



## Summer Meal Policy Resources

For all organizations participating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), it is important to be aware of how the Program operates within the larger Federal framework. This section provides information on the background of SFSP and resources describing Federal policy related to SFSP.

Go to [USDA Resources](#).

### History of SFSP

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act initially provided funding for the summer meals in 1968. It became a separate Program in 1975.

### Who Administers the SFSP?

The SFSP is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The State education, agriculture, health, or social service department may be designated to administer SFSP at the State level. Locally, SFSP is operated by approved sponsors, including school districts, local government agencies, camps, or private nonprofit organizations.

### How does SFSP Work?

Sponsors sign agreements with their State agencies to operate the program. SFSP reimburses approved sponsors for serving meals that meet Federal nutritional guidelines. Sponsors receive payments from USDA, through their State agencies, based on the number of meals they serve. Generally, sponsors provide free meals to children at eligible sites in low-income areas, such as schools, parks, or community centers.

### Where does SFSP Operate?

States approve SFSP meal sites as open, enrolled, or camp sites. Open sites operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty level, making them eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are served free to any child attending an open site. Enrolled sites provide free meals to children enrolled in an activity program at the site where at least half of them are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Camps may also participate in SFSP. They receive payments only for the meals served to children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.



**Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA)**

- Grants legislative authority to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to operate the SFSP.



**U.S. Department of Agriculture,  
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)**

- Develops program regulations that are published in the Code of Federal Regulations.
- Interprets program regulations and instructs States regarding how to operate the SFSP.
- Provides program guidance through handbooks and memoranda.



**FNS Regional Offices**

- Provides technical assistance to State agencies.



**State Agency**

- Provides support to sponsors and the public by answering questions, providing SFSP funding, doing outreach to disadvantaged areas, and providing training.
- Approves sponsors and provides reimbursement for eligible SFSP meals.
- Approves eligible sites to operate SFSP.



**Sponsors**



**Summer Meals Toolkit**

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## USDA Resources

The FNS website has a subscription feature for any new guidance that is issued related to the SFSP: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFNS/subscriber/new>

### Program Handbooks

The legislative, regulatory, and policy requirements of the SFSP are consolidated in easy to understand guidance for sponsors, monitors, and site supervisors. These handbooks are updated annually, with highlighted changes, to ensure that all information is accurate:

- Administrative Guidance for Sponsors
- Monitor's Guide
- Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors
- Site Supervisor's Guide
- Site Supervisor's Guide (Spanish)

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

### Code of Federal Regulations, 7 C.F.R. 225

Legislative authority granted to the Department of Agriculture and other Program requirements are codified here to instruct State agencies how to administer the SFSP. <http://www.ecfr.gov>

### Policy Guidance

Program memoranda clarify legislative and regulatory requirements of the SFSP. Operational waivers and urgent changes to Program operations can be announced through memoranda, but is ultimately codified in the Code of Federal Regulations. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/Administration/policy.html>

### Summer Food Service Program Financial Management Instruction

This Instruction establishes standards, principles, and guidelines to assist States in the development and maintenance of financial management systems, including accounting information systems which are to be maintained by sponsors. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/796-4.pdf>

### Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act

Enacted and reauthorized by Congress, this Act grants legislative authority to the Department of Agriculture to operate the SFSP under section 13, 42 U.S.C. 1761. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLA.pdf>



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## For Additional Information

Utilize these resources to ensure your summer meal operations are successful. For additional questions, sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for help. 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/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

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