

Summer Food Service Program Webinar Transcript Latino Focused Session

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Amber Herman, and I am glad that you're joining us today for the Summer Food Service Program webinar that's focusing on organizations serving Latino communities. I am the acting Deputy Director for the United States Department of Agriculture Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

So again, I'd like to welcome you. And today's official welcome is coming from Ms. Lisa Pino who serves as the Deputy Administrator for the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutritional Service. Lisa has spent her career working with and helping underserved communities, and she brings valuable hands-on experience to USDA. Lisa most recently served as the Director of Public Affairs for International Institute of the Americas College in Phoenix, Arizona. She's also worked with the Florence Immigrant Whites and Refugee Project as well as the Community Legal Services Farm Workers Unit in rural Arizona. Welcome, Lisa.

Thank you, Amber, and thanks everyone for joining us today. We are so excited. I am Lisa Pino, as Amber mentioned. I am Deputy Administrator of the SNAP Program formerly known as the Food Stamp Program here at the Food and Nutrition Service. And I'm honored and delighted to join all of you for what is our first ever Summer Food Service Program discussion serving Latino and Hispanic organizations. So bienvenidos a todos.

We're today and we've asked you to join us for this webinar because we have a very important message and issue to address. And that is, at the agency, we are completely committed -- we always have been, but now more than ever -- to end childhood hunger. But to do that, we have to work together to raise awareness and improve access to nutrition programs, particularly through the avenue provided through the Summer Food Service Program.

So we're really delighted that there's such great interest. We have a lot of folks on the line; and we want to tell you about all the great benefits of the program, and hopefully make this program work for you and your respective organizations so that you can serve your communities.

Now, summer is a particularly vulnerable time because as you know, the children who receive free and reduced-price meals during the school year no longer have that benefit during summer. So we have created a program to serve this gap, and it's what we refer to as our Summer Food Service Program. And we are here today because USDA is asking for your help to reach more eligible children in underserved communities. Unfortunately, we have a very low participation in this program. It tends to be chronic at about 17%. So your participation and attention today is really appreciated.

Let's talk a little bit about the numbers and the statistical scope. So as some of you may know, but our National School Lunch Program serves millions of children. In fact, it serves 30.9 million students in schools and residential childcare institutions. But during the summer, about 1.4 million of these children eat a school meal in summer school, while over 2 million more enjoy breakfasts, lunch, or snacks through the Summer Food Service Program. Available at more than 32,700 meal sites -- and these meal sites can be in parks and schools, camps, churches and other locations. The program provides resources to foster healthier lifestyles

Almost 60% of students participating in the National School Lunch Program receive free or reduced-priced meals. The numbers show that a significant portion of low-income children are not accessing these resources. So here's our target community, right? These are the vulnerable kids that typically would receive free and reduced-priced meals during the school year, but no longer have that access during the summer.

The Summer Food Service Program is targeted in that vein to low-income areas where 50% or more of the students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals live. Provided to children, including teenagers through the age of eighteen, the program serves up to two meals or one meal and one snack per day per child. Some sponsors may serve up to three meals a day, so that's something for you to think about if you have that capacity.

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Despite aggressive outreach efforts at the federal and state level, the Summer Food Service Program is vastly underutilized. Investing in and implementing proven strategies to engage more participants is critical to the program's success.

Why are we here today? We're here today so that we can reach more children and reduce barriers. Simply put, there aren't enough sponsors; and we need more feeding sites. Even though more than 20,000 school districts operate a National School Lunch Program and over 100,000 schools and residential childcare institutions, only 8% of these school districts sponsor this Summer Food Service Program. That's why we're asking for your help today.

Though FNS has worked to reach new sponsors -- there's partnerships with national, state, and local organizations -- more sponsors are needed to bring the program to underserved areas. So you can clearly see how much we need you.

Recent legislative changes have simplified program operations. So in the last couple of years, these simplified requirements were expanded to all sponsors nationwide. It is some paperwork, folks; but these streamlined procedures allow sponsors like you to receive maximum reimbursements rates for the meals served and maximum flexibility for using the reimbursements for all allowable costs.

The role of community in expanding access to summer meals -- well, it's proven that children who miss school meals are more likely to be sick, absent, or tardy, disruptive in class, inattentive, and more likely to score lower on achievement tests. To ensure the nutritional needs of low-income children are met while school is out, a commitment from individuals and communities is imperative. Local governments, camps, schools, private, non-profit organizations may be eligible to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program.

So this information is something you can take not only back to your respective organizations, but tell your partners -- tell others in the community -- that they can provide sites as well.

