

Feeding Hungry Children when School Is Out

tools and tips for expanding usda's summer food service program



from usda's food and
nutrition service
midwest region - winter 2010

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Summer Food Fact Sheet

Ending Childhood Hunger through the Summer Food Service Program

Shortly after taking office, President Obama announced a bold goal—to end child hunger by 2015. Given the recent growth in hunger and food insecurity in our country as reported by USDA and anti-hunger organizations, reaching this goal will require the resolve and effort of each one of us. Particularly during this period of economic challenge, every person and organization has a vital role to play.

While achieving this goal will take many actions and participants, great opportunities exist. One of the opportunities with great potential is the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SFSP serves as a stopgap for rising hunger during the summer months and constitutes an excellent tool in our arsenal of available feeding programs. The SFSP represents both a resource and a structure for continuing and sometimes expanding a form of school lunch in the summer, and it provides a way to bring additional federal funds into your state and community.



*Ollice Holden, Midwest
Regional Administrator*

However, without sponsors and partners for feeding programs and sites, these available federal funds, meals and progress toward eliminating childhood hunger evaporate. And particularly now, with hunger on the rise and resources scarce, greater utilization of the program is urgently needed. Currently less than 20% of the meals served during the school year are eaten during the summer, a stark statistic that underlines the urgent need for more SFSP partners.

Because we know that child hunger has tremendous costs to our budgets and society, not to mention children themselves, it's critical that we combine efforts to end it. Please join us in ending child hunger in the long-term and expanding the critical SFSP in the short term. By becoming a partner or helping to find partners and sites, you can help us reach the President's goal. Thank you for your support.

For more information about the Ending Childhood Hunger initiative at FNS, go to: www.fns.usda.gov/fns/ech/default.htm

Visit the USDA Summer Food Service Program website at: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/

Food That's In When School Is Out

2010 Summer Food Service Program Talking Points

Many low-income children face a seasonal nutrition gap.

Low-income children across the Nation depend on free or reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches throughout the school year. But during summer months and long vacation periods for schools on year-round schedules, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program makes a difference in these children's lives by providing access to nutritious lunches when school is out. USDA would like your help in reaching more eligible children in underserved communities.

**USDA Summer
Food Service
Program website:**

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/>

A look at the numbers.

During the school year, the National School Lunch Program serves more than 30.9 million students in schools and residential childcare institutions. In the summer, about 1.4 million of these children eat a school meal in summer school, while over 2 million

more enjoy breakfasts, lunches or snacks through the Summer Food Service Program. Available at more than 32,700 meal sites in parks, schools, camps, churches and other locations nationwide, this Program provides resources to foster healthier lifestyles. Since 59.6 percent of those students participating in the National School Lunch Program receive free or reduced-price meals, the numbers show that a significant portion of low-income children are not accessing these resources.

The Summer Food Service Program is targeted to low-income areas where 50 percent or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Provided to children, including teenagers through age 18, the Program serves up to two meals or one meal and one snack per day per child. Some sponsors may serve up to three meals a day.

Despite aggressive outreach efforts at the Federal and State levels, the Summer Food Service Program is vastly underutilized. Investing in and implementing proven strategies to engage more participants is critical to the program's success.

Reaching more children, reducing barriers.

Simply put, there aren't enough sponsors and feeding sites in many of the communities with the highest need. Even though more than 20,000 school districts operate the National School Lunch Program in

*Eating a free summer lunch in Milwaukee.
Photo credit: Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee*



continued on next page

Food That's In When School Is Out

2010 Summer Food Service Program Talking Points

Talking Points, continued

over 101,000 schools and residential child care institutions, only about 8 percent of these school districts sponsor the Summer Food Service Program. Though FNS has worked to reach new sponsors through partnerships with national, state and local organizations, more sponsors are needed to bring the program to under-served areas.

Recent legislative changes have simplified program operations as well. Since January 1, 2008, "Simplified" Summer Food Service Program requirements were expanded to all sponsors nationwide. In addition to reducing paperwork, the streamlined procedures allow sponsors to receive maximum reimbursement rates for the meals they serve and provide maximum flexibility for using the reimbursement for all allowable costs.

The role of community in expanding access to summer meals.

It's proven that children who miss school meals are more likely to be sick, absent or tardy, disruptive in class, inattentive, and more likely to score lower on achievement tests. To ensure the nutritional needs of low-income children are met while school is out, a commitment from individuals and communities is imperative.

Local governments, camps, schools and private nonprofit organizations may be eligible to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program. Parents are encouraged to contact organizations within their community that offer activity programs, such as local schools, community centers, recreations centers, and faith-based organizations. By improving opportunities and leveraging partnerships, our Nation's children gain not only better nutrition but better health.

