

SUMMER FEEDING TOOLKIT

Best practices to start or enhance your summer feeding program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Welcome Letter
- 3 Introduction
- 4-9 Summer Feeding Fundamentals
- 10-14 Summer School: Real-World Stories of Summer Feeding Success
- 15-17 Let Your Program Shine: Marketing and Promoting Your Summer Feeding Programs
- 18 A Recipe for Success: Sample Menus

Made possible by:



Welcome



Dear School Nutrition Professional,

Throughout the school year, you have many opportunities to support children—from offering delicious and healthy meals and snacks, to providing nutrition education, to creating a warm and welcoming environment in your cafeterias. And no goal is more important than feeding those children who might not otherwise have access to regular nutritious meals.

For many of us, the end of the school year means the end of our opportunity to help our neediest customers. But there is more that we all can do. Thanks to programs like the federal Summer Food Service Program—and the Seamless extension of the National School Lunch Program—administering a reimbursable summer feeding program is easier than ever. These programs also can support your employees by offering them the opportunity for extra hours, and they might even help you meet your overall financial goals. And summer feeding not only provides kids with nutritious meals—it shows them that their communities care about them.

With this toolkit, the School Nutrition Association and the National Watermelon Promotion Board offer you information on starting a summer feeding program, as well as tips and advice for promoting and expanding an existing program. We've also included a number of success stories from school nutrition directors; perhaps one of them has a district with similar characteristics to yours, and has found creative solutions to some of the same obstacles you might face. We hope you'll use this toolkit as a jumping-off point, to begin to think about how to serve your most important customers all year long.

Happy summer feeding!
Leah Schmidt, SNS, 2013-14 President
School Nutrition Association

SUMMER FEEDING
TOOLKIT

Introduction

As a school nutrition professional, you already know how important it is to provide nutritious meals for students through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (NSLP and SBP). But when the last bell of the school year rings, many of the children who rely on these programs throughout the year are left at serious risk of going hungry. The federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) can help bridge the hunger gap.

If you think your community could benefit from participating in the SFSP, or you would like to expand your existing program through better promotion and marketing, this Summer Feeding Toolkit—brought to you by the School Nutrition Association (SNA) and the National Watermelon Promotion Board—is for you. The toolkit will help you:

- * understand the fundamentals of running a summer feeding program.
- * learn about the Seamless and Simplified administrative options and decide which one is right for you.
- * find inspiration in the best practices of other school nutrition directors and their successful—and very different—summer feeding programs.
- * promote your program and work with the media.
- * discover new menu ideas.

Summer Feeding: Does it Close the Gap?

In July 2010, summer nutrition programs (notably the SFSP and the Seamless Option offered through the NSLP) served lunch to 2.8 million children on an average day. That may seem like a high number, but it means that only one in seven low-income children who ate a school lunch during the regular 2009-10 school year was provided a nutritious meal. This gap is compelling evidence for starting or expanding a summer feeding program in your community.

Source: Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation 2011

Fundamentals

Learn the basics



School nutrition directors have often seen summer feeding as an administrative and financial challenge. In fact, administering a summer feeding program has gotten easier, due to regulatory changes that offer school districts some options, as well as simplified administrative requirements.

Even though they're easier than ever to set up and run, summer feeding programs still require a strong commitment, a solid plan and the willingness to complete a number of important steps before the first summer meal can be served. Understanding the basics of these programs is the first step to successful summer feeding. To get started, let's look at the structure of the program and how it can fit into your existing operation.

Who's in charge? 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). Your state child nutrition agency runs the program at the state level, and is responsible for approving applications, conducting training, monitoring operations and processing program payments.

Sponsor? Vendor? Which role should I play? On the local level, the SFSP requires two participants: a sponsor and a vendor. In some cases, the same organization takes on both roles; at other times, two or more organizations work together. As director of a school nutrition operation, you may choose to participate as a sponsor, a vendor or both.

Sponsor The sponsor is the organization that takes administrative responsibility for the program and undertakes the bulk of the work and the financial liability. The sponsor is responsible for

monitoring all sites, training site staff and submitting reimbursement claims. School nutrition professionals are, of course, uniquely qualified to serve as SFSP sponsors, as the program is similar to the NSLP in terms of nutritional guidelines and federal framework. School nutrition professionals also bring their practical expertise in administering foodservice programs specifically for kids.