Parents are encouraged to contact organizations within their community that offer activity programs such as local schools, community centers, recreation centers, and faith-based organizations. By improving opportunities and leveraging partnerships, our nation's children gain not only better nutrition but better health.

So, again, we are so glad that you are joining us for this webinar today. We hope that you can take a lot of good information away with you about the Summer Food Service Program. As Amber mentioned, this material is available for download and will be later available on demand online. I hope you decide to join us and have your organization work with the Summer Food Service Program. Thank you for your time today and every day, and for everything you do to help feed our nation's children and strengthen our communities.

So with that being said, I would like to actually give you a brief overview of our programs here at the Food and Nutrition Service. Okay. So we're going to talk just a little bit about all the programs here at the Food and Nutrition Service so we can provide an overview not just of the Summer Food Service Program, but of fourteen other programs here at the department. We also will do this with a specific focus on the Latino community. And, again, this information is available in English and Spanish -- available for download.

Our programs -- and, again, we have fifteen programs altogether at the Food and Nutrition Service -- but all of our programs have the same objectives; and they are to increase food security and reduce hunger. We look at how we can increase partnerships with organizations committed to providing food assistance services to communities in which hunger is most prevalent. And the Latino community is unarguably one of those vulnerable communities. USDA

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administers these programs that will be discussed further in the webinar. Funding for these programs are then given to the state governments to administer state-level food assistance.

On the local level, our partners include community organizations that become involved in sharing in sharing information about these food assistance programs in their communities and directly influencing increase in participation rates. These community organizations also screen eligibility, provide program services, and assist people with their applications to these programs.

Now, this next slide talks a little bit about food insecurity -- specifically among Latino households. We are particularly interested in how food insecurity and hunger affects Latino households. And at the USDA, we're looking at locations that have high levels of food insecurity. And "food insecurity" is a technical term, but it generally refers to the access and availability of food for a particular household. And most often it means that a household does not have enough money to afford food on a regular basis.

Well, currently over 2.3 million Latino households in the country are food insecure. And that means 177,000 Latino households with children are food insecure; or in other words, they do not have enough money to put food on the table every day. And while the national average for food insecurity is 14.6 for the general population; among Latinos, this food insecurity average is higher at 26.9%. And between the years 2007 and 2008, Latino households had the largest increases in food insecurity in the U.S. So as you can see, these statistics really show the backdrop of how urgent this situation is.

Now, we will take a glance at the food assistance programs offered by FNS at the USDA. The following programs you and members of your community may qualify for and can utilize to combat hunger in our communities.

Now let's look at the WIC Program, which some of you may be familiar with, otherwise known as the Women Infant and Children Program. This is a fantastic program. It provides nutritious food, education, and referrals to Social Services to pregnant women, new and breast feeding mothers, and infants and children up to the age of five. Eligible participants must meet USDA guidelines for income and nutritional risk. More information on eligibility can be referenced on the USDA website or by contacting your State agency. A list of State agency contacts in English and Spanish is included as a handout in this webinar. You can access these and more handouts at the upper right-hand side of the screen. The icon appears as three pages attached to one another.

In regards to Latino participation in WIC, Latinos represent the largest racial ethnic group participating in the program. IN 2006, over 41% of those enrolled in the WIC Program were of Hispanic origin. And about 860,000 of Latino infants born in the U.S. participate in the WIC Program as well. So, again, this is a program that is particularly important to Latino communities.

Other programs mentioned before include our National School Breakfast Program and our National School Lunch Program. Again, these programs are so important for Latino children. I mean, we have the large population -- the lunch program serves over 31 million national school breakfasts. Program serves over 11 million. But again, if you're looking at the demographics, with the breakfast help the USDA gives to public and private school subsidies to provide eligible school children with free or reduced-price breakfasts or lunches during the school year, this again is such an important asset for Latino children.

And now we'll get to the Summer Food Service Program. This is the program that, as mentioned, provides children with an opportunity to have two meals daily during the summer months. Children eighteen years or younger, and persons over the age of eighteen with mental or physical disabilities, are eligible to receive meals through the program. The way the program works, and it's run by a local sponsor -- it can be a school district; it can be a local government agency; a camp, a private non-profit; a State-based organization -- and that organization applies to become

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a sponsor and run a feeding site for the program to serve meals to children during the summertime. Sponsors are vital to serving food to children when they may not get the nutrition they usually get when they are in school. We encourage organizations willing and able to become a sponsor to do so by contacting your State agency. Once again, you can reference the contact information for your state at the "Handouts" tab of this screen or on this page of the presentation.