To find out how you can help improve access to summer meals by being a sponsor or by partnering with an existing sponsor, contact your State agency.

To find out where your child can participate, call your State agency or the National Hunger Hotline at 1-(866) 348-6479.

Children need good nutrition, all year long. To make this a reality, join USDA's Summer Food Service Program today.



Free summer lunch and fun at a "Maranda Summer Park Party" in Grand Rapids, MI

Midwest Region State Agencies

Summer Food Service Program Contacts

Illinois State Board of Education

website: <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm>
contact: Amy Bianco, Division of Nutrition Programs
phone: 1-800-545-7892
e-mail: abianco@isbe.net

Indiana Department of Education

website: <http://www.doe.in.gov/food/summer/welcome.html>
contact: Tina Skinner, School and Community Nutrition
phone: (317) 232-0858
e-mail: tskinner@doe.in.gov

Michigan Department of Education

website: Go to www.michigan.gov/mde/
Click on “Programs,” then “Summer Food Service Program”
contact: Gloria Zunker, Grants Coordination and School Support
phone: (517) 335-4608
e-mail: MDE-CNAP-SFSP@michigan.gov

Minnesota Department of Education

website: http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/FNS/index.html
Click on “Summer Food Service Program” in right margin.
contact: Jenny Butcher, SFSP Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Service
phone: (651) 582-8526
e-mail: jenny.butcher@state.mn.us

Ohio Department of Education

website: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>
Click on “Learning Supports,” then “Food & Nutrition” and “Summer Food Service Program”
contact: Mary Forster, SFSP Coordinator, Office for Safety, Health and Nutrition
phone: 1-800-808-6325
e-mail: Mary.Forster@ode.state.oh.us

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

website: <http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/sfsp1.html>
contact: Amy Kolano, Division for Finance and Management
phone: (608) 266-7124
e-mail: amy.kolano@dpi.wi.gov

Summer Food Success Stories

Feeding Kids, Helping Families

Launching Summer Meals in Delaware, Indiana

As the school year was winding down and the children got ready for a much-awaited summer break, the food service staff at two Delaware elementary schools was not thinking about slowing down. The exact opposite was taking place; they were busy preparing for the launch of a new feeding program in June, 2009!

The decision to join the SFSP was made at the last minute, but the staff at Eaton and Albany Elementary Schools was energized to do their part. Dee Orick, Food Service Director of the Delaware Community Schools, and the staff at the two elementary schools with the highest percentage of free and reduced price students had decided to venture into uncharted territory. The school had sent out flyers to parents and advertised the program on the radio, and the local paper published an article about the program benefits. Now only time would tell what kind of response they would receive in the two small rural schools accustomed to closing their doors for the entire summer.

There was an immediate response to their efforts. The program participation grew as the days passed, and the community became used to the idea of free food in the neighborhood. By July you could observe the excitement when driving by the school before the lunch time. About 15-20 minutes before the meal service, the sidewalks around the school started filling up with children making their way toward the school and buzzing at the doors, waiting to receive a free nutritious meal. And the children knew exactly what was in store for them – a tasty main course like *Chicken and Noodles* or *Turkey Tetrazzini*. The staff at Delaware takes pride at cooking most of their meals from scratch and the children love it!



When asked how they manage to keep up the meal quality, Mrs. Orick credits a good vendor and efficient use of government commodities. She has some adjustments in store for 2010, planning to modify the breakfast meal times to accommodate more children. “We believe a later breakfast time will attract more participation.” Last fall they also enrolled in the USDA After School Snack Program, to better meet students’ nutritional needs. Mrs. Orick views these steps as a service to the community. She recalls the picture a little girl handed to her staff member last summer. The neatly colored drawing had a small personal note: “Thanks for your smiles and thanks for the meals!” This note summarizes the joy and fulfillment the staff at these two schools feel for a job well done in their first year of the SFSP.

by Tina Skinner, Indiana Dept. of Education; tskinner@doe.in.gov

Summer Program Gets Warm Welcome in Walkerton, Indiana



Have you heard of the small town of Walkerton, Indiana? It is located uniquely right where four of Indiana's northern counties meet in St Joseph County. It's a quiet community of about 2,000 residents and known for its relaxed, unhurried atmosphere. The town boasts of its 19th century historic ambience and its three local schools.

As is true for many communities, the turbulent economic times have not left this place untouched. Unemployment has been on a steady rise and many families are left struggling to make the ends meet. The impact of hard times became even more clear to Celeste Dooms, the Food Service Director of the John Glenn School Corporation, when she opened the doors to feed the neighborhood children in the summer of 2009.

"We have conducted summer school and fed our students for years, but 2009 was the first year we joined the SFSP. This included an expansion of the meal service and opening our doors to the children in the community," explains Mrs. Dooms. Her efforts to reach out were rewarded with a great turnout. She contributes the success to the extensive advertising campaign and a warm response from the community.

Part of the preparation work included mailing SFSP flyers to all the local households, and a collaborative effort with the local paper to publish the weekly SFSP menu. Also, children who were attending summer school classes in the nearby high school were reminded daily of the free meals and the menu choices. As a result, many of the high school students opted out of their regular staple diet at the close-by Mc Donald's and decided to walk or drive over to the elementary school for a free balanced meal. "We were amazed by the great turnout of our older students. Often times they came on bikes and many didn't mind walking several blocks to receive a nutritious meal they enjoyed eating," said Mrs. Dooms.

There was one more contributing factor to the program's success. Mrs. Dooms continues to approach the menu planning with two thoughts in mind: optimal nutritional value and kid-friendliness. "If meals are appealing to the children, they will keep on coming back again.

As for summer feeding in 2010, John Glenn School Corporation has decided to build on the last year's success model. They continue to prove the fact that the children in small Indiana towns need and benefit greatly from the Summer Food Service Program.

by Tina Skinner, Indiana Dept. of Education; tskinner@doe.in.gov

More Summer Food Success Stories...

GO PURPLE!

Minnesota Vikings Boost Summer Feeding



In 2009 the Minnesota Vikings teamed up with two Minnesota anti-hunger organizations to tackle child hunger and food insecurity in the summer months. The result was a ground-breaking new partnership between the Vikings, the Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank in St. Paul, and Hunger Solutions Minnesota to expand the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in Minnesota. With enthusiastic support from the Minnesota Department of Education, the collaborators came up with a winning strategy to remove obstacles for new sponsors and sites and substantially increase the number of nutritious meals served to children.

Before the Vikings partnership, only about 20% of the 270,000 Minnesota children who ate free and reduced price school meals participated in a free USDA summer meals program. To help close the summer nutrition gap and help struggling families, the Second Harvest Food Bank in St. Paul and Hunger Solutions Minnesota began a partnership with the Vikings last spring. The initiative, called the “Vikings Children’s Fund Summer Lunch Program,” aimed to increase the number of new summer meals program sponsors and sites and the number of SFSP meals served to Minnesota children.

Last year, the Vikings Children’s Fund awarded \$92,000 to help expand the program, of which \$52,000 was used for “mini-grants” to new and existing SFSP sponsors. The mini-grants helped new sponsors with start-up costs (e.g., purchasing a new cooler) and helped existing SFSP sponsors and sites expand their participation (e.g., enhanced programming and publicity). The remainder of the grant was used for program costs. The \$92,000 came from money raised at the Vikings annual “Taste of the NFL” event. The Vikings also lent their high profile to outreach and publicity for the program and messaging about healthy eating.



Children from Salvation Army summer meals program visit Vikings training camp in Mankato.

Thanks to the mini-grants and the tremendous publicity generated by the Vikings, total summer meals served grew by 122,627, or almost nine percent more than in summer 2008. Also, 17 new SFSP sponsors and 44 new feeding sites joined the SFSP. The mini-grants supported creative strategies for reaching more children. One public school summer feeding site in Minneapolis used the funding to provide meals for parents and caregivers who accompanied the children. The family meal time option dramatically increased the number of participating children (61% increase over the previous summer).

For more information, contact fns@state.mn.us

More Summer Food Success Stories...

Enriching Children's Lives in East St. Louis

The Griffin Center is an outreach program of Catholic Urban Programs (CUP), an agency serving the needs of very poor families, the homeless, and low-income elderly of the metro East St. Louis region since 1971. CUP is an affiliate of Catholic Charities of Southern Illinois, through the Diocese of Belleville. Since 1986, the Griffin Center has sponsored free, month-long summer day camps that offers a safe and welcoming place for kids to learn and play, in air-conditioned buildings right in the housing developments. About twelve years ago, they began participating in the Summer Food Service Program.

In the crowded, hot housing projects of East St. Louis, children urgently need structured activities to fill their time. Griffin Center offers two summer day camps that operate at four sites. Last summer the two day camp sessions served free breakfasts and lunches to a total of

285 children. The meal program serves the children enrolled in the day camp, their siblings (who are encouraged to come and eat) and other walk-in children from the neighborhood.



