



Working with Schools

Local education agencies that operate school lunch and breakfast programs are well positioned to provide Summer Meals, with learning and recreation opportunities for children. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), and traditional school lunch and breakfast programs give schools a variety of choices to meet the nutrition needs of children, all year long.

Go to [Resources](#).

Did You Know?

Too many children who rely on school meals do not have access to meals in the summer. In 2015, 22.1 million children received free or reduced-price meals during the school year, but only 3.8 million children received Summer Meals after the school year ended.

Options for Schools

Schools have three options for serving meals to children during the summer:

- **Summer Food Service Program**
SFSP is ideal for schools that offer enrichment, recreational, or activity programs over the summer. School sponsors receive SFSP reimbursement for serving free meals to children, including teenagers through age 18, at approved meal sites, including neighborhood schools, recreation centers, playgrounds, parks, and camps, in low-income areas.
- **Seamless Summer Option**
SSO has less paperwork, making it easier for schools to feed children. Participating schools continue to provide meals through the National School Lunch Program during the summer and, for year-round schools, other long vacation periods. Meals are reimbursed at the free rates for school lunches, school breakfasts, and afterschool snacks, which are slightly lower than the SFSP rates.



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Summer Meals Toolkit

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- **Traditional School Lunch and Breakfast**

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are available for any school that is hosting an academic summer school. Academic summer schools that intend to serve meals only to enrolled students follow the same rules and claiming procedures for free, reduced-price, and paid meals as during the school year.

State Responsibilities

State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program are required to ensure that local school food authorities cooperate with SFSP sponsors, to the maximum extent possible, and inform families of the availability and location of free Summer Meals when school is not in session. If a different State agency administers SFSP, the two State agencies must work together to ensure that outreach activities are conducted.

State agencies are encouraged to facilitate partnerships among schools, sponsors, and local governments to ensure that school administrators help promote Summer Meal Programs for children.

Requirements for Schools

SFSP Applications

Schools in good standing in the National School Lunch Program do not have to submit further evidence to demonstrate financial or administrative capability when applying to participate in SFSP.

School food authorities applying to operate SFSP at the same sites where they provide school meals may follow application requirements for experienced sponsors and sites instead of the application for new sponsors and sites.





Academic Summer School Programs

Schools that serve meals only to children enrolled in summer school programs receive reimbursement through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

If children in the community at large are served along with children enrolled in summer school and children in the community at large are served, a school in an area eligible location may operate as an open site, through either SFSP or SSO. The school food authority must ensure that these sites are open not only to children enrolled in summer school, but to any child residing in the area served by the site.

Priority Selection

The State agency usually approves only one sponsor to serve an area. When determining which sponsors will serve an area, the State agency must give priority to school food authorities.

Reimbursable Meals

SSO sites follow the meal pattern requirements for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. All meals are reimbursed at the free rates for school lunches and school breakfasts.

Schools participating in SFSP may use either SFSP or school lunch and school breakfast meal patterns, with State agency approval. They receive reimbursement for meals served through SFSP.

All sites may use “offer versus serve,” regardless of the lunch or breakfast meal pattern they choose.

Financial Management

Schools only need to maintain one non-profit food service account for all Child Nutrition Programs. Excess SFSP funds in the non-profit food service account may be used in other Child Nutrition Programs.

USDA Foods

School food authority sponsors that extend existing vendor contracts for Summer Meals are eligible to receive USDA Foods. USDA purchases more than \$2 billion worth of food each year to distribute through the States to schools, food banks, soups kitchens, and other institutions.





Resources

USDA

- *An Opportunity for Schools*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/opportunity-schools>
- *Comparison of Programs SFSP/NSLP/Seamless Option*
http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SFSP_SeamlessComparisonChart.pdf
- *SFSP 07-2014: Expanding Awareness and Access to Summer Meals*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP07%20SFSP07-2014os.pdf>
- *SFSP 04-2013: Summer Feeding Options for School Food Authorities*
http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP07_SFSP04-2013.pdf
- *Take a Healthy Summer Break*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/take-healthy-summer-break-infographic>
- *This Summer, Eat Smart to Play Hard*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/summer-eat-smart-play-hard-parents-guide>
- *Summer Food, Summer Moves*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/summer-food-summer-moves>.

Share Our Strength

- *No Kid Hungry School Calculator*
<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/business-model-tool-0>
- *Summer Meals Toolkit and Guides for Collaborative Meetings*
<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. For additional questions, sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for help. 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/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

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