Also I want to share with you a little about the Child and Adult Food Program, otherwise known as CACSP. This is a program that's available to children and adults. It's called the Child and Adult Food Program, and provides nutritious foods and snacks to adults and children. There are several groups that qualify to participate in this group as well. It can include children at eligible after school camp programs, children at day care facilities, adults who receive care in non-residential adult day care centers, and children at merchants and food centers.

There are also several groups that automatically qualify for participation in Child and Adult Food Program, and these include children whose families already participate in federal assistance programs or who are residents of emergency shelters. Children in these categories would be automatically eligible. Also adults enrolled in day care programs that receive SNAP or Medicaid benefits are automatically eligible as well.

Now let's move on to programs for which the entire family may be eligible. And the first of these is the SNAP Program. SNAP, for some of those who don't know, is the new name for the Food Stamps Program; and SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The way this program works now is that Food Stamps no longer are in existence. People now receive their benefits from an EBT card that looks very much like a debit -- a regular debit card from the bank. And people can make purchases at their local market. And it's a fantastic means of providing frontline support -- especially at a time like now when the recession has impacted the affordability of food for so many families across the country. And participants can make purchases in grocery and authorized stores, and now we even have the ability to have people use their SNAP eligibility at farmers markets.

So this is a program that we definitely encourage you to share with your respective members because many people that are eligible for the program, particularly in the Latino community, as this is the only program that carries a citizenship requirement. To be eligible for the program, you must be either a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident for five years; but we are seeing that many eligible Latinos in these categories are not participating. So if a family of four is approved for instance, the family could receive monthly \$668 a month. And this is a benefit calculated by multiplying the net income by 30%.

Let's talk a little bit about who's eligible. Aside from the citizenship requirement, SNAP is open to adults at the ages between eighteen and fifty who can be given benefits for three months in a thirty-six month period. And when receiving benefits, participants must be searching for work or going to job training. You cannot receive SNAP benefits if you are a family of four with a monthly gross income of \$2,389 or higher, or if you receive a net monthly income of \$1,838 or higher.

An additional note on households that receive SNAP benefits, children of these households automatically qualify for breakfast and lunch. So again, there's a great information point for you to share back with your communities. To check your eligibility for the SNAP Program, please use the "Pre-Screening" tool at the first link on the screen. And to apply to the SNAP Program, please visit the second link on this page.

Now, as I mentioned earlier, there are citizenship requirements; and in terms of who's eligible, you must be a legal immigrant to apply for the SNAP Program. And the residents have that five-year bar. And otherwise, if you're receiving disability-related assistance or benefits or as of October 1, 2003, your children will be eligible regardless of their entry date.

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And now let's move on the last program we'll review in this webinar, and that is the TEFAP Program. Now TEFAP -- the Emergency Food Assistance Program -- provides emergency food and nutrition assistance to low-income Americans, including the elderly and homeless. States are responsible for distributing USDA foods to local agencies that directly serve their communities at food banks, shelters, and soup kitchens. So at a time of hardship like we're seeing now with the recession, when many people and people visit their local food banks, it's usually those USDA foods. Not all of it, but a portion of it, are USDA food and the remainder tends to be private and corporate donations.

If your organization is interested in participating in the Emergency Food Assistance Program and operates a food bank or distributes meal to low-income populations, you may be eligible to receive some USDA foods. And for those who are interested in receiving food through the Emergency Food Assistance Program and already participate in another USDA-funded assistance program, you may also qualify for TEFAP as well.

Now overall, there are plenty of food assistance resources available on the USDA website and through the State agencies that administer USDA food assistance programs. All FNS informational brochures, handbooks, tool kits, and other outreach materials are accessible to download on the FNS website. The FNS website address is right at the top of this slide. It's fns@usda.gov.

We also have several nutrition education materials available on the website as well, including my pyramid food guide; menu planners, team nutrition materials for schools; Eat Smart, Play Hard; a recipe finder; and informational facts like Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future. All of these guides are good resources that you and your organization can use to become better aware of better nutrition assistance. This education will contribute to the enhancement of community health and wellness.

So that was a lot of information that we shared with you today; but we thank you all for participating in the hope that you share this information that you learned with others in your community. Thanks so much for your time today. And now, I'd like to turn it back over to Amber.

Very good. Thank you, Lisa, for providing us that wonderful overview of all of the FNS programs that impact families and communities. Because of the -- we want to make sure we stay within time, and Lisa has provided a great overview. I wanted to jump right in and really start talking about some of the details of the Summer Food Service Program.

