

Utilizing Grants and Unique Partnerships to Serve More Summer Meals
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Questions & Answers

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1. We are a site not a sponsor but we do all the food prep and ordering. Is that unusual?

Answer: You are what is called a self-prep site. It is not the most common type of summer meals operation, but it is a great way to get healthy meals to kids! Preparing meals at site can help with quality and taste of summer meals.

2. Are packaged food distributors in the U.S. whose products are not necessarily made in the USA allowed to offer food products and backpacks for children in the summer food service program? The backpack program foods are high protein, low fat, low sugar nutritious foods, but some are imported. Can these companies participate but maybe not by using USDA funding for the program, and if so, how?

Answer:

USDA: Backpack programs are not allowed in the Summer Food Service Program.

3. I find schools often times serve pre-packaged, unappetizing meals. How can we encourage better options? Can we?

Answer:

Patrice Chamberlain: For schools, there are often so many factors that ultimately play into what gets served in summer meal programs. Sometimes there may be fewer or no central kitchens operating in the summer but sometimes we find that it is a symptom of a bigger need to make some year-round adjustments (e.g., staff development, addressing labor costs, using USDA commodities effectively, etc.) However, summer can be a great opportunity to:

- Conduct taste tests with kids and teens to help develop menus for the year
- Incorporate Farm to Fork and use fresh, local produce -- [Farm to Summer Food Programs webinar](#)

The [National Food Service Management Institute](#), [The LunchBox](#), and [Center for Ecoliteracy](#) have lots of resources for school districts to operate successful child nutrition programs that can offer high quality food in a financially feasible way. Food quality and summer meal program participation are intertwined and often, improving one can support the other. A good place to

start is learning more from your school district about the challenges they face and finding out if and how you can help.

4. I need help with becoming a sponsor? Who should I contact?

Answer:

USDA: Contact your State agency that administers the Summer Food Service Program. They will tell you exactly what it takes to be a sponsor and how to apply. Find your State agency contact information here: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm

5. Is there an estimated cost to run a program independently for a month?

Answer:

USDA: FNS does not have a resource that would estimate the cost to run a summer program. But Share Our Strength has a calendar for schools - check it out: <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/business-model-tool-0>

6. I am the Dietetic Program Director at the University of Maryland. My students are interested in helping with summer - promotion and activities. Where can we start from? Are there grants available to cover their transportation and other things they might need to develop?

Answers:

USDA: For Maryland, there is a Maryland Summer Meals Coalition. Most other states have anti-hunger coalitions or summer meals coalitions too. Contact your state agency for this information and names of summer meals sponsors that you can contact to see how you can help. www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm

Patrice Chamberlain: Assisting with nutrition education activities would be a great opportunity for dietetics students! There are lots of "pre-packaged" nutrition education activities that they could use. If funding can't be found to help, perhaps integrating this into the dietetics program for school credit would be a good alternative; perhaps as part of a practicum experience (school credits/units aren't cheap).

7. How are you able to serve meals in the library? Where do the children eat? Did you have a separate area or did they allow them to be served in the library?

Answers: The library doesn't prepare the meals rather they work with a vendor to deliver meals that they distribute on site.

They allowed us to serve inside in the crafts room. We just clean up and empty trash cans and provide trash bags.

Patrice Chamberlain: In CA, we worked with the libraries to determine which would be the best place to serve. In most branches it was in their community room. It seemed the easiest place to serve, monitor, and maintain an orderly environment. It is a great place to offer the programming too. Often, these rooms already had a refrigerator, sink, etc. Librarians have a pretty good sense of their library space.

8. Who supervises the lunch service at the libraries? Library staff or other volunteers/partners?

Answers: We have an employee on our staff hand out meals and keep count.

Our Site Supervisor is in charge of feeding the students before the actual Library Program starts.

Patrice Chamberlain: In CA, it varied. In some branches it was a library staff person and in others it was a volunteer. This summer, one of the sponsors will have a staff person at each site.

9. Am I eligible to apply for a grant for the Summer Food Service Program?

Answer:

USDA: Contact your State agency to see if you are eligible. Share Our Strength also created a memo listing lots of grant opportunities available to summer meals operators. Check it out here: <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/download/file/706>

Also, they recorded a webinar about grants:

<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/resources/Summer%20Grants.mp4>

10. The YMCA worked with what entities in Wilkes-Barre besides the WalMart Foundation to get this going?

Answer: They City of Wilkes-Barre (park attendants and junior counselors), Wilkes-Barre Health Department, Commission on Economic Opportunity, Live Well Luzerne (a healthy community coalition).

