



For many low-income children, summer vacation does not mean “fun in the sun” but rather, increased risk of hunger and developmental decline. **What can you do to help?**

The Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) federal food assistance program. In conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), USDA provides money (reimbursement) to organizations (sponsors) that serve meals that meet the SFSP nutritional guidelines. These meals are served free to children 18 and younger and to disabled individuals over age 18 who are enrolled in school programs.

The Sponsors

Sponsors are the organizations that run the SFSP. They can be:

- Public or private nonprofit school food authorities;
- Public or private nonprofit summer camps;
- Units of local, municipal, county, tribal or state governments;
- Public or private colleges or universities which are currently participating in the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP); and
- Private nonprofit organizations (special conditions and restrictions apply).

A sponsor must be fully capable of managing a food service program, follow regulations, and be financially and administratively responsible for running its program.

The Meal Service Site:

A site is a physical location, approved by the state agency, where you serve SFSP meals during a supervised time period.

There are different types of sites: open, restricted open, closed enrolled, camp, migrant and NYSP. Each has its own criteria for eligibility.

Meal service sites may be located in a variety of settings, including schools, recreation centers, playgrounds, parks, churches, community centers, day camps, residential summer camps, housing projects, migrant centers, or on Indian reservations.

Types of Meals Served:

Most sponsors may be approved to receive reimbursement for serving up to two meals or one meal and a snack per day (usually breakfast and lunch or lunch and a snack).

If your site primarily serves migrant children, or you run a residential or day camp, you may be eligible to serve up to three reimbursable meals each day. Camps receive reimbursement based on the number of low-income children they serve.

Meal Preparation:

A sponsor may prepare its own meals, purchase meals through an agreement with an area school, or contract for meals with a food service management company (vendor).

If your site has its own kitchen, you may want to prepare meals yourself. If your kitchen is not on the premises, you may still want to prepare your own meals, and then transport them to the site(s).

Meals that you prepare yourself receive a slightly higher rate of reimbursement. You would receive “self-prep” rates, whether you prepare the meals from scratch or purchase the components and assemble the meals yourself.

A sponsor that lacks the kitchen facilities to prepare meals may purchase meals from a school or another public or private food supplier with approved meal preparation facilities.

Ways You Can Participate:

Community and faith-based organizations, schools, government agencies, and other types of organizations can participate in the SFSP in the following four ways:

- 1. Become a sponsor** – If your organization already provides services to the community, and has capable staff and good management practices to run a food service, you can administer the SFSP.
- 2. Run a site** – Some organizations do not have the financial or administrative ability to run the program, but they can supervise a food service for children, along with recreational or enrichment activities, at a site.
- 3. Volunteer** – team up with a sponsor to help serve the meals or provide an activity that makes summer fun!
- 4. Become a program advocate** – promote SFSP in your community by scheduling meetings with key community members, sharing information about the program, and help to connect potential sponsors with sites.





Becoming a Sponsor

Learn About SFSP and Your Community:

Speak with the Minnesota Department of Education SFSP Coordinator and visit the MDE SFSP website to learn more about the program at: <http://education.state.mn.us>.

Find out:

Find out if your community already participates in the SFSP, a current list, by county, can be found at: <http://education.state.mn.us>. If not, determine the interest level by speaking with others in your community.

What areas in your community are eligible (open sites—those that are open to feed all children in the community—are eligible based on school free/reduced data or census data. If a site is located within a service area of a school that has 50% or more children eligible for free and reduced price school meals or within a qualified census tract, it will be eligible).

Where (within the eligible areas) you could run a successful food service program for children. Most effective sites will be located in areas where you can offer supervised food service with recreational or enrichment activities.

Attend the New Sponsor Training:

Each spring, training is provided for the supervisors of all organizations that are interested in serving as SFSP sponsors. The training will help you decide whether sponsoring the SFSP is for you.

Training provides an opportunity for you to meet other sponsors, ask questions, and to develop a strategy for launching your program.

The training covers all necessary areas of running the program for those that are new to the program. It will also provide you with important information to help you train your staff and volunteers who will work at your sites.

Complete an Application:

Once you have selected appropriate sites and obtained approval from your organization to participate, an on-line application must be completed. Be prepared to provide details regarding meal service at each site as well as a complete budget that demonstrates your organization's ability to run a food service program for children. Part of the training you will attend is devoted to reviewing the application process.

Plan Effective Outreach Strategies:

To have a successful program, families must be aware that the SFSP is available in their community. If you conduct an aggressive outreach effort, more children will receive the nutritious meal benefits of the SFSP.

Coordinate Your Support:

Reach out to your community to attract a winning team of staff and volunteers. Finding capable people to help is a key to success.

Are you ready to make a difference in the lives of children in your community?

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KIDS EAT
FREE!
SUMMER MEALS
FOR KIDS
AGES 1-18

The Summer Food Service Program