First, we have meal service. The Summer Food Service provides two meals per child per day, and any combination of two meals may be served except lunch and supper. Normally a program will provide a breakfast when the children arrive and then provide a snack before the children leave the site. A snack may be served, but it does not count as a meal. There's an exception to the two-meal rule. Camps, as well as sites that serve children of migrant workers, may serve up to three meals per child per day. And all meals must meet USDA standards to be eligible for reimbursement. A typical lunch may consist of a meat and cheese sandwich, carrot sticks, an apple, and a carton of milk.

So the summer program begins when a community works with their State agency, and State agencies are responsible for all administrative requirements of the program. A State agency is most likely your Department of Education. To participate in the Summer Food Service Program, each sponsoring organization must sign an agreement with the State agency. The agreement sets forth the responsibilities of the State and the sponsor. The State is also responsible for providing training and technical assistance to all sponsors. The State wants you to succeed, so they would work with you every step of the way to assist both new and experienced sponsors.

State agencies are also responsible for monitoring the operations of participating sponsoring organizations. You might be asking yourself, "What exactly does it mean to be a sponsor?" First,

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a sponsor accepts financial and administrative responsibility for their program. Second, they manage a food service. This means the sponsor must have food preparation facilities or the capacity to oversee a food service management contract. Sponsors also train and monitor sites personnel. They arrange for meals to arrive at each site. They oversee the operations of each site. They assure all paperwork is completed accurately and in a timely manner. And, most importantly, for most organizations they submit the claims for reimbursement for the food provided.

And several types of organizations can be sponsors of the Summer Food Service Program. They include such groups as community and faith-based organizations, private non-profits, local government, school systems, colleges and universities participating in the National Youth Sports Program, migrant centers, and Indian reservations. Feeding sites can include a whole variety of locations -- essentially anywhere that children gather, such as camps, migrant centers, libraries, pools, community or rec centers. In fact, you can even do it under a tree in the park, as long as there are children congregating together to eat, it can count as a feeding site.

There are basically two types of feeding sites. The first is an open site. These sites serve meals free to all children eighteen years of age or younger. The second type is an enrolled site. These sites require the children's family to complete an enrollment form and a household income application. In order for a site to be eligible for the program, it must meet one of two criteria. For an open site, the location where meals will be served must be located in a school attendance area where 50% or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The 50% criteria is based upon school data or census data. So don't worry. Your State agency can provide substantial technical assistance in helping your organization make these determinations.

For an enrolled site, families must submit a household income application for each child enrolled in the program. If 50% of the applications demonstrate eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, then the site may serve free meals to all children. Now these criteria, we understand, can sound a bit confusing and overwhelming if you've never dealt with this program before; but, again, your State agency will help you through the process of determining eligibility.

Now there are two exceptions to the basic site eligibility rule. Residential and non-residential summer camps may serve up to three meals per child, per day; however, only meals served to children who meet the free or reduced-price meals criteria, based upon household income applications, will be reimbursed.

The second exception is for feeding sites that primarily serve children of migrant workers. In order for the site to be determined eligible, the location must be certified by a migrant organization. Then the site may serve up to three meals per child, per day, to all children. USDA reimbursement may be used to defray the operating and administrative costs of conducting the Summer Food Service Program. Typically operation costs include the cost of the food; food supplies, such as paper bags and napkins; and the cost of labor to prepare the meals. Administrative costs might include costs associated with doing paperwork, training staff, monitoring of sites, and all the other administrative functions we discussed earlier. Additional reimbursement is also provided to sponsors that operate sites in rural areas or prepare their own meals -- which is sometimes referred to as "self-prep."

So what can you do to help? First off, you could become a sponsor of this program. And frankly, our children in your community need you. Or, if you want a little less responsibility and still want to help feed the children, you could supervise a feeding site. Or you could oversee an activity program at a feeding site. Many folks spend their summers looking for interesting and innovative activities for children; and we have found in the past that serving a meal sometimes isn't enough to get kids to show up, but an interesting activity will do the trick. And if you have meal preparation facilities, you could be a meal vendor. And as a vendor, you would enter into a contract with the sponsor to provide the meals for all the sites.

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So there's lots of ways to getting involved; and in a community, there's lots of ways to partner together to make this possible. Below we have a list of groups that you could potentially partner with, and you recognize these aren't your usual suspects. The mayor's office will likely know community organizations you can partner with. County extension agents also are likely to know community organizations. Boys and Girls Clubs /Salvation Army run successful programs. Police and fire departments will likely come out and help doing a Summer Food Service Program, provide a needed activity, or even the location for a site. Community groups like the Rotary Club can possibly help with transportation issues or funding. And local libraries often have summer reading programs and have a building that is suitable for serving a meal. There's all kinds of interesting partnerships, and this is just a short list. We encourage you to think critically about partnerships viable in your own community.

