



Department of Defense

Promoting childhood nutrition is a priority shared by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the Department of Defense (DoD), presenting an exciting opportunity for Summer Meal collaboration. This toolkit page highlights how State agencies, sponsors, and other organizations can partner with DoD, with useful tips and resources for providing Summer Meals to children in military families.

Go to [Resources](#).

Getting Started

The State Joint Services Support Family Program, which provides family-oriented services to military communities, is a good starting point for Summer Meal partners interested in working with DoD. The National Guard Family Program provides a search tool Summer Meal partners can use to find the State Director, Child and Youth Program Coordinator, and other key Family Program contacts.

<https://www.jointservicesupport.org/ResourceFinder/SearchResource.aspx?resource=contact&topic=de7af4bc-fe84-492d-b1c7-ba9eddd5b7f6&state=92a3e852-48ad-4c64-b398-9bec19d6eb98>.

FNS Capacity Builder is always a useful tool to help locate bases and identify other community partners to assist with expansion efforts.

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

Connect with DoD

Military Outreach Initiative

In partnership with the Armed Services YMCA, this program gives service members and military families extra support and access to vital resources that promote youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

<http://www.asymca.org/>



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Military One-Source

- *Children, Youth & Teens* connects families with information and provides support to children and youth, whether they live on or near a military installation.
<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/cyt>
- *Blog Brigade* allows military spouses and families to offer a “boots on the ground” perspective to military life, share their day-to-day experiences, and provide useful information to other military community members.
<https://blog-brigade.militaryonesource.mil/>

Outreach Opportunities

Military bases are great partners to engage in outreach and site promotion activities. Here are examples of how bases can help to inform families about Summer Meal Programs.

- Raise awareness about Summer Meals at neighborhood meetings;
- Publicize Summer Meal sites in base newsletters;
- Encourage military families to share Summer Meal stories through the Military One-Source “Blog Brigade;”
- Post meal service hours on community calendars;
- Canvass the neighborhood to share information; and
- Post Summer Meal flyers throughout the base.

Hosting Meal Service Sites

Military bases are home to a number of food service facilities that may be available to prepare and serve Summer Meals, including food courts; dining and catering services, and community center kitchens.

Many potential sites on bases run summer sport programs, camps, and other activities which complement Summer Meals. Choosing a site already hosting a kid-friendly summer activity is a good way to boost turnout.





Armory and National Guard center kitchens, which are primarily used for weekend drills, may be ideal locations for preparing and serving Summer Meals. These facilities have kitchen staff capable of cooking for large groups, and ample seating available for children.

Transportation is a common barrier for Summer Meal participation, even on military bases. If transportation becomes a challenge, consider how you can utilize volunteers or military vehicles to drive children to and from sites, or deliver meals to sites.

Resources

USDA

- *Mapping Tools for Summer Meal Programs*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/mapping-tools-summer-meal-programs>
- *Raise Awareness*
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/raise-awareness>
- Summer Meals Toolkit
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>

Food Research and Action Center

Summer Meals Matter

<http://frac.org/webinar-and-conference-call-recordings/>

Share Our Strength

Sponsor Center Outreach Materials Templates

<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/summer-meals/outreach-materials>

For Additional Information

Review these ideas and adopt the strategies that seem reasonable to you and achievable for your Program. Do you have more questions? Sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for answers. State agencies should contact their 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>

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