to nonprofit organizations seeking to enhance their organizational capacity to serve people in an efficient way. Guidelines are generally available by mid-December, with the program launching in January, but check the website for specific deadlines and grant periods as they are subject to change annually.

<http://www.conagrafoods.com/our-company/our-commitment/foundation>

- **Albertsons' Companies Foundation**

On a national basis, this foundation funds organizations working in the area of childhood hunger through the *Hunger Is* campaign. Visit the website and select your neighborhood to learn about priorities in your area, amounts of funding available, and timing and review of applications.

<http://national.albertsonscorporation.com/get-funded/>

- **H-E-B Grocery Independent Retailer**

Community Investment Program

These grants are for non-profit organizations that focus on hunger relief, health initiatives, and education and literacy. H-E-B may contribute cash, gift cards, product (in-kind donations) or volunteers depending on the needs of the organizations approved for funding in the H-E-B area. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but must be submitted at least eight weeks in advance of the organization's program or event.

<http://www.heb.com/static-page/Apply-for-Community-Investment>





Resources

USDA

- *How Can You Solve Your Transportation Challenges?*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/can-you-solve-your-summer-food-transportation-challenges>
- *Summer Meals: Best Practices for Tackling the Transportation Challenge*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOQQJKGGHrw&list=PLBccton6gOdqPwQvPfO_wwPEPNa7EeQ-m&index=1

Share Our Strength

- *Child Nutrition Program Grant Opportunities*
<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/child-nutrition-program-grant-opportunities>
- *Launch a Mobile Meals Program*
<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/summer-meals/launch-a-mobile-meals-program>
- *No Kid Hungry Summer Collaborative Planning Toolkit*
<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/no-kid-hungry-summer-collaborative-planning-toolkit>

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.