So I wanted to run through five successful ingredients to a successful Summer Food Service Program. The first is to be creative, and have activities for kids and teens. The second is partnerships. They're becoming more important, particularly as funding for children's programs continues to decrease. There may already be an established Summer Food Service Program in your community, but you could help them serve breakfast when children arrive or lunch before they leave. Next, involve parents whenever you can. Parents often know the community and the neighborhood children very well, and will be your best source of information and support. Be resourceful and innovative, looking for opportunities -- especially the unlikely ones. For instance, in rural Nebraska, a sponsor was having difficulty finding a meal vendor. So they approached a local hospital which was very interested and needed very little technical assistance on how to serve nutritious meals. The partnership between the hospital and the sponsor meant that children in that rural community were able to eat in the summer.

Above all, you need to find a local champion. This is someone who will go the extra mile to get the job done. This person needs to know and understand that starting a Summer Food Service Program, especially in a rural area, may be very difficult at first. But the hard work pays off, and people are willing to partner because we're all committed to feeding children. Local champions are creative, innovative, and self-starters. So help identify your local champion, or it might be you.

So now you're thinking, "How do I get started?" Well the answer's pretty easy. You first contact your State agency. Your State agency will provide you with an application, training on the required paperwork, and will help you with every aspect of the program. To find your State agency, you can visit the USDA website on the Summer Food Service Program or, up on the right-hand side of your webinar tool, those three little pieces of paper that look shuffled together, you click on that link and you can download your State agency contacts.

So I want take a moment here to recognize that listening to government employees talk about their program is not as exciting as listening to a colleague who runs a community organization talk about their success with the program. So I'd like to invite -- if we could check and make sure she's on the phone -- Ms. Kathy Hestor --

Hello?

Hello, Ms. Kathy. Kathy is the Executive Director and has been with Hamilton Living Water Ministry for seven years. Her passion is to improve the lives of disadvantaged children and their families, and provide them with the same opportunities as those in affluent neighborhoods. She serves on numerous committees, many of which work to be a voice for a culture-diversity community. We welcome Kathy and the opportunity to hear your story.

Thank you. I would like to share, just for a moment, a little bit of background about our agency and then talk about our summer feeding program. Hamilton Living Water Ministry was founded eleven years ago as a result of the needs in our community changing. We offer a free year-around programs to youth, grades kindergarten through twelfth; and they include after-school

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tutoring with many bilingual tutors; literacy interventions. We have summer programs; recreational activities; and many, many life skills programs. We also have a neighborhood service center for the adults that offers translation services; a lot of information and referral services for community resources; and do a homeless prevention and adult education and recreational programs. Last year, we served 300 youths through all of our programs. We're located in the inner city of Hamilton and are in the highest crime rate area of the city. The majority of our neighbors are Hispanic. Eighty percent of our youth are Hispanic. Ten percent are white \INAUDIBLE\, and then ten percent are African Americans.

Several years ago, the children were able to get their lunches at a school that was located directly across the street from us. They would attend school, and then they would walk into the cafeteria and grab their lunch. Well, the school stopped serving the lunches. And the first year that that happened, we tried to contact local churches to have them come in and bring meals daily to our children. And mind you, we were running a hundred plus children a day. And we found that it was very difficult to find someone to cover every day. It was not always the most nutritious meal, and it was also very costly for the volunteers to come in and do this.

I since found out about the Summer Feeding Program. And, you know, I was very reluctant. I'll be real honest. We were a very small grassroots agency, but the children just kept coming through our doors. You know, we run out of a church that's over a hundred years old. We have limited space. I am the only full-time staff, and the last thing that I thought was to take on another project because I really didn't have the time to do it. So I was amazed by the support that we had from the other staff that were here. The parents in the community were so appreciative of what we were doing. Community leaders and community members -- church members -- all came forward to help us with the program to make sure that the children in our community would have lunch, as well as a snack. Each year we continue to grow and improve our meals to the children. And we're a sponsoring site and now prepare meals for two other sites.

Some of the biggest challenges that we had -- some of the barriers -- were also storage, funding challenges -- you know, how in the world with programs, what in the world are we going to do? And we also have a very -- we have a sheriff's department located two blocks from our facility which has kind of made it difficult for some of the Hispanic residents in our community.

Another area that was challenging for us was we being predominantly having Hispanic children coming through our doors -- one of the other sites that we had was primarily African American. So we were trying to find, you know, food that was appealing to both cultures and races at the different sites. We began teaching the children here at our facility by introducing them to some of the various foods through a food and nutrition class that we have and also our community garden. These classes made them curious, and they were more willing to try some of their own produce that they had actually grown. And much of the produce they had never even seen before.