Vendor The vendor is the organization that provides the actual meals. Some sponsors—camps or park/recreation departments, for example—don't have the facilities or operational expertise to prepare meals and must contract the food preparation to a vendor. Sponsors naturally turn to school foodservice as vendors: Not only do schools have the infrastructure and expertise already in place, but the SFSP allows a sponsor to enter into an agreement with a school food authority (as long as it is not a management company) without having to go through the bidding process.

What locations can I serve?

When choosing possible locations to serve meals in the SFSP, a sponsor is limited only by the number of places that children congregate in the summer.

Typical meal service locations include:

- * Schools
- * Camps
- * Churches
- * Community centers
- * Parks and playgrounds
- * Public housing complexes
- * Other public sites where kids gather

If you decide to be a sponsor, your application will include proposed feeding sites. Your state agency will determine if your proposed locations are eligible, using the guidelines shown in the table.

Site		Eligibility	
Type	Definition	Requirement	Data Source
Open Site	Site where all children eat free	At least 50% of children in the community are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals	Area eligibility data from the local school or census block group
Restricted Open Site	Site meets the open-site criteria, but access to meals is later restricted for safety, control or security reasons	Same as open site	Same as open site
Closed Enrolled Site	May be in any community for an enrolled group of low-income children and meets the 50% criteria explained above; this excludes academic summer schools	At least 50% of children enrolled in the program are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals	Income eligibility statements describing the family's size and income
Camp	Residential or non-residential camps	It offers a regularly scheduled foodservice as part of a residential or day camp program	An individual child's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals
Migrant Site	Site in an area where migrant workers and their families are present during the summer	It primarily serves children of migrant workers	Appropriate certification from a migrant organization
NYSP Site	A college or university with a National Youth Sports Program (NYSP)	It participates in the NYSP	A child's enrollment in NYSP

Table based on information from www.fns.usda.gov

Made possible by:





Comstock



How will I administer the program?

As a sponsor, you can decide to administer your program using the Simplified or the Seamless Summer options. The Simplified option debuted in 2008 as a streamlined version of the original SFSP program. The Seamless option, included as a provision of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, allows schools to extend their participation in the NSLP for a seamless transition between the school year and summer vacation.

There are trade-offs and benefits to both systems, and your final decision probably will be based on balancing dollars and cents and the administrative requirements of each type of program. To understand the key differences, check out the chart below:

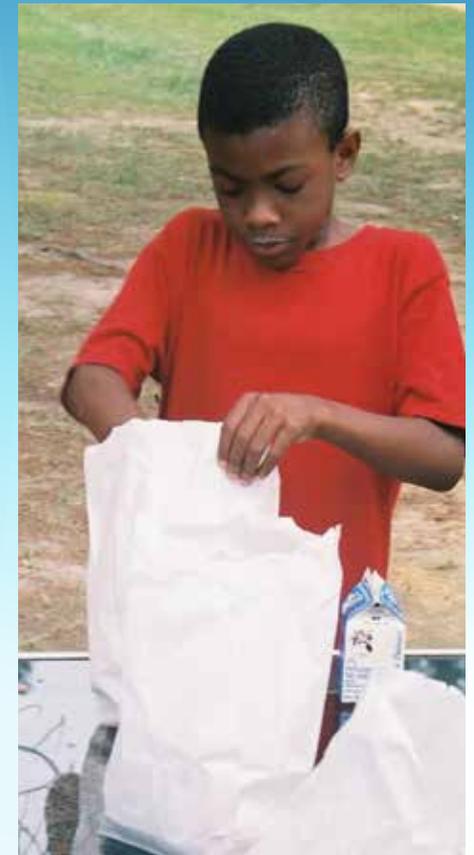
Simplified Summer Option	Seamless Summer Option
Requires more paperwork	Extends a school's participation in the NSLP, meaning less paperwork
Offers a higher reimbursement rate that allows for administrative costs	Conforms to the standard reimbursement rate
Requires new contracts and separate accounts	Uses existing contracts and accounts, so accounting is easier
Allows claims based on participation, instead of requiring separate claims for administrative and operating costs	Doesn't require sponsors to re-qualify if they're already eligible for the NSLP
Usually includes a mandatory training program	Can work well for short-duration programs like summer school

Where to Start

Will You Take the Plunge?

