



# Summer Meals for Children

winter 2005

resources for promoting usda's summer food service program  
from usda's midwest region - food and nutrition service

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Dear Partners and Supporters of FNS Programs:

We'd like to share with you some promotional resources for USDA's Summer Food Program (SFSP) - a vital but greatly underutilized feeding program for low-income children. Our goal is to encourage eligible organizations - especially faith-based and community organizations - to help reach more children.

Summer can be a real challenge for families with limited resources. When schools shut down for the summer, many low-income children don't have the opportunity to eat a free or reduced price school breakfast or lunch. Family food dollars must be stretched even further, leaving many of these children at risk of hunger or inadequate nutrition.

USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to bridge the "nutrition gap" when school is not in session. Children up to age 18 can eat free nutritious breakfasts, lunches or snacks at summer feeding sites operated by approved sponsors. Sponsors receive federal reimbursement for serving meals that meet USDA nutrition guidelines. The SFSP is targeted to low-income areas where at least 50% of the children qualify for free or reduced price school meals. Many sponsors also offer educational, enrichment, or physical activities or partner with others to do so.

The single biggest reason we're not reaching enough children is the lack of sponsors and feeding sites. If you know of any organizations interested in sponsoring a SFSP, or serving as a feeding site under a sponsor, please share this resource with them. Also, please encourage them to call their state agency (see enclosed list) for application and training information as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Midwest Regional Administrator



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# ***Hunger Doesn't Take a Summer Vacation***

## **Summer Food Service Program Talking Points**

Many low-income children suffer from a summer vacation “nutrition gap.” They depend on nutritious free or reduced price school breakfasts and lunches during the school year. But, when school closes for the summer, so do most school food service programs. USDA’s Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to close the nutrition gap and prevent hunger, but it’s not reaching nearly enough eligible children. Why not?

Let’s look at the statistics.

During the school year, USDA’s National School Lunch Program serves almost 17 million free or reduced price lunches each day to children of low-income families. In the summer, about 1.3 million of these children eat a school meal while in summer school. About 2 million more eat breakfasts, lunches or snacks through the SFSP at parks, schools, camps, churches and other locations. That adds up to 3.3 million low-income children who ate a nutritious meal on a given day last summer - less than 20% of those eating free and reduced price school lunches during the regular school year.

The SFSP is targeted to low-income areas where 50% or more students are eligible for free or reduced price school meals. All meals are served free to children up to age 18. But, despite vigorous outreach efforts at the federal and state levels, the program is greatly underutilized.

Why isn’t the program reaching more children?

First of all, there simply aren’t enough willing sponsors and feeding sites in many communities. Even though more than 20,000 school food authorities operate the National School Lunch Program in over 98,000 schools, only about 10% of school districts sponsor the SFSP. Transportation can also be a barrier to reaching children, especially in rural areas. Paperwork requirements are sometimes seen as a barrier, although recent legislative changes have made the program easier to administer.

Faith-based and community organizations can help by:

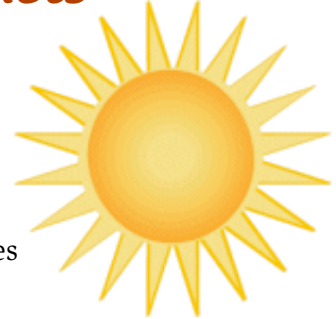
- Serving as a SFSP sponsor, or as a feeding site under a sponsor. (Contact your state agency on the enclosed list for more information.)
- Offering educational or enrichment activities for children, in conjunction with a summer meals program sponsor. (Contact your local school district or your state agency to see who sponsors the program in your area. Then talk to the local sponsor about partnering opportunities.)
- Raising public awareness of the SFSP through print media, radio, television and the Internet.
- Educating other partners - parents, community leaders, government officials, nonprofit organizations - about the need for the SFSP in their areas and encouraging them to get involved.

Children need good nutrition, all year long. The SFSP helps meet the President’s goal of a HealthierUS...by offering our nation’s most vulnerable citizens nutritious meals in a safe, supervised environment. Help our children have a good summer and start the new school year healthy, alert and ready to learn.

