

## **The Summer Food Service Program in California**

### **Key Actions:**

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working with the California Department of Education to target efforts to expand the number of Summer Food Service Program meal sites this summer. There are expected to be close to 600 summer meal sites throughout the drought stricken areas.

### **What is the Summer Food Service Program?**

Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does a child's need for good nutrition. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to help children in low-income areas get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow, throughout the summer months when they are out of school. Most sites provide one or two meals each day, while places serving migrant children may serve up to three meals per child, each day. This video further explains SFSP: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkLGT0fRr8w>

### **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, with no identification required. 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.

### **Who is eligible?**

Children 18 years and younger may receive free meals and snacks. Persons with disabilities who are 19 and older and participate in school programs for mentally or physically disabled people are also eligible.

### **Where can I find summer sites?**

To find a meal service site near where you live, contact organizations in your community that are offering an activity program. Organizations offering activities for children are often local schools, community centers, recreation centers, and faith-based organizations. You may also call the National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE. If you are unable to find a site in your area, please contact your State agency and ask for the location of a meal service site in your community.

### **What can I do if there are no nearby sites feeding children?**

If there are no meal service sites in your area, you can mobilize your community to sponsor the program. A school, nonprofit organization or local government agency must be the program

sponsor and is responsible for the administration of the program. Contact the following people and groups, and tell them there is an interest in the community to feed children in the summer: teachers, school principals, Parent Teacher Associations, school food service managers, school officials (such as the school board or superintendent of schools), Recreation and Parks Office County officials, and/or elected officials.

### **History of SFSP**

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act initially provided funding for the SFSP in 1968. It became a separate program in 1975. More than 2.28 million children participated at almost 39,000 sites in the summer of 2012.

### **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). In most States, the State education agencies administer SFSP. In some areas, the State health or social service department may be designated. Locally, SFSP is operated at sites 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.

### **Who can sponsor SFSP?**

Units of local government, camps, schools, and private nonprofit organizations can sponsor the SFSP. If your organization already provides services to the community, and has capable staff and good management practices to run a food service, you can sponsor the SFSP. As a sponsor, you will attend the State agency's training, locate eligible sites, hire, train and supervise staff, arrange for meals to be prepared and delivered, monitor sites and prepare claims for reimbursement.

Find an SFSP sponsor in your area online: <http://www.whyhunger.org/findfood>

More information on SFSP: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/frequently-asked-questions-faqs#1>.

For additional questions, sponsors and the general public should contact Sandip Kaur, Nutrition Services Director, California Department of Education, 1430 N Street, Sacramento, California 95814, or call 800-592-5609.

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