Now that you have a better picture of your administrative options, it's time to reflect on the need for summer foodservice in your community and determine where your school nutrition operation might fit. You have several decisions to make, from serving as a vendor or sponsor and determining the type of administration you will use to identifying locations, number of meals served and goals. To get started, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Will you act as a sponsor, a vendor or both for service sites in your community? Are there existing agencies and organizations offering summer meals? Are they seeking partners to vend meals or to take over SFSP sponsorship?
2. Are there sites in your community that will draw enough participation to qualify for reimbursable meals? Check income eligibility and census data.
3. Where do children congregate naturally? Consider parks and housing developments as potential service sites.
4. Do you have the ability to deliver meals to the different sites you identify? Have you thought through various limitations—and opportunities—regarding transportation, safe-temperature holding and service?
5. Are there community organizations that provide activity programs for children during the summer? (Work with state agency staff to identify and connect with local agencies or organizations.)
6. How many weeks during the summer will you offer meals?
7. If your school nutrition operation will be a sponsor for summer sites, will you use the Seamless or Simplified approach for your summer feeding administration?
8. What specific arrangements will you need to make for delivery, labor and site use? (Start planning now and contact your state agency for resources and technical assistance.)
9. Do you have sufficient labor to carry out your goals?
10. Are there other school nutrition directors in the area who have experience with summer feeding? Can you contact them for ideas and advice?



Made possible by:





Plan Ahead to Spread Some Sunshine

Once you've determined the scope of your summer feeding program, it's time to begin the planning phase. You can't wait until the school year is ending to start thinking about feeding kids in the weeks that follow! Most experienced sponsors start planning menus and making arrangements for equipment in the winter, particularly if they have a number of feeding sites not based in schools.

SNA has compiled a checklist to help you get started on page 9.

Winter is also the right time to contact your state agency for training opportunities and help with applications. Your state agency will be able to answer many of your questions and direct you to state-specific resources. To find your state's contact information, visit USDA's State Directory at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.html>.



What Are Your Plans for the Summer?

Every summer feeding program must start with a well-thought-out plan for administration and operations. Thinking through the answers to some basic but crucial questions helps you begin planning for your summer feeding program in earnest. Ask yourself:

Who...

- How many low-income children need service through this summer nutrition program to keep from going hungry?
- Is lunch the primary requirement, or is there a need for breakfast, snacks or even dinner?
- What support do I need from the community? Are there community leaders who will help sponsor and/or promote the program?
- Will there be staff or volunteers to help lead enrichment activities?
- Who will be in charge at each site?
- Who will monitor participation counts?
- How many staff hours will I need to run the program? Do I need to hire extra staff?
- Can I use volunteers for certain responsibilities?
- Do I have a training plan for staff who will manage and carry out the program at each site?
- How will we handle unauthorized adults who try to eat meals?

Where...

- Where will I serve the food?
- Do service locations have facilities and/or equipment for refrigeration, warming, preparation, holding and storage of food and meals, if necessary?
- Do service sites have adequate shelter in case of inclement weather?
- Do service locations have access to a telephone?
- Do service sites require special transportation provisions?
- When and how do I need to notify the health department of off-site feeding plans?
- Have I conducted a pre-operational visit to each site?
- How will trash be removed?

What...

- Can I use my existing cafeterias and/or central kitchen to make the meals?
- Can I use ingredients and prepackaged food items that were originally procured for my NSLP operation?

- Will grab-and-go packaging/service items be required?
- Can I use existing vendor contracts to supply what I need?
- Do my proposed meals and menus meet nutritional requirements?
- Are my planned foods appealing to children for summer eating?
- What food safety measures need to be implemented?
- What monitoring procedures need to be in place?

How...

- How will food be delivered to the sites?
- What is my proposed delivery schedule?
- Do I need to coordinate with the school transportation office or another entity to arrange for transportation?
- How will I determine and document each child's eligibility?
- How will I keep necessary records? What records are required?
- Do I need to attend state agency training?
- Do I have a plan for regular site visits and inspections?

For additional checklists and planning tools, visit the USDA's guide to administering a summer feeding program at

www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Summer/library/handbooks.html.

Made possible by:



Summer School:

*Real-World Stories of Summer Feeding Success**

For instruction and inspiration, look no further than these success stories from school nutrition directors who already have met the challenge of summer feeding with ingenuity and enthusiasm. To show you how summer feeding can work under many different circumstances, we've chosen examples from rural, suburban and urban settings. So put your sunscreen on, and don't forget your hat! Let's go to school...summer school, that is!

