



## State Superintendents of Education

Improving access to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) has been a long-standing priority for USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) because the program reaches only a fraction of the children in need of nutrition assistance when school is out. Despite vigorous efforts at the Federal and State levels, SFSP is still vastly underutilized. FNS staff in the National and Regional Offices conduct efforts that address access issues that affect the program on a national level. However, the primary responsibility for expanding the program at the local level has been left to State agencies and Program sponsors. Our partners spread the word at the national and local level; but we are requesting your help to address access issues and to help feed more children this summer.

You can help by:

- **Communicating directly with your districts to share with them the importance of making schools in low-income areas available to feed community children.** Schools are the best sites for summer meals. Children and parents are familiar with them and they are known for providing nutritious food in a safe environment. A message from the State Superintendent can help shape district priorities for creating a network of schools that can serve as summer meals sites.
- **Communicating directly with your School Food Authority Director to work with schools in low-income areas to become Summer Meals Program sponsors.** Schools with full kitchens can help prepare meals for distribution both at school and within the community.
- **Creating Public Service Announcements and Press Releases about the USDA Summer Meals Programs.** Schools are a trusted community resource. A message from the leader of education in their State can help families know that the USDA Summer Meals Programs are useful resources for their families.
- **Encouraging teachers to share information about summer meal sites in their community with the children and families in their classes.** We often hear that these programs need champions. Teachers have the attention and trust of their students and their families and often know best the families that are in need. If they can reach out and connect these families with summer meals before the school year ends, they could continue to make a difference in the lives of their students even after the school year ends.

Together we can raise awareness about the SFSP and, ultimately, feed more children throughout the summer.