***Join USDA’s Summer Food Service Program team today!***

# **Who's Who** *in the Summer Meals Program*

## **Midwest State Agency Contacts**



### **Illinois State Board of Education**

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

### **Indiana Department of Education**

website - <http://www.doe.state.in.us/food/summer/welcome.html>  
contact - Julie Sutton, Division of School and Community Nutrition Programs  
phone - (317)-232-0850  
e-mail - [jsutton@doe.state.in.us](mailto:jsutton@doe.state.in.us)

### **Michigan Department of Education**

website - Go to [www.michigan.gov/mde/](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/) Click on "Programs and Offices," then click on "Grants Coordination and School Support Services," then click on "Summer Food Service."  
contact - Gloria Zunker, Grants Coordination and School Support  
phone - (517) 241-2096  
e-mail - [ZunkerG@michigan.gov](mailto:ZunkerG@michigan.gov)

### **Minnesota Department of Education**

website - [http://education.state.mn.us/html/Intro\\_sfsp.htm](http://education.state.mn.us/html/Intro_sfsp.htm)  
Contact - Jenny Butcher, Federal Support Programs  
phone - (651)582-8543  
e-mail - [Jenny.Butcher@state.mn.us](mailto:Jenny.Butcher@state.mn.us)

### **Ohio Department of Education**

website - [http://www.ode.state.oh.us/food\\_service/Summer/default.asp](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/food_service/Summer/default.asp)  
Contact - Cecelia Torok, Office for Safety, Health and Nutrition  
phone - (614) 466-9748  
e-mail - [Cecelia.Torok@ode.state.oh.us](mailto:Cecelia.Torok@ode.state.oh.us)

### **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**

website - <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/fns/sfsp1.html>  
Contact - Amy Kolano, Division for Finance and Management  
phone - (608) 266-7124  
e-mail - [amy.kolano@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:amy.kolano@dpi.state.wi.us)



## **SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP) 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 less than \$34,873 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; 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?**

Federal funds are available in the form of per-meal reimbursement rates for Program administrative and operating costs. Monthly, each sponsor reports the number of eligible Program meals it has served. In **Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin** a sponsor must also report eligible Program costs it has incurred. In these States, the sponsor is paid the lesser of Program meals times rates or Program costs. **Indiana, Michigan and Ohio** have been permitted by Federal legislation to operate a Simplified Summer Program. Sponsors in these States do not have to report costs. They are paid the number of meals served times the applicable reimbursement rate.

**For 2005, the reimbursement rates are:**

Meal Type	Breakfast	Lunch/Supper	Snack
Operating Costs	\$1.42	\$2.48	\$.58
Administrative Costs Self-prep OR Rural sites	\$.14	\$.26	\$.07
Vended AND Urban sites	\$.1125	\$.2150	\$.0550

**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	Julie Sutton	(317) 232-0850
Michigan	Department of Education	Gloria Zunker	(517) 241-2096
Minnesota	Department of Education	Jenny Butcher	(651) 582-8543
Ohio	Department of Education	Cecilia Torok	(614) 466-9748
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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# Great Ideas and Resources

## for Expanding the Summer Food Service Program

### Getting started...

To see what areas of your state are eligible for the SFSP (areas where 50% or more students in the community are eligible for free or reduced price meals or “closed” sites where 50% of enrolled children meet the income criteria), call your state education agency (see enclosed list), or call your local school district. You can also go to the USDA Interactive SFSP map at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/sfsp/> to see eligible areas and existing sponsors as of last summer. Even if your community already has one or more sponsors, they may not be reaching enough children. You can apply to be a sponsor or serve as a feeding site under a sponsor. (Feeding sites don't have the administrative/financial responsibilities of a sponsor.)

### Easier Paperwork Requirements

Under the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of June 2004, SFSP cost accounting requirements for private nonprofit sponsors were eliminated in 20 states, including Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. (Indiana's exemption continues from a previous pilot.) This exemption has proven very popular with sponsors because it significantly reduces the paperwork burden. Potential sponsors in IN, MI or OH should call their state agency (see enclosed list) for more information. In addition, USDA offers a “seamless summer waiver” that encourages more schools to serve meals through the summer by reducing administrative requirements.



Summer food program friends. Courtesy of Community Resources Center, Columbus OH.

### Networking and Partnerships

According to a 2004 survey of 125 SFSP sponsors by the FNS Southeast Region, networking and partnerships were vital to operating a successful SFSP. Respondents stressed the importance of “building trusting cooperative relationships...and exploring diverse and uncommon alliances” with organizations like hospitals, real estate offices, grocery store chains, boards of education, youth empowerment services, migrant associations, teen centers and more.