RURAL ROADS:

Burke County School District, Georgia

During the summer months, in the rural county of Burke County (Ga.), a fleet of yellow school buses deliver more than 4,000 meals per day to children "who otherwise wouldn't have a nutritious meal all day," reports School District Nutrition Director Donna Martin, EdS, RD, LD, SNS.

Martin and her school nutrition department did not participate in a summer feeding program until 2006. After the county government was forced to trim its budget and eliminated funds for a summer feeding program that had been run by the recreation department, Martin was asked to take it on. She agreed to it, despite some objections voiced by others over the use of tax dollars "for another form of welfare."

But it wasn't long before the community was won over and the school nutrition program had gained incalculable good will. Why? Because in a few short years, the number of Burke County children served has quintupled; foodservice employees and bus drivers have earned needed summer incomes; and Martin's operation even has turned a modest surplus, earning her and her team a U.S. Department of Agriculture Southeastern Region Summer Sunshine Award.

Without the attraction of the organized activities put on by the recreation department, making arrangements to bus children to various feeding sites presented daunting obstacles. As an alternative



to transporting children to the food, Martin considered the reverse: busing the food to the children. With the help of the school district's transportation director and the data collected from a parent survey, Martin put together a plan. Buses were equipped with

coolers to store individually wrapped sandwiches, milk and juice, as well as trash cans and bags for refuse. And the installation of two-way radios would allow drivers to communicate any problems encountered along the route.

*These case studies were originally published in the November 2008 issue of School Nutrition magazine, the flagship publication of the School Nutrition Association. They are excerpted and reprinted with permission.

On the program's first day in 2006, Martin served 700 kids. By her third week, the average daily total was up to 3,000. By Summer 2007, the Burke County program encompassed 113 bus stops, 35 Vacation Bible Schools, five district schools and five summer camps. During the 39 days that the program ran that summer, 146,992 lunches were served, with an average daily participation of 4,121 children. In addition, the school nutrition department served 9,260 breakfasts at eight school sites, averaging some 261 breakfasts per day. A typical menu: ham, turkey or bologna sandwiches (made with hamburger buns for easier wrapping), plus a piece of fresh fruit and a carton of milk or juice.

Martin, who's been working in nutrition for more than 30 years, credits a combination of hands-on administration, financial management and operational experience with the success of her department's Summer School Nutrition Program. Balancing the books may be the biggest challenge. "Our expenses include \$45,000 per summer in bus fuel alone," she reports. "On top of that, we have

our food costs, and we pay our foodservice workers and bus drivers. And then our people have to do the reimbursable-meal paperwork at every bus stop—and that's more than 100 stops!" One strategy she uses to keep costs down is to save certain commodities—like ham and turkey—throughout the school year.

Martin sees summer feeding as a way to increase public awareness about the problem of poverty and childhood hunger, as well as to generate interest and attention for school foodservice in general. Martin also reports that employee morale has increased, both as a result of the opportunity to earn income during the summer months and the relationships they are forging as they come "up close and personal" with the children and families they serve. "When your staff can actually see the kids and their needs, right where they live, they get a whole new vision and appreciation for school nutrition," asserts Martin. The summer feeding program also turns a modest surplus that can be invested back into year-round operations.



Made possible by:



SUBURBAN LAWNS:

Auburn School District, Washington

In this district southeast of Seattle, Eric Boutin, SNS, director of child nutrition services, wanted to find ways to serve more kids during the summer. "It's a very needy community," he notes. "The kids have the same needs in the summer as they do in the school year."

When Boutin began the summer program in 2004, his team served some 500 kids at three park sites. Four years later, the program had expanded to 43 sites, after the district's superintendent drove around town with Boutin, scouting potential lunch locations. The district purchased five surplus buses, which are stocked with lunch supplies and travel to low-income apartment complexes, hitting the same site at the same time each day, staying for about 10 minutes, before moving on to the next site. At park and school sites, lunch is served for approximately one hour.

If you assume lunch is grab 'n' go, be assured that this is no ordinary lunch, but a moveable feast. The staff sets

up a buffet, with one hot entrée and as many local, organic, fresh fruits and vegetables as the budget allows, including watermelon, doughnut peaches and cherry tomatoes.

"Our staff works very hard," emphasizes Boutin. "They are out in the heat, so it is very challenging. I can't tell you how hard they work." They often team up with area Boy Scouts, who provide activities for the kids. The locations have the added advantage of drawing some 2- and 3-year-olds, as well as older children. (For a site to be considered for inclusion in the program, it must serve at least 20 students.) Signage (resembling metal real estate signs stuck into the ground) and flyers given to apartment managers are used to build participation.

Boutin's biggest challenge, he says, is keeping the program staffed for the entire summer break, which runs from late June to late August. But it's worth it, he insists, because "the program is a great opportunity for the community. ... It's not an easy



program to set up and execute. But we want sites where all kids are actively encouraged to participate. We don't want to single out any particular group of students," Boutin notes, adding, "Our community and our children are best served when any child can sit down and eat lunch with friends. We could use a little more [funding], but the kids eat the best lunch that the money we get will allow."





SUMMER IN THE CITY: *Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota*

When she speaks of the Minneapolis summer food program, Rosemary Dederichs cannot suppress her enthusiasm. According to Dederichs, the department served an estimated 11,000 lunches and 8,000 breakfasts per day during Summer 2008. "There was a very high need this summer. It was really humbling. We said, 'Oh wow, we've really hit on something here.'"

The program's success has its origins in focus group sessions in 2006 that sought feedback about the summer food program. The results prompted them to offer breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner (but only two meals at any one location). They also learned it wasn't effective to serve breakfast at park locations, because kids rarely arrived in time. Now, they offer lunch and a snack at park sites.

Dederichs obtained a grant to launch a 2008 pilot program to provide dinner to adults, along with their kids, at three particularly low-income sites. The program is open only to families, and an unintended benefit of the evening service is that it has brought parents to the schools. "It was wildly successful," says Dederichs.

To improve operational efficiency, Dederichs established a drive-through meal distribution system at the district's central kitchen. The drive-through lane opens at 6:30 a.m., and designated couriers to more than 40 of the 100+ sites pick up all the meals they need on their way to their destinations. The program couldn't do that number of sites any other way, explains Dederichs. The drive-up helped control food waste, as well. "We could adjust production immediately," she reports, because staff could judge how quickly or slowly meals were being picked up. Each site was required to have refrigeration to hold meals; Dederichs' team made arrangements to provide it for some locations, such as by moving one school's milk cooler to another site for the summer.

According to Dederichs, the best part of the summer was the level of cooperation. If maintenance departments had to schedule extra staff, she would pay them from her budget. Site supervisors accepted that they had to conduct evening site visits. "We're singularly blessed," she emphasizes. "From security to garbage, nothing turned out to be a problem. Everybody just knew it was going to be a good thing for the kids."

*These case studies were originally published in the November 2008 issue of School Nutrition magazine, the flagship publication of the School Nutrition Association. They are excerpted and reprinted with permission.

Made possible by:



MOBILE MEALS FOR KIDS:

Jefferson County Public Schools Bus Stop Cafe

In Jefferson County, Kentucky, 67% of students rely on free/reduced price meals as a key source of nutrition throughout the school year. In the summer of 2013, the district found an innovative new way to ensure these students continue to receive healthy meals over summer vacation - they remodeled an old school bus into a mobile feeding unit.

The Bus Stop Café was introduced as part of the USDA Summer Food Service Program in 2013. The district has long offered summer meals to students at school and community sites district-wide, but too many children lacked transportation to access the nutritious meals. "One of the biggest challenges is getting kids into our sites," says Nutrition Director Julia Bauscher. "The Bus Stop Café offered the perfect way to overcome this - we take the bus where the kids are!"

The of the bus features cafeteria-style seating up to 25 children, a refrigerated cooler, hand sink, air conditioning and security camera.

The bus exterior features bright, colorful fruit and vegetable graphics, an under-the-bus storage unit for tables, chairs and tarps and an extendable awning to provide shaded eating space for additional children.

Beginning in early June 2013, the Bus Stop Café made five regular stops daily to deliver summer lunches to children in the community. Children were routinely waiting at the stops for the bus to arrive. Children eating lunch were as young as 1 year old. In fact, after day one, the district provided a "toddler-friendly" meal for the youngest participants.

Feedback from the local community was overwhelmingly positive. "Everyone wanted to see the bus!" says Bauscher. "Parents wrote us personal thank you notes and kids colored pictures expressing their appreciation. We were featured in local news stories that helped us get the word out. We started a list of several other sites that want a bus stop in their neighborhood next year."