We have since received a grant for the food and nutrition and cooking classes, and now the children even after the lunch, later on in the day, have been able to prepare a simple, nutritional meal. We incorporate math, teamwork, the proper etiquette, learning to read the labels and make healthy food choices as a result of that program. There's also a summer garden, and they take some of the produce to a local homeless shelter and have completed several other community service projects here within the community.

The children have really enjoyed seeing the harvest of all their hard work, and we've also found that many of the moms in the area started getting involved. It's a very culturally-diverse garden, and the moms enjoy it. They make a lot of sauces. They're free to come in and take what they need. So we've been very successful with our garden program and running it alongside of our summer feeding program.

We partner with the Boys and Girls Club here and prepare meals for them, as well as another school that is probably about three or four miles from us that runs a summer program to help

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keep children off the streets. We have church youth groups that come in; they pick a day of the week, and they do activities for our children. We have other community members that come in and do activities with the children. Master gardeners from a local garden club come in. The scouts come in -- 4H Club; we have athletes; the local fire and policemen. We have artists, chefs, musicians -- all of these individuals come in and give of their time at no cost to us, and help us provide activities for the children on a daily basis.

What we've done is we also -- we've found that everything that we do is obviously in English and in Spanish. And we made up some very creative fliers, if you would, and took them into local elementary schools and started getting the word out to pass them out to the children, announcing the program. We also announced it in the local newspaper which -- a lot of our families obviously do not have access to that -- but we found that some of the community residents had heard about the program and wanted to get involved. We did fliers to put in church bulletins and other organizations to try to get the community involved. We not only let the children know that we serve lunch, but that we have daily activities; and then they're also provided with a snack before they go home.

But the first year we had the meals catered or vended, if you would. And I found that the first year that was helpful for me because it me some time to familiarize myself with some of the paperwork and everything that was involved -- because honestly I really didn't know what I was getting myself into.

The last couple of years we have been doing it our own -- preparing the meals ourselves. It allowed me to be a little bit more creative with our menus. It allows us to control the quantity -- obviously we don't want someone else preparing things that may not be something that our children might necessarily did not like. So that gives us liberty to prepare and to change the menu as needed.

With the summer feeding program, it's just now something that families in our area have come to depend upon for us to help feed the children. And the children, honestly, enjoy coming here. Many of them are in summer school all day -- you know, the first part of that day, and they get off the bus. Many are walking here from the community. Some are dropped off to come in and have lunch and spend the afternoon with us.

I would encourage anyone to become a sponsor. I'll tell you, it's well worth the time and energy. And I found through our Department of Education staff, you know, answers to many questions I had were just only a phone call away. It was just being willing to step up and do this, and the program just continued to grow. And I thank you for letting me share about our summer feeding program. Thank you.

Thank you so very much, Kathy. I really appreciate you speaking from the perspective of a sponsor and the challenges of getting started by overcoming those in creative ways to serve your kids.

Another good example we have to share with you today is Martha Richards. She's the volunteer Program Coordinator for Grandview Park Presbyterian Church's Neighborhood Children's Ministry. Grandview Park Presbyterian Church is a small congregation of Latino and Caucasian members. Last year the church celebrated its 220th anniversary in Kansas City, Kansas. Martha has been a church member there since the 1950s, and has been active in building active programs for underprivileged children in the neighborhood of the church and the greater community for several years now and while raising her family there. I would like to welcome Martha about sharing your story about being a site. Thanks.

Hi, this is Martha Richards. And first of all, I have an apology to make. I did a typo in my information I sent, and we've been her 120 years. It might seem like 220, but 120 is the year. We live -- we are located in a neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas, which has housing of similar

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age -- about 120 years. And we operate as an open site through the church of receiving children from the neighborhood and beyond. We have no income guidelines because all of our schools are 50% or more children receiving free and reduced-price lunches.

We have sponsored a summer kids club in various forms for some time over the last thirty years, and I have been involved in that. Our church membership is about 70, and 65% of those are Latino families plus another 20 youths that the majority of those are also Latino. Our kids club was begun with an idea of having safe places for children to gather with caring adults providing supervision and to provide this at healthy start of nutrition and physical activities; marketable skills, including opportunities for education; and opportunities for service to the community. As we grew, we found that we needed additional resources because we were becoming much larger than we as a small church could manage.