In one Hispanic community, a sponsor found that visiting families door to door was the key to earning trust and building SFSP participation. One sponsor collaborated with the local Lions Club, which donated money to pay for bookmobiles. Many churches and other nonprofits partner with schools to run feeding sites, under a school district's sponsorship. In Columbus (OH), the Community Resource Center use volunteers from several local churches to run their sites. Each week a different ministry acts as site manager. Some churches offer vacation Bible school along with the meal service.

## Great Ideas and Resources, cont'd

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### Transportation Barriers

Transportation can be a barrier to sponsoring a SFSP, especially in rural areas, when children live miles from the nearest sponsor. Nearly 28% of respondents in the Southeast Region's survey said they transported the meals to the children, using church vans, school buses, and YMCA and city recreational vehicles, and even having volunteers deliver the food in their own vehicles. Even in large cities, transportation can be an issue. The Community Resource Center in Columbus (OH) worked with Legal Aid and the local transit authority to get bus service along the route bordering a large low-income housing complex so the children could get to the SFSP site.

### Food Service Options

Over 50% of the Southeast Region's survey respondents served hot meals each day and they felt this kept the kids coming back. Some sponsors used high school students interested in community service as feeding site managers or "waiters and waitresses." Another sponsor partnered with the local Meals on Wheels program for the elderly to receive meals for the SFSP. Many schools remain open during the summer to offer meal service. Churches and other nonprofits can serve as feeding sites and have meals delivered under the school district's sponsorship. Other sponsors choose to contract with commercial vendors for their meals.



Children eating lunch at a Grand Rapids public school summer program.

### Best Practices

There are many great ways to offer a SFSP and many successful models. USDA gives "Sunshine Awards" (now biennial) to summer meals programs that exemplify best practices. (Go to: [www.summerfood.usda.gov/sponsors/index.html](http://www.summerfood.usda.gov/sponsors/index.html) Click on "Best Practices and Sunshine Awards" to learn more.) There are several award categories, including successful expansion, service to special populations, and partnering with other organizations.

In the Midwest, our Summer Sunshine Award winners for 2003 and 2004 have just been announced, and they're both from Wisconsin. The first, "Fueling Young Minds," is a collaboration between the Milwaukee Public Schools, the Social Development Commission, the Salvation Army, Impact, and the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee. This group received a substantial financial contribution from the Harley Davidson Foundation to fund marketing, outreach and staffing of additional summer feeding sites. The Hunger Task Force was a key player in pulling together the coalition and securing the funding. The second winner was the Green Bay Public Schools. In summer 2003 and 2004, the school district partnered with community organizations to promote the program. They were able to increase both feeding sites and meals participation.

## Grants and Other Funding Opportunities

(adapted from a 2004 list compiled by the USDA FNS Southeast Region)

[www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) - information about more than 800 federal grant programs.

White House Faith-based and Community Initiatives – [www.fbc.gov](http://www.fbc.gov) has a booklet of federal grant opportunities for faith-based and community organizations.

Teammates for Kids Foundation – for organizations working with needy children.  
[www.touchemall.com/](http://www.touchemall.com/)

Share our Strength – Great American Bake Sale – Funding for summer food programs, after-school snack programs and other initiatives to end childhood hunger. Note: 2005 grant process is closed. Check website for future opportunities. [www.greatamericanbakesale.org/site/PageServer](http://www.greatamericanbakesale.org/site/PageServer)

General Mills Champions – offers grants to community-based groups that support nutrition and fitness efforts. Grant process just closed; check website for future opportunities.  
[www.generalmills.com/foundation](http://www.generalmills.com/foundation)

Corporation for National and Community Service – funding available to support programs addressing community needs. [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org)

The Public Welfare Foundation - awards grants to organizations that provide services to disadvantaged populations. [www.publicwelfare.org](http://www.publicwelfare.org)

The Gannett Foundation provides grants for organizations that address the community's most pressing issues. [www.gannettfoundation.org/](http://www.gannettfoundation.org/)



Artwork by Martin Garcia,  
Eastwood School summer  
meals program,  
Sturgis, Michigan.  
Summer 2004