Two cafeteria managers passed out the meals on the bus and provided assistance to young children in opening meal components. The district even created and provided activity sheets for the students on the bus that included simple spelling, counting, reading and physical activities to emphasize the importance of learning during the summer. For returning the activity sheets children received small prizes like pencils, bookmarks and silly glasses.

As with any summer feeding program, generating awareness about the availability of the meals was key. "We issued a press release, but we also let families know by sending home information through students and putting up promotional posters around the community," says Bauscher.

The Bus Stop Café served 11,522 summer lunches, about 10% of all summer lunches served in Jefferson County. **With the introduction of the Bus Stop Café, Jefferson County increased the number of meals served by 25% compared to the previous**



Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Public Schools

summer! The district is in the process of considering how to expand the mobile cafeteria concept next summer through another bus (or other type of vehicle) that will enable us to increase the number of neighborhoods and children reached.

The district received local and national media attention for our efforts to expand access to an important USDA feeding program. The Bus Stop Café will continue to be an asset to the department during the school year for special school events where students and the public can be served healthy school meals.

Made possible by:



Let Your Program Shine:

Marketing and Promoting Your Summer Feeding Program

If you feed them, will they come? The answer is yes—if they know about the program! When the community knows about your summer feeding program, you can reach as many hungry children as possible, while maximizing your reimbursement potential.

Build a Marketing Plan

“Marketing? I don’t have the money for that!” Marketing may sound expensive, but if your budget is limited, don’t despair. With careful planning, it’s possible to promote your program cost-effectively. Many promotional activities require staff time rather than large amounts of money, so advance planning is an important key to success. To get the most bang for your buck, start by developing a marketing plan and a set of clear objectives for your promotional program. Your marketing plan should include:

- ★ **Objectives**—Tie each marketing objective to a business objective. For example: Drive awareness of the benefits of a summer foodservice program and increase participation by x% at the following feeding sites.
- ★ **Target Audience**—Determine your primary audiences (such as students and parents) and secondary audiences (for example, the community at large). Work toward engaging all audiences, but particularly children, because if they are excited about the food served or the activities scheduled, they will tell their friends and families and help you increase and maintain program participation.

- ★ **Strategy & Tactics**—Find engaging ways to publicize the program. Tell kids about the program with fun posters in the cafeteria and send flyers home to parents with location, time and menu information. Contact community groups and ask them to distribute flyers or offer to come and speak at their meetings. See “Be Your Own Promoter” for more suggestions on how to advertise your program.
- ★ **Media Strategies**—Use the media to promote your program and highlight the important issue of childhood hunger. See “Reach out to the Media” for more information.
- ★ **Timing**—Keep key dates—the end of school and start/end dates of the summer feeding program, for example—in mind when planning promotional activities. Start promoting the program to students, parents and community groups before school ends and continue to promote the program for its duration.
- ★ **Budget**—Identify any promotion budget that’s available and indicate how it should be spent.
- ★ **Evaluation**—This is a key and often overlooked element. It is essential to evaluate your results against your initial objectives so you can improve your marketing plan and overall program implementation.



Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/summer for a detailed template plan that can be downloaded and customized for your program’s needs. The template plan also includes many creative promotional ideas for your program.



Apulberimages



Reach out to the Media

A newspaper article or radio story about summer feeding is free publicity for your program, and it can help increase participation and community goodwill. Don't let yourself be daunted by the idea of working with the media! It's easier than you think.

To get started, create a press release that alerts the media to specific events in your school or summer feeding program. (This press release also will be part of your SFSP application.) Take advantage of the template press release available in USDA's Administrative Guidance for Sponsors (www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Summer/library/handbooks.html). This template gives you a great starting point, and it can be customized with logistical details, such as site locations and times of service.

Next, approach media outlets, such as local newspapers, radio stations and TV stations. In general, it is easier to get coverage from newspapers and radio than TV, and for any type of media, building a relationship with a specific reporter can help get stories in print or on the air.

At a minimum, media coverage should provide a simple description of your program and a list of sites and times. A more detailed feature story focusing on the impact of summer feeding on children and the larger problem of hunger can bring more interest and support to your program. To attract reporters' and editors' attention, help them see the story that will interest their readers. Invite them to cover a specific event, such as a site opening, or direct them to a site that has the most activity or provides an opportunity for human-interest coverage.