So about seven years ago, we began to participate in the Summer Food Program. We work under the sponsorship of our local food bank, Harvester's Community Food Network; and they do the problem solving of making our facility meet the State education requirements and helping us to figure out how to do the paperwork. And it has been a very, very pleasant experience. These pictures on the screen are pictures that have been taken during our summer meal program. At the present time, the one that you see is our Kids in the Kitchen nutrition program that's brought in by Harvesters. Our benefits for doing this program over the years -- we've been able to build community in the city, meeting the needs of a changing population, and caring for the children and allowing the children to participate in a caring community.

Barriers to this have been a limitation of funds; and the overcoming of those barriers has been through a series of grant writing and finding partnerships throughout the city in areas that are more financially able to support our ministry. We've had to remain flexible. Part of our staff are those middle school and high school students who have been in the program as early elementary students and have come up through the ranks, and it gives them summertime opportunity to influence their younger siblings and give them training for future jobs.

We use a staff of two teachers, who are employed by the local school district; and adding to that are college students. Most of them have been in our program at sometime in the past, and they need summer jobs to continue their college. And we have then the high school and the middle school students taking on responsibilities as mentors. Another benefit is that there are conversations about higher education and careers after school days have ended.

We serve for half days, four to six weeks in the summer. It would be ideal if we could provide meals every day of the summer, and we're working toward that goal. This includes three days or more that we put the children on buses and taken them to a Presbyterian camp so that they can enjoy the outdoors, having swimming and horseback riding and all those camp activities that children enjoy and these children don't get an opportunity to do.

We have our partnerships -- without the partners we couldn't possibly still be in existence. At one point the United Way provided partnership by giving training in grant writing and promoting churches throughout the city to provide summer activities for the children in their immediate neighborhoods -- and that, basically, is what got us started.

The Kansas Health Foundation has supplied grants. Last summer we received a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to pay for our very small staff that we hired. The cost of food is reimbursed with Harvesters helping us through the paperwork that's required to get the reimbursement back.

The benefits are that we have had increased participation every year. Last summer we started thinking we would be serving 50 children, and we had over 100. And through the help of all of our partners, we were able to continue to build that enrollment through the summer as they enjoyed their self-prep meals.

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Our local families helped with the self-preparation. It was the first time that we had done it, and we were a little reluctant to think that we could provide the meals; but families, parents in the neighborhood, came in as volunteers under the direction of a person who was supervised by Harvesters. They helped to tweak the menu so that the food that we received from the food bank, we were able to acknowledge the cultural preferences and keep the children happy and give the parents in the neighborhood an opportunity for service.

Some of the activities that we have done to keep the children interested in the program -- there are playgrounds -- local parks within walking distance that are probably not as safe for children without the adult supervision. So one day a week, we walk to those parks and participate in soccer and playground and lots of hard work -- physical activity. We have -- during the days -- fun reading activities to keep pace with the -- so that the learning that is left with at the end of the school year isn't lost before they go back to school the next fall. We promote learning of recreational skills. Some of our older children have created some pretty terrific soccer teams among the younger children that have come. Kids in the Kitchen, which is what you're seeing on the screen right now, teaches children to make healthy snacks. And obviously, they do enjoy it very much.

I think that my time is almost up, so I'll turn it back over to Amber and any possible questions that you might have.

Fantastic, thank you so very much both Martha and Kathy. And as you can see, the partnership piece here is critically important for running a Summer Food Service Program. And whether you're the sponsor that provides the food and is seeking that kind of flexibility and wants to deal with that administrative type of work, or if you are an organization that just wants to be a site and be a place where the food is brought to you and then you provide the activities as well, there's space in this realm for all of us to have a role.

And I think we would like to open it up for questions now. You have two options for asking questions. I believe it's "*" on your phones, as well as hit the question and answer tab on your webinar tool. So, operator --

Yes, \INAUDIBLE\. If you'd like to ask a question, press "*" and please unmute your phone to clearly record your name. We'll give it one moment for the audio portion.

And I do believe we have a Food and Nutrition Summer Food Service Program policy expert with us -- Ms. Katherine Quinn. Are you on the line?

I'm here, yes.

She'll be able to help us answer some of the more detailed questions. Thank you, Katherine. Any questions on the phone?

I show no questions yet at this time.

Oh, no questions.

Okay, we're going to end up answering some questions from the -- one question is, Can we administer the program -- excuse me, let's try this again -- Can we administer a program at our location, or would we be required to do it elsewhere? If so, what are the requirements around times, hours, or capacity?

