



Summer Meals Newsletter

MARCH 2016

SPRING IS HERE AND SUMMER IS NEAR
IT IS TIME TO KICK YOUR PLANNING INTO HIGH GEAR

What's New?

Coming Soon! Farm to Summer Best Practices - The SFSP Best Practices page will be updated to include best practices for increasing the use of local foods in summer!

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/best-practices>

Mobile Route Maker - This new tool allows Summer meal sponsors, vendors and State agencies to create mobile meal routes using data from the Capacity Builder. This tool will help a variety of audiences allocate resources efficiently and in a cost effective way.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/mobile-route-maker>

SFSP Toolkit Page - Check out updated toolkit pages, share with your sponsors, and let FNS know if you have a best practice or resource that should be added!

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>

Upcoming USDA and Partner Events

March 3rd, 1:00 pm EST

*Food Research and Action Center (FRAC):
Organizing Community Summits and Kick-off Events*

http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5118/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=80765

March 10th, 2pm EST

USDA FNS: Integrating Integrity with Increased Access in the SFSP

<https://cc.readytalk.com/r/>

Resources for State Agencies

USDA Farm to Summer Census - In this report, State agencies can find out which school sponsors are already procuring local foods and encourage them to procure local foods for summer as well!

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census#/>

No Kid Hungry Strategies for Sponsor Retention - Retaining strong sponsors is critical to the success and growth of summer meals program. This resource provides a quarterly timeline with specific actions to take, and links to more resources. <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/resources/No%20Kid%20Hungry%20Strategies%20for%20Sponsor%20Retention.pdf>

Check out PartnerWeb to view previously recorded webinars!



Proactive Planning- What to do this Month

- Ensure that State staff are ready to conduct site visits.
- Get an idea of where and when sites in your State will be opening, and reach out to sponsors near underserved areas about expanding in these areas. You can use the Capacity Builder (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/capacitybuilder>) to identify high need areas that would benefit from having a summer meals site.
- Check and see if there are any potential sites lacking sponsors and reach out to nearby sponsors about including them in the program.
- Reach out to any sites that are still unsure about how the program works.

Did you know....?

A national SFSP study found that about 8 percent of sponsors did not return to the Program the following summer. Reasons ranged from local personnel issues to financial problems.



Retaining Successful Sponsors

Keeping successful sponsors is vital to the success of summer meal programs. State agencies can focus their efforts on retaining successful sponsors in a variety of ways.

- **Training** - Effective training is essential for every sponsor but helps create and retain successful sponsors by ensuring that they fully understand their responsibilities. State agencies can meet training needs of sponsors by offering targeted training on specific areas based on feedback from sponsors at the end of the summer, providing online trainings that sponsors can reference throughout the summer, holding themed trainings to engage sponsors, and providing administrative review forms to sponsors at the start of the program to compliment formal training.
- **Mentoring** - If sponsors feel engaged with the program, they will be successful and more likely to return. The State agency can operate a mentor program where new sponsors are paired with returning successful sponsors, or with a member of the State agency's monitoring staff. Mentors can help sponsors check paperwork, troubleshoot during site reviews, or help prepare budgets.
- **Communication** - Open lines of communication between the State agency, sponsors, and sites help establish strong working relationships. Having a customer service mindset can be an effective way to make sure that sponsors needs are met. Conducting exit interviews or debriefs at the end of summer can help the State agency understand any issues that sponsors faced during the summer.
- **Outreach** - Outreach assistance can help experienced, successful sponsors expand their programs. State agencies can publicize their program through other State agencies such as State Medicaid, WIC, or SNAP programs. States can also develop ready-to-use outreach materials to help sponsors recruit new sites.