To learn more, visit www.schoolnutrition.org/summer for summer feeding talking points and tips on working with the media.

Made possible by:



Summer at the Café

In 2005, Sylacauga City Schools (Alabama) CNP Director Kelley Wassermann gave the summer foodservice program a catchy name, calling it the Sylacauga Summer Café. “Oh my gosh, you would have thought I reinvented the wheel,” she reflects of the resulting change in participation. According to Wassermann, before the name change, the program served about 100 kids for lunch. After this simple marketing ploy, it began to average some 300 lunches and 100 breakfasts each day throughout the summer.

“A lot of people didn’t know we had the program,” she reports. “There were a lot of kids missing out. Parents said, ‘This has been here all along, and we didn’t know about it?’ People just can’t believe it. They think it’s too good to be true.” Once the message was out, enthusiasm spread.

Getting that message out and building public awareness was priority number one. “The first year we pulled out all the stops,” Wassermann recounts. This included her getting up early to appear on a local cable television show at 6 a.m. “You’d be surprised how many people watch at that hour,” she laughs. Area churches were sent flyers promoting the programs. Two months before the school year concluded, Wassermann began partnering with the administrators of planned service sites, which included parks, churches and locations arranged through the local housing development authority.

While aggressive promotion was a new strategy, one thing that remained the same was the popular hot entrée menu, featuring pizza, chicken nuggets, chicken and dumplings and a school-year favorite: a turkey-and-rice signature dish. Despite the summer temperatures, “It’s just always been our thing to do a full-cooked lunch,” explains Wassermann, noting that serving sites are located in air-conditioned buildings. Her team experiments with new recipes from time to time; some work (sandwich wraps), some don’t (chicken parmesan).



Excerpted with permission from School Nutrition, November 2008.

Be Your Own Promoter

Media coverage is great for generating interest, but you don’t need a TV show to spread excitement about summer feeding. You can get the word out on your own with the right plan for promoting your program. The promotional possibilities are endless, and a few are listed below.

- * Create posters to hang in your cafeteria promoting your summer program before school ends for the year.
- * Talk to students in assembly about the location of summer feeding sites, any fun activities that will happen and the menu that will be served.
- * Work with teachers, school nurses and guidance counselors to help make kids aware of the program.
- * Send home flyers and fact sheets to parents about your program. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/summer to download customizable flyers, fact sheets and activity sheets.
- * Take a page from the public relations manual and create brand recognition! Give your summer program a catchy name and incorporate a theme and consistent artwork in all of your materials.
- * Talk to parents at PTA/PTO meetings.
- * Work with site contacts such as recreation site managers or church leaders to promote the program and distribute flyers.
- * Talk to community leaders and provide them with flyers to distribute so they can pass on the message about your program.

A Recipe of Summer Success

Sample Menus



Now that you're ready to administer your program, what will you serve all of your eager summer customers? Depending on the feeding locations and the facilities you will use, you may need to try some new menu items.

As a baseline, your SFSP meal pattern must follow 7 CFR 225.16(d) standards, found in *Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors* at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/handbooks>. If you prefer, you can apply to your state agency to substitute the NSLP/SBP meal patterns. Of course, the Seamless Summer Option already follows the NSLP/SBP meal patterns.

If you are new to summer feeding or looking for new menu ideas, check out the sample summer menus collected from school districts across the country and available at www.schoolnutrition.org/summer.

The menus focus on the food groups to encourage: fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains and lowfat milk. Whether your summer customers are feeling lazy, crazy or hazy, they'll love these different warm-weather offerings.

Made possible by:



SUMMER FEEDING
TOOLKIT

Endless Summer... Limitless Rewards

Running a successful and efficient summer feeding program benefits everyone: Local kids eat a nutritious meal when they otherwise might go hungry. School nutrition staff members get the chance to earn extra income. The school district gains goodwill, better community visibility and increased revenues.

So don't let it be a cruel summer for kids in your district. Use this Summer Feeding Toolkit and resources at www.schoolnutrition.org/summer to get ideas, ask the right questions and make a plan. Then let your summer feeding program shine.

Happy Summer Feeding!



Summer Feeding Toolkit photography by Donna Martin, Burke County Schools, GA.

SUMMER FEEDING
TOOLKIT

Made possible by:

