



Faith-Based Organizations

As part of their mission, many faith-based organizations already have networks and programming that provide meals in local communities. Partnering with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in this effort can result in additional resources leading to a greater impact on child hunger. Organizations that do not have experience operating a food program can work with existing Summer Meal Program sponsors that can provide the guidance needed to operate a successful Summer Meal site.

Go to [Resources](#).

What are some ways to get involved?

- Operate a summer meal site open to the community.
- Provide programming at an existing Summer Meal site.
- Recruit volunteers from your congregations can help out a summer sites.
- Provide information about Summer Meal sites to your congregations.
- Allow nearby Summer Meal Programs to use your kitchens to prepare meals.

Spotlight on Texas

The Texas Hunger Initiative (THI) of Baylor University partnered with local churches and community volunteers in San Angelo, to address the problem of summer hunger. The area school was only able to serve Summer Meals during summer school, in the month of June. That's when a group of local churches and community members came up with a solution. They now operate Summer Meal sites at area churches and an apartment complex during July and August. They use their own resources to help sustain the Program in their community – providing food and supplies, coordinating and leading activities at sites, distributing flyers about meal sites, and having Sunday school classes and youth groups serve meals.



10/31/16

Summer Meals Toolkit

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In Waco, the Korean United Methodist Church, a longtime Summer Meal site, partnered with McLennan County Hunger Coalition to cover the cost for adults to eat meals with their children. In Dallas, the Watermark Community Church partners with THI to distribute flyers, serve meals, create programming, run activities, and much more at meal sites at apartment complexes. To learn more about THI and its efforts to expand access to Summer Meals, visit:

<http://www.baylor.edu/texashunger/index.php?id=85316>

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I find out what is already happening in my community around summer meals?

Contact your State agency to find out who the current sponsors are in your community, where sites were located last year, and where expansion efforts are taking place this year. You can find your State agency’s contact information at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

2. Are churches required to have Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt status in order to be eligible to participate as a sponsor?

No, churches are exempt from this requirement. All other types of private nonprofit sponsors must have tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 in order to be eligible to participate in Summer Meals.

3. What does it mean to supervise a site, instead of participating as a sponsor?

As a site supervisor, your dedication to your job will have a major impact on the success or failure of your sponsor's Program. For example, since your sponsor's reimbursement is based on the daily records you keep of the meals prepared or delivered and served, how well you keep those records will directly affect your sponsor's Program. You are the one who must alert your sponsor when something is wrong with the meals – when the food is spoiled or when there is too much or not enough food. By working cooperatively with your sponsor and following Program guidelines, you can ensure that your site is successful.



4. What subjects should be included in the site supervisor training provided by the sponsor?

Sponsors are required to arrange a pre-operational training session for site supervisor. The training will cover:

- Kinds of meal service (self-preparation or delivery) the site will have,
- Types of meals the site will serve (i.e., breakfast, lunch, snack, or supper),
- Times meals will be delivered and served,
- Recognizing and serving a complete meal,
- Proper method for counting meals,
- Trash removal service,
- Recordkeeping requirements,
- People to call about problems and when and where to call them,
- Local health and sanitation standards,
- Local security and safety considerations, and
- Nondiscrimination policy.

5. To participate as a sponsor, how much access will the State government have to my organization’s records?

The State government will request records only related to Summer Meal Program operations. Sponsors are not required to maintain Program funds in a separate account. But sponsors must be able to account for the receipt, obligation, and expenditure of all the funds provided by the State. State agencies fully train sponsors on recordkeeping requirements prior to approval of sponsor participation.

6. To participate as a site, how often will the State government staff visit?

Sponsors are required to make periodic, unannounced visits to each sponsored site. The State agency also visits sites, most likely prior to the beginning of Summer Meal Program operations, once during the first week, and again later in the summer for Programs that operate for a longer period of time. These visits are a great opportunity for the sponsor and State agency staff to provide sites with technical assistance and help ensure the site is running as smoothly as possible.



7. Can afterschool programs participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during the school year operate a Summer Meal site during the summer?

Yes, organizations that serve meals or snacks to children in afterschool centers in CACFP during the school year are generally eligible to participate in Summer Meal Programs to serve meals to all children through age 18 during the summer months.

Resources

Summer Food Service Program Overview

Watch this video to learn about Summer Meal Programs and how they help ensure that children receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals, that meet Federal nutrition guidelines, are provided to all children 18 years old and under at approved Summer Meal sites in areas with a significant concentration of low-income children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkLGT0fRr8w>

HealingWaters Family Center Success Story with Summer Food Service Program

Pastor Joseito Velasquez from the Healing Waters Family Center shares his successes Operating a Summer Meal Program. Pastor Velasquez began this Program from scratch. His church is located in an area where 90 percent of the population is below the Federal poverty level. He describes events they have hosted and ways they used social media to spread the word about their summer meal program.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_0nRuPtG28

Faith-Based Outreach Resources

Share Our Strength has tips and template resources, such as bulletins, flyers, and letters, for faith-based organizations.

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





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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