The key to the program's success has been the longstanding public-private partnership between the Griffin Center and the East St. Louis Housing Authority. The Housing Authority provides free space, garbage collection, nonfood items, and utilities for the day camp. The Griffin Center serves as the SFSP sponsor, preparing from-scratch breakfasts and lunches and supervising activities for the kids. Griffin staff prepare hot meals at one housing project site and transport the food to the other three sites. Over the years, the menu has proven to be very popular with the kids.



Each week the campers go on a field trip for a full-day park and swimming outing. The adults take along food for a barbecue. Teen youth workers help with activities and learn valuable work skills. Sister Julia, who supervises the Griffin Center's summer day camp and after-school programs, believes strongly in the SFSP. "We

love the SFSP. It fills a tremendous need for children and families in this impoverished community. And it works so well for us because of our partnership with the East St. Louis Housing Authority."

For more information, contact the IL State Board of Education, Nutrition Programs Division, at 1-800-545-7892.

More Summer Food Success Stories...

VISTA Volunteers Promote Summer Meals in Ohio

Last year, the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF) received a Corporation for National Community Service grant to utilize Americorps VISTA volunteers to help serve more children through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The grant enabled the OASHF to partner with the Ohio Department of Education and Americorps VISTA on a statewide “Americorps Vista Summer Associate Project” during June and July 2009. The goal of the project was to enroll children in the Summer Food Service Program in high need communities identified by the Ohio Department of Education. The communities chosen were: Alliance, Lodi, Cincinnati, Dayton, Belpre, Columbus, Willard, Cleveland, Hamilton and Sylvania.

VISTA Summer Associates were assigned to do outreach throughout the state to draw youth into the SFSP sites daily. They also helped prepare and serve over 100,000 meals. Focusing on neighborhoods with high concentrations of eligible youth, they informed and encouraged parents to send their children to nearby sites for breakfast and/or lunch. They visited churches, playgrounds and other gathering places to promote the SFSP. By summer’s end, SFSP participation increased statewide by 5,000 children over the previous summer.



The project had many benefits, not only for the children, but also for the families, SFSP sponsors, and VISTA volunteers. For example, in Alliance, Ohio, several families would wait while their children ate their meals. To engage these families and keep them coming back, VISTA Summer Associates at the Alliance City Schools worked with parents to assemble a cook-book with recipes from the families.

The VISTA Summer Associates gained invaluable knowledge from experiencing hunger on the front lines in an agricultural state like Ohio. Many of the 55 participants voiced their shock and concern for families who are unable to provide basic needs like food for their children. SFSP site directors’ testimonials indicate that they would not have been able to increase participation at their sites without the VISTA Summer Associates.

Many of the Summer Associates have already expressed great interest in serving in the project again next summer. OASHF has begun the application process to the Corporation for National and Community Service to expand the project in 2010 from 55 to 75 Summer Associates and has requests pending for the needed monetary match.

Because of its efforts with the VISTA Summer Associate Project, the OASHF recently received one of 26 “Victory against Hunger” awards from the Congressional Hunger Center.

For more information, contact Dustin Speakman, OASHF, at: Dustin@oashf.org

More Summer Food Success Stories...

Illinois Food Pantry Expands Mission to Summer Meals

In summer 2009, the Holy Family Food Pantry in Waukegan, Illinois, began its first summer lunch program for children. The program started out small, serving meals two days a week on Mondays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., from June 8 to August 20. The pantry received the lunches from the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB), a longstanding Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsor. Over the eleven weeks, they served a total of 1,495 lunches to children, averaging 60 children on Mondays and 75 on Thursdays.

The Holy Family Food Pantry caters to a large Hispanic community, most of whom are families with children. In fact, 53% of the pantry's clients last year were children 17 years and younger. Promoting enhanced quality of life for children and families is at the cornerstone of the pantry's mission. Pantry director Barb Karacic knew that having children home during the summer can put a great strain on food-scarce families and lower the quality of life for everyone in the household. Also, children in the neighborhood who don't attend camp or other organized activities are left unsupervised during the day. Offering a lunch program at the food pantry provides kids with a safe haven to eat and play in a secure, monitored environment.

The Holy Family Food Pantry's first step was to establish a relationship with NIFB's Youth Nutrition Program to become a feeding site. Besides delivering the lunches each day, NIFB provided training to all site staff and volunteers. The pantry agreed to become NIFB's first "open site," serving enrolled children as well as "walk-ins" from the community. The pantry also built a solid support structure by enlisting high school and adult volunteers from neighboring communities to help set up tables and chairs outside for lunch and supervise activities. The children ate outside most days, except on a couple of rainy days where they stayed inside the pantry or the nearby PADS shelter.

