



Tips for Sponsor Success

Summer Meal sponsors are the key to ensuring that the Nation's children and families do not face a summer of hunger. As sponsors of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO), you serve at the frontline in our battle to fight childhood hunger during the summer. Your Summer Meal Program benefits not only your organization, but your community as well. To aid in your efforts this summer, here are easy steps to help you expand participation in your Program.

Go to [Resources](#).

Program Basics

When starting a Summer Meal Program, the first step is to understand the SFSP or SSO requirements that you must meet. Here are tips and resources to help you comply with the Federal requirements so you can be sure to receive the full reimbursement for the meals you serve. Your State agency can also provide training and technical assistance to ensure your success!

- Provide appropriate training to supervisory staff and volunteers to ensure program requirements are understood. Be sure everyone understands that all children who come to your open sites have equal access to services and facilities.
- Monitor all your sites throughout the summer.
- Regularly confirm that all site staff understands the proper way to count and record meals everywhere they are provided.
- Provide copies of the *Site Supervisor's Guide*, in English and Spanish, to ensure all Program requirements are met and your sites are reimbursed for every meal you serve.



10/31/16

Summer Meals Toolkit

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider,
Employer and Lender



Highlight Your Program

- Contact schools and afterschool programs in your community and ask them to work with you to inform families about the locations of your sites or to serve as a site. Provide them materials on sites serving children in their area and request they distribute these to families and children before the school year ends.
- Share USDA's free public service announcements (PSAs) with your local radio stations. PSAs provide free advertising for your sites.
- Distribute banners to all your sites and ask them to display them in strategic locations to publicize to the community that meal service sites are open. Check with your State agency and local anti-hunger advocacy groups for free banners.
- Ask elected leaders in your community and State to highlight your Program in the media or State newsletters. This will give you free press and ensure that more families know Summer Meals are available for their children.
- Coordinate with other local agencies and organizations interested in the health and safety of low-income children. Creative partnerships can result in new advertising resources and funding sources.
- Overcome transportation challenges in rural communities with creative and innovative partnerships. Mobile feeding models can be strategic in the location of sites to maximize participation.
- Explain your program to tenants, security staff, and other clients of the facilities where your sites are located, so they can direct children to the areas where meals are served.
- Team up with call centers, like 2-1-1, in your State. 2-1-1 provides free and confidential information and referrals related to public services with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling and more. Ask them to include your site as a resource for families in your area.



Keep Children Coming Back!

- Announce to children, at each meal service, the time and location of the next available meal service. Have a 'bring-a-buddy' program at your sites. Tell children in attendance that they will be recognized if they bring a friend with them the next day.
- Ask the children at your sites how they like their meal. Adjust menus to serve more popular meals, to keep the kids coming back.
- Offer activities at the meal sites to keep children engaged and excited to come back. Get creative; the activities do not have to cost you anything! If your site serves multiple age groups, ask the older teens to teach the younger children a sport. Ask the local fire or police department to provide a safety demonstration or set up a cooking lesson with a community college or local chef.
- Engage parents and grandparents. Inform them about the meals and the enrichment that children receive at your sites. Invite them to volunteer or to help promote Summer Meals to their neighbors. Recruit more volunteers through United We Serve or AmeriCorps Vista.

Resources

USDA

- Program Guidance
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/handbooks>
- 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 Food, Summer Moves
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/summer-food-summer-moves>
- Summer Meal Site Finder
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks>





- Summer Meals Toolkit
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>
- Summer Meals Webinars
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/2015-summer-meals-webinars>

Montana Food Bank Network

Summer Food Service Program Best Practice Guide

<http://mfbn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Summer-Food-Best-Practice-Guide.pdf>

Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices

Nutrition Program Sponsor Center

<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/nutrition-program-sponsor-center>

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 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.