So to answer this question, to be a site -- that's the place where the children congregate to eat the meal -- if you want to supervise a site, there are no specific requirements around times, hours, or capacity for you to do that. There are potentially requirements around what time lunch

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is served and to be reimbursed for that. But if you want to do it in the park underneath the trees, if you want to have -- you need enough staff to supervise the number of children you have available. But the capacity and how you manage your feeding site is up to the resources that you have. So there's no real federal rules around that, as long as it's safe; that the food is safe; and that the children are safe.

Katherine, do you have anything to add to that?

No, I would just maybe add that applicants who are sponsoring a site should maybe talk with their State to make sure the hours -- they are supposed to be three hours that lapse between the meals -- that those timeframes are kept in tact.

Excellent. We have another question here that be good for FNS friends. Is there a limit to the number of children that each site is allowed to feed?

No, there's not.

So this has in the past been a challenge sometimes, to determine how many kids might show up to your site. I wonder if Kathy and Martha can speak to how you plan for the number of children to arrive to your feeding site.

With us, we have -- we're an old church, and we have enough food in the downstairs. And we actually prepare -- we're preparing food for two other sites. So we kind of go -- we kind of predict highs to start out. And if we have kind of an overflow, the children actually can go upstairs to have there lunch or we have some that would be downstairs in more of a controlled -- you know, there's obviously a controlled environment. But we also kind of -- we prepare more because we are able to serve leftovers the following day. And we always want to have enough food -- never ever run out of food as to not being able to provide for the children.

This is Martha. We have an enrollment process, although drop-ins are accepted all along the -- during the summertime that we have the program. But the enrollment process gives us a good idea of the number that we're going to be serving. And we never turn anyone away, but the self-prep meals especially -- it was easy to keep track of the number of children that we were going to have. We had a first-day panic last summer when we had 50 enrolled and we had 100 show up, but we were able to solve that by incorporating some food from the next day's meal plan into that particular menu. And that was helpful because it was a case of having people in the kitchen preparing the meal as if it were for a family, and they were able to meet that demand.

And this is Lisa. And I would just add, you know, in trying to assess just how many children might show up, keep in mind that marketing is also a critical factor; and sometimes there's a direct correlation between how much you invest in marketing -- whether it's putting an ad in the local paper; it can be distributing fliers at the school; it can just be, you know, generating buzz by word of mouth. But don't underestimate that marketing tool, and also getting the word out in advance, regardless of how you do, that also helps people -- specifically parents and guardians -- prepare. So for instance transportation to the sites is a big variable in determining how many people show up. So it's just one of the tools of anticipating and getting the word out in advance.

And this is Martha, and we start that process about a month before school's out.

As part of outreach, this is a good follow-up question because that is: Which dates does the Summer Food Service Program officially begin and end?

And the Summer Food Service Program operates when school is not in session, which is typically from the end of the school year in late May or early June until school begins again, usually late August or early September. And when school's in session, these dates vary across the country. So if you talk to your State agency -- and someone asked the question: "This is all

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overwhelming. How do I even get started?" -- the best place to start is to contact your friendly folks at your local State agency, which is likely the Department of Education. Again, on the upper right-hand corner -- those little shuffled pieces of paper -- if you click that box, you can download the State contacts. You can go ahead and just give that person a phone call and tell them who you are, and you're interested, and you need some more information. If you want to feel a little more well-versed before making that phone call, you can always go to www.summerfood.usda.gov and click there. There's useful information that spells all of this out. There's also fantastic outreach material that is free to download, to print. And so there's tools and resources there for you to help make sense of all of this information which we've thrown at you quickly.

We've just about reached our time. I think we have time for one more question, operator. Do we have a question from the phone lines?

We do have one. I believe it's Dr. Christopher Ledger. Your line is open.

Yes, I am interested to know how to get the \INAUDIBLE\ and how long it takes to \INAUDIBLE\

The question is: How long does it take once you've applied to become part of the program?

To become a sponsor -- so that would be the folks that provide food -- to be a sponsor, you have to go through a little bit of training related around food safety and make you have the appropriate equipment for that. Those usually applications are fairly easy -- not terribly complicated. Your State agency can help you to fill out that information. And you need to register to be a sponsor -- usually by mid-April/late March. If you want to be a feeding site or a place where children congregate and the food is delivered to you, those sites -- you have to find someone to be a sponsor with. And again, the State agency can help connect you; but there's not much of an application process there because as a feeding site, you're likely not dealing with the paperwork and administration that requires a bit of training. Is that clear?

So I really wanted to wrap up here tonight and say thank you to everyone who took the time to be on the call. If your question wasn't answered yet, we will go ahead and respond to you individually offline. Thank you to Kathy, Martha, Lisa, as well as Katherine for being on the phones. And have a wonderful day.