



HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN SUMMER MEALS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**, also known as the **Summer Meals Program**, provides kids and teens in low-income areas free meals when school is out. There are a number of ways that local organizations can be a part of the Summer Meals Program.

What is the Summer Food Service Program?

The SFSP is a federally-funded, state-administered program. The SFSP reimburses providers who serve free healthy meals to children and teens in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session. Check out [our video](#) to learn more.

Who Does the Program Serve?

The SFSP serves children and teens age 18 and younger.

How Does It Work?

There are three main players involved: State agencies, sponsors, and sites.

- State agencies administer the program and communicate with USDA.
- Sponsors enter into agreements with State agencies to run the program. Schools, local government agencies, camps, faith-based and other non-profit community organizations that have the ability to manage a food service program may be SFSP sponsors. Sponsors get reimbursed by the Program and may manage multiple sites.
- Sites are places in the community where children receive meals in a safe and supervised environment. Sites may be located in a variety of settings, including schools, parks, community centers, health clinics, hospitals, apartment complexes, churches, and migrant centers. Sites work directly with sponsors.

How Can Your Organization Participate?

1. **Contact your State agency** to see if you can become a site that serves summer meals. The State agency will help to see if you are located in an eligible area that can serve summer meals and connect you with a sponsor organization.

2. **Promote the Summer Meals Programs** to your community. Put up flyers and door hangers with information on where free summer meals are being served to help families find a nearby Summer Meals site.
3. **Provide fun activities for the kids and teens at your site to keep them coming back and to keep them physically and mentally active.** Recruit teens to help at your site to give them responsibilities and new skills.
4. **Volunteer at other sites.** Help serve meals or transport meals for other organizations that are involved with the Summer Meals Program. Organize physical or learning activities for the kids and teens.

Resources:

- Check out the Summer Food Service Program website: www.summerfood.usda.gov
- Learn why organizations throughout the country serve Summer Meals: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_93W0U3E8U&index=5&list=PLBccton-6gOdp0d5YdliI3TtRcSDtCdmzH
- Contact your State agency to talk about how you can get involved: www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/sfsp-contacts
- Find Summer Meals promotional materials: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/raise-awareness>
- Discover ways to recruit teens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A5K0qsVels&list=PLBccton-6gOdp0d5YdliI3TtRcSDtCdmzH&index=2>
- Find Summer Meals sites close to you: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks>