

Proactive Planning

Providing summer meals is a year-round effort. At any point throughout the year, there are things your State agency can do to proactively approach Program expansion. Establishing State agency, sponsor, and partner timelines will ensure that your summer meal programs run as smoothly as possible and keep sponsors in the program from year to year.

State Agency Planning

FALL

- Identify unserved and underserved areas and reach out to potential sponsors.
- Compare participation from this year to that of prior years, as well as current participation in free and reduced-price meals in local schools.
- Reach out to sponsors and remind them of information and training session dates for the following year.
- Update the State Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) website and ensure all program deadlines are accurately posted.
- Survey sponsors to note successes and challenges over the summer. Consider updating forms used by sponsors and sites based on sponsor feedback.
- Reach out to sponsors that had challenges operating their program over the summer and assign specific State agency staff members to provide support for the coming year.
- Consider hosting a community partner meeting to enable sponsors and partners to connect and discuss strategies for operating summer programs. The sooner this happens, the better, as sponsors will have their summer memories fresh in their minds.
- Provide nonmonetary awards to recognize sponsors who excelled in their summer program.
- Evaluate State agency staffing needs to ensure staff is adequate to meet the needs of an expanding summer program.

DECEMBER

- Encourage all sponsors to sign up for the mandatory SFSP training classes and ensure they are aware of other deadlines that may apply.
- Connect with potential sponsors and determine what resources they need to get started. Offer to assist them with their applications or other concerns.





JANUARY

- For sponsors that have not signed up for SFSP training classes, find out what challenges or barriers are preventing them from participating this year. To simplify this process, consider creating an Intent to Participate Form due in January to find out which sponsors plan to return.
- Reach out to new sponsors to help them with the bid process.
- Let sponsors know that they may be asked to cover sites if other sponsors leave the program.

FEBRUARY

- **February 1:** State agencies must announce the purpose, eligibility criteria, and availability of summer meals throughout the State through appropriate means of communication.
- **February 15:** State agencies must submit a Program Management and Administration Plan (MAP) for approval to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

MARCH/ APRIL

- Depending on the State, ensure State staff are ready to visit sites.
- Get an idea of where and when sites in your State will be opening, and reach out to sponsors near underserved areas about expanding to these areas.
- Check if there are any potential sites lacking sponsors and reach out to nearby sponsors about including them in the program.
- Reach out to note if any sites are still unsure about how the program works.

MAY/JUNE

- Prepare to promote SFSP Kick-off events in conjunction with your Regional USDA FNS office.
- Focus on program outreach to families and children.
- **June 15:** All sponsor applications must be submitted to the State agency. Note that different States may have earlier deadlines.

JULY/ AUGUST

- Check if sites are being underused and provide technical assistance in creating activities or conducting outreach activities to keep children coming back. Moving currently government-funded programming near a food site may be one way to help.
- Engage with partners and find out what else they need to support the project.
- Monitoring and review sites and sponsors as required.





Sponsor Planning

Given that States have their own separate deadlines this list provides general information that sponsors can use to plan for their summer program. For some States that provide region-specific deadlines for sponsors to meet, scroll down to *Promising Practices*.

FALL

- Ensure all Reimbursement Claims have been filed.
- Consolidate daily meal counts and submit reimbursement claims.
- Take time to reflect on the summer with site administrators and what could be improved or what worked.
- Reflect on the service provided by your vendor. Ensure the food was well-received by the children. Revise menus as needed.
- Review unserved and underserved areas near current sites. Recruit sites to these areas of need.
- Compare participation from this year to that of prior years, as well as current participation for free and reduced-price meals in local schools
- Reach out to sites that were underutilized and offer support to increase participation for the coming year.
- Consider providing nonmonetary awards to recognize sites that excelled during the summer.
- Set participation goals for the next summer and plan how you will accomplish them.
- Look out for dates on mandatory sponsor training from your State agency.

WINTER

- Sign up for and attend mandatory sponsor training classes.
- Determine which sites are returning, explore new site options, and meet with community partners.
- Plan site staff training, meal production and delivery, and programs and activities.





MARCH/ APRIL

- Review sites and ensure you are aware of their locations, operational hours, staff, and dates for monitoring.
- Think about how meals will be delivered to the sites and how many will be served.
- Complete preoperational site visits.
- Ensure administrative staff is trained.
- Finish Application/Renewal forms and contract with FSMC, if applicable.
- Check with the State agency to determine if there are any potential sites lacking sponsors or areas lacking sites and sponsors and consider extending service to those areas.

PRIOR TO OPENING

- Ensure your sites are still available and ready to serve meals.
- Conduct outreach to families and children near your sites.
- Finish Health Inspection Letter.
- Ensure site staff have been trained.
- Prepare to promote SFSP Kick-off events in conjunction with your other State and organizational partners.
- **June 15:** All sponsor applications must be submitted to the State agency. Note that States may have earlier deadlines.

WHILE OPEN

- Engage with partners to see what else they need to support the program.
- Conduct monitoring visits to sites and ethnic/racial participation evaluation.
- Ensure all monitoring and financial management documentation is complete and accurate.

