

## Governors Can Be Champions for Summer Meals

During the school year, 21 million children receive free and reduced-price meals through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs (NSLP). But when school is out, many low-income children relying on these school meals go hungry. To fill this gap, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides federally funded meals through the summer meal programs, including the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the NSLP Seamless Summer Option. These programs provide free, nutritious summer meals to children at approved sites in areas with high concentrations of low-income children. Unfortunately, these summer meals reach only about 15 percent of the eligible children nationally.

As Governor, you have the ability to make a real contribution towards the success of the summer meal programs. Throughout the Nation, States with Governors who have expressed strong support for the summer meal programs have shown increases in participation. By increasing participation, you are not only enhancing your efforts at ending childhood hunger in your State, but also accessing additional Federal

### Right Away

**Use your visibility to draw attention to summer meals** by participating in the **3rd Annual National Summer Food Service Program Kick-Off Week**, taking place June 10-14, 2013. Events held during this special week attract media attention, which helps spread the word to families that free meals will be available in their community.

**Encourage local leaders in rural areas** and other parts of the State with areas of high need to promote summer meals in their communities. Let them know that USDA summer meal programs can bring additional Federal funds and new jobs into their communities. Consider providing State funds to help provide transportation for children in rural areas to summer sites.

**Contact the Directors of the SFSP and NSLP State agencies** in your State and ask them to set a State goal to increase summer meal participation. Let them know expanding summer meals is a priority for you and you will work with them to increase access for low-income children.

dollars for your communities in the form of combined reimbursements for meals and administrative costs. In 2012, 161 million meals were served during the summer months, representing a \$513 million Federal investment in local communities. To see the financial impact Summer Meals can make in your State, refer to the Economic Benefit tool featured in the resources.

Around the Nation, States are demonstrating their commitment to ensuring that all eligible children receive nutritious summer meals in a number of ways, including dedicating staff to retaining and recruiting summer meal sponsors and sites, working across agencies to reach participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and other programs for low-income families, and working jointly with State partners and community organizations to engage children and families. To further support these efforts, below are 10 simple steps that you can take as Governor to promote the summer meal programs and expand participation in your State. USDA also has many resources that can help. By working together, we can ensure that no child is hungry this summer!



**Summer Food Rocks!**

Ensure that they are able to use fully use their USDA resources to effectively administer the Programs in your State.

**Work with your State Superintendent** to encourage schools in low-income areas to provide summer meals. Schools are ideal locations for summer meal programs because they are recognized as safe places that serve nutritious food. Remind school officials that many children in their schools are hungry in the summer when they lose access to school meals.

**Ensure that other State agencies are engaged** in the summer feeding effort. Departments of Education, Human Services, Agriculture, Housing, and others that provide services to low-income citizens may have resources that can be shared and can share information about summer meals with their clients.

## Throughout the Summer

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**Publicize summer meals through constituent mailings**, State and local human service agency newsletters, local newspapers, public service announcements, and religious bulletins.

**Empower your community organizations to champion summer meals!** Contact both large and small groups, letting them know the State is cheering them on. Highlight their efforts in media or State newsletters, thereby gaining free press for the summer meal programs and ensuring more families know nutritious summer meals are available for their children.

## Next Year and Beyond

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**Consider providing funding to summer programs that provide enrichment activities** that can reduce the achievement gap, ensure children are ready to learn when they return to school in the fall, and improve student test scores statewide. While USDA provides funding for meals and the administration of the meals programs, many of these vital summer programs need additional assistance to fully serve the children in your State.

**Establish a State summer meals workgroup**, with staff from your office, and other agencies in your State that have a vested interest in the health and safety of low-income children in the summer. Creative and innovative partnerships can lead to real change!

**Make it competitive!** Start a “Mayor’s Challenge” to encourage mayors to increase participation in their cities. Commit to making a guest appearance at the winning city’s Kick-Off Week Event next year.

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## USDA Resources

The USDA, Food and Nutrition Service has many resources to assist States and sponsors in administering USDA Summer meal programs. Some current resources include the following:

- **Summer Food Rocks!** Download and distribute Program flyers throughout your State.  
English: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Summer/library/SFSP\\_Promotional\\_Flyer.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Summer/library/SFSP_Promotional_Flyer.pdf)  
Spanish: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Summer/library/sp-SFSP\\_Promotional\\_Flyer.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Summer/library/sp-SFSP_Promotional_Flyer.pdf)
- **Economic Benefits of Summer Meals.** Find specific information on State participation rates and how increases in participation can increase Federal financial support for your State.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/SNAPandSFSPmap.htm>
- **3rd Annual National SFSP Kick-Off Week.** Taking place June 10-14, 2013, Kick-Off Week helps spread the word to families that free meals will be available in their community. For more information or for help planning a local event, contact Jeff Greenfield at the Food and Nutrition Service at [jeff.greenfield@fns.usda.gov](mailto:jeff.greenfield@fns.usda.gov).
- **National Hunger Hotline.** Make sure your State registers with the National Hunger Hotline. Families use the hotline to find meal sites.  
<http://www.whyhunger.org/findfood>
- **SFSP Outreach Toolkit.** The USDA SFSP Outreach Toolkit includes webcasts, free radio public service announcements, templates for promotional items, and resources in Spanish.  
<http://www.summerfood.usda.gov/Outreach.htm>