For many children, the lunch program was one of the highlights of their summer. Pantry staff and volunteers worked hard to make the program appealing and gain the parents' trust. They arranged for the Waukegan Public Library Bookmobile to come every Monday, so parents and kids could check out books. Volunteers worked with the kids on fitness activities, games and arts and crafts and talked to the moms about nutritious recipes. Parents were encouraged to visit the pantry's new community garden and take home fresh produce.

The Holy Family Food Pantry looks forward with enthusiasm to partner with NIFB to expand its SFSP to four days a week next summer.

For more information, contact Andrea Lutz, NIFB, at: alutz@nifb.org
Northern Illinois Food Bank website: www.northernifoodbank.org





SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP) 2010 FACT SHEET

WHAT IS THE SFSP?

The SFSP is a Child Nutrition Program that feeds children during school vacations. It uses meal patterns similar to those used in other federal child nutrition programs. The SFSP Income Eligibility Standards are the same as those used for reduced-price eligibility in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The SFSP is operated at the local level by program sponsors and is usually administered at the State level by the State Department of Education.

WHAT CHILDREN CAN PARTICIPATE?

(1) Children who are 18 years of age or younger; or (2) disabled persons, regardless of age, who are determined by a State educational agency or a local public educational agency of a State to be mentally or physically disabled and who participate in a public or nonprofit private school program established for the mentally or physically disabled.

WHAT ARE THE SPONSOR ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

Organizations which may sponsor the Program are: (1) public or private nonprofit school food authorities; (2) public or private nonprofit residential summer camps; (3) State, local, municipal, or county government entities; (4) public or private nonprofit colleges or universities participating in the National Youth Sports Program; and (5) private nonprofit organizations that provide ongoing year-round activities for children or families.

When applying for the Program, a potential sponsor must demonstrate that it has the necessary financial and administrative capability to meet Program objectives and comply with Program regulations. Sponsors must also accept final financial and administrative responsibility for all sites under their jurisdiction.

Sponsors of sites which are not camps must serve either: (1) a site in an area in which at least 50 percent of the children who live in that defined area are eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs; or (2) a site which enrolls children, at least 50 percent of whom meet the SFSP's Income Eligibility Standards. Under these income guidelines, for example, a family of four earning \$40,793 or less annually is considered needy.

At non-camp sites, reimbursement may be claimed for all meals served that meet SFSP guidelines. Sponsors offering the Program at camp sites may claim reimbursement only for the meals served to enrolled children who meet the SFSP Income Eligibility Standards.

MEAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Sponsors purchase or prepare meals and serve them to the children at the site(s). Sponsors may claim reimbursement only for meal types they are approved to serve. Non-camp sites can serve either one or two meals each day. Sites which are camps, or which primarily serve children of migrant families, may serve up to three meals per day (any combination of breakfast, lunch, supper, or snack).

(over)

MEAL PATTERN REQUIREMENTS

In general, meals served under the Program must meet the meal pattern requirements listed below. However, there are exceptions for school sponsors that use a meal pattern other than the traditional food-based meal pattern.

Breakfast: one serving each of: milk; fruit or vegetable or full-strength juice; grains/breads.

Lunch/Supper: one serving each of: milk; meat or meat alternate; grains/breads; a serving of fruit and a serving of vegetable, or two servings of either fruit or vegetable.

Snack: two of the four meal component groups served at lunch.

WHAT FEDERAL FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE?

The Fiscal Year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Act, which was signed into law on December 26, 2007, extends the cost accounting procedures known as the "Simplified" SFSP to all States. This means that beginning January 1, 2008, all SFSP sponsors will receive the maximum "meals times rates" operating and administrative reimbursements without regard to their actual costs. Sponsors do not have to report their costs to the State agency, but they must maintain records for the State agency's review. Monthly, each sponsor reports the number of eligible Program meals it has served.

For 2010, the reimbursement rates are:

Meal Type	Breakfast	Lunch/Supper	Snack
Operating Costs	\$1.68	\$2.94	\$.68
Administrative Costs Self-prep OR Rural sites	\$.1675	\$.3075	\$.0825
Vended AND Urban sites	\$.1325	\$.2550	\$.0650

HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM?

Persons desiring to apply for the Program or receive further information should contact:

Illinois	State Board of Education	Amy Bianco	1-800-545-7892
Indiana	Department of Education	Tina Skinner	(317) 232-0858
Michigan	Department of Education	Gloria Zunker	(517) 335-4608
Minnesota	Department of Education	Jenny Butcher	(651) 582-8526
Ohio	Department of Education	Mary Forster	1-800-808-6325
Wisconsin	Department of Public Instruction	Amy Kolano	(608) 266-7124

For More Information on the Web: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/>

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