Partner Planning

Partners can use these timelines as a resource to determine in what areas State agencies, sponsors, and other partners need the most support. The following timeline provides a general schedule of activities for summer partners.

FALL

- Find out if there is already an annual Summer Meals conference or meeting for your State. If not, consider organizing one. A coordinated summer planning meeting is a great way to help create relationships, share innovative strategies, increase awareness of Summer Meals in the region, leverage resources, and create a coordinated outreach plan.
- Review unserved and underserved areas near current sites and reach out to State agencies and sponsors about creating sites in the areas.





- Compare participation from this year to that of prior years, as well as current participation for free and reduced-price meals in local schools.
- Consider providing nonmonetary awards to recognize sites and sponsors that excelled during the summer.
- Set participation goals for the next summer and plan how you will accomplish them.
- If there is not already one, consider creating a State-specific list of deadlines for sponsors to follow.

WINTER

- Figure out which sites are returning and explore site options and meet with community partners.
- Ask State agencies which organizations plan to host Summer Meals sites and contact these sponsors about helping with outreach activities.
- Take another look at your prior review on underserved and unserved areas and determine if there is still a need for sponsors or sites in the area.
- Connect with returning sponsors and offer assistance.

SPRING

- As you learn where sites will be placed, talk to community groups about creating activities in conjunction with SFSP.
- Continue connecting sites to sponsors, if possible.
- Ask sites if they need help finding vendors, keeping meal counts, etc., and offer volunteer services.
- Ensure schools are providing students and families with information about summer sites.
- Recruit volunteers to distribute Summer Food Rocks flyers.
- Host or help with a summer kick-off event.

SUMMER

- Engage with the State agency, sponsors, and other summer partners and find out what else they need to support the program.
- Brainstorm programming to keep children coming and entertained.
- Note if any sites are being underutilized and find out ways to increase participation.
- Consider hosting or helping with a mid-summer event to remind families and children of the availability of summer meals.





USDA Resources

New Sponsors

Potential sponsors considering joining SFSP have more requirements than returning sponsors to be aware of as the year approaches. For more information, visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SMT-PolicyResources.pdf>

Management and Administration Plan (MAP)

Annually, State agencies are required to submit their plan for the year to their FNS Regional Office. For more information, visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SMT-MAP.pdf>

Sponsor Retention

Retaining sponsors from year to year is vital to keeping the program running smoothly. For more information, visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SMT-SponsorRetention.pdf>

Training

Keep up-to-date with changes to the Program, and update your training materials accordingly. For more information, visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SMT-ProgramSimplifications.pdf>

SFSP State Deadlines for Sponsors

While Federal guidelines require sponsors to apply by June 15, many States have earlier deadlines. This link lists States who adhere to the deadlines. As always, be sure to call your State agency to ensure that the deadlines still apply, as they may change from year to year. For the list of State Deadlines, click here:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/deadlines.pdf>

Partner Organization Resources

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) —Summer Nutrition Programs Implementation Calendars and Guide

This useful resource provides a more detailed look at what sponsors and other partners can do to make SFSP run as well as it should. <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/summer-programs/summer-nutrition-programs-implementation-calendars-and-guide/>



Summer Meals Toolkit

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Promising Practices

The following examples highlight methods State agencies can use to make it easy for sponsors to stay organized throughout the year.

Kansas Sponsor Timeline

http://www.kn-eat.org/SFSP/SFSP_Menus/SFSP_Calendar_of_Responsibilities.htm

Massachusetts Sponsor Timeline

http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbestpractices.nokidhungry.org%2Fdownload%2Ffile%2Ffid%2F130&ei=IHPHUsDxNum1sASoyoGgCg&usq=AFQjCNGMJkx6UL-iSQ6uiClgKJ_AAAXqvQ&sig2=oEF4eZ9tYHAoOQ_h6sZBYQ&bvm=bv.59568121,d.cWc&cad=rja

Montana Sponsor Timeline

http://mfbn.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Guide-to-starting-a-Summer-Food-Site_Updated-Novemeber-2012.pdf

Ohio Sponsor Timeline

http://www.ohiofoodbanks.org/sfspsummit/2013/5_SFSP_timeline.pdf

Oregon Sponsor Timeline

<http://oregonhunger.org/files/Summer-Food-Sponsor-Timeline.pdf>

Illinois Sponsor Timeline

<http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/sfsp-handbooks/summer-guide/s1-overview.pdf>

For Additional Information

Review these ideas and adopt the strategies that seem reasonable to you and compatible with your program. Sponsors and the general public should contact the appropriate State Agency for additional guidance. State agencies should contact their FNS Regional Office for additional guidance.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>





Additional Resources:

<http://www.summermealcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/CNAP-Guide-to-Summer-Meals.pdf>

<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/statelocal-campaigns/building-coalition-end-childhood-hunger-your-community>



Summer Food Rocks!

Summer Meals Toolkit

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