For promotion: schools, United Way agencies, churches, newspapers, TV, and billboards

11. When you form a partnership, is there an agreement made in writing?

Answer:

Deborah Waxman: If in reference to partnering with Transit Authority and UPS, we have never had anything in writing with either. That's how our small community works, but this might not work in other areas of the country where relationships may be more formal. It has been a verbal or phone conversation with management before the summer got rolling and then a quick meeting with drivers if requested. It is important to nurture these relationships, such as by asking lunch site supervisors to have kids make creative cards or one card they all write in that we can give to the various drivers who help with deliveries.

12. Do you allow adults to purchase meals at the park or library?

Answers:

USDA: Some sites allow adults to purchase meals but those meals are not reimbursable. FNS does not allow the use of our program funds to pay for adult meals, but if you get a partner or grant from another source, you can use those funds! This memo explains the rules - www.fns.usda.gov/meal-service-requirements

Some sites allow parents to purchase a meal so they can participate as a family.

Patrice Chamberlain: Our pilot libraries last summer did not venture into selling adult meals -- we wanted the library staff to feel comfortable with operating SFSP/SSO. This was such a shift for libraries, anything more would be overwhelming. I know of one library system that will be experimenting with offering adult meals for purchase this summer.”

13. How much do you charge for the adults?

Answers: The stated meal rate that is established by USDA SFSP.

14. How did you figure how many meals for the sites?

Answers: Our site supervisors come back to us at the end of the serving time and let us know whether they had 20 meals too many or turned away 10 kids that day, so we adjusted our numbers on a daily basis.

Also having a Community Calendar on hand helps. Different functions affect how many kids attend.

15. What happens with the meals that are not served?

Answers: Some donate the meals to a daycare facility in town or to the homeless foundation in the town.

USDA: For Program Requirements around leftover meals - check out www.fns.usda.gov/meal-service-requirements

16. Are most summer meals bag meals or eat-at-site meals?

Answers: All summer meals served to kids and teens have to be eaten at the site even mobile sites. In terms of the actual meal, they can be bagged or served on trays.

The Boys & Girls Clubs have a food bank that vends meals to our clubs and we feed the kids boxed foods at our sites

17. Is City Square serving SFSP meals only or do they claim meals under multiple programs (SFSP is one)?

Answers: City Square does not claim under multiple programs, but is able to do all of the meals under the SFSP, but with the support of other grants and partnerships that help with service and transportation.

18. What are the best ways to keep meals cold or hot?

Answers: Coolers, delivery bags (think pizza delivery), or Cambro food storage. All of these things are available at wholesale warehouses or restaurant supply stores.

Some use Cambro food storage containers that keep food at a safe temperature for up to 4 hours.

19. My Department of Health bans non-mechanical refrigeration (i.e. ice cubes).

Answer: There are “ice” blankets that don’t melt that you could use.

20. Do vendors offer these coolers at no cost or do you know what the cost is?

Answer: Some vendors will offer if they are your vendor. They do not sell these to the general public.

21. My center is for profit and we participate with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), is the Summer Food Service Program offered to non-profit orgs only?

Answer:

USDA: If you participate in CACFP as a for-profit center you are not eligible to be a SFSP sponsor.

22. Do parents usually go to sites with their kids?

Answers: Many SFSP sites in Texas do not have parent attending them, whether they are at apartment complexes, schools, churches, or libraries.

Another sponsor said, “At all our sites, 90% of the kids don’t come with adults. However, we are a small community and most of the kids served come from our Elementary and Middle Schools so my staff already knows them.”

Patrice Chamberlain: In CA, it varies by community. One of the driving forces for serving at the libraries was that we learned that in some neighborhoods, kids were already at the library all day on their own -- it was a safe place in a gang-dominated neighborhood.

23. I have not heard any conversation around partnering with faith-based organizations. I wonder if this is a challenging task to implement for faith-based organizations.

Answers: One sponsor said, “Not at all! Most of our 800 volunteers came from churches and many of our sites are church sites.”

Another sponsor said, “We are a church that was a sponsor last year. Worked very well and this year we are looking to expand.”

Patrice Chamberlain: In California, they are often vital partners in helping kids access summer meals. Depending on capacity of the organization, we find it is sometimes easier for FBOs to start as sites. We have some pretty phenomenal faith-based sponsors too but starting small is sometimes helpful.

24. Do faith-based organizations have to have a 501(c)3 designation to participate in the Summer Food Service Program?

Answers:

USDA: No faith-based organizations are exempt.

Other interesting comments:

- “I have a unique association for SFSP. We cook and serve out of Head Start Centers.”
- “This year we are going to try and partner with our new computer centers throughout the reservation. We got positive feedback from Computer Lab Coordinators.”

To watch any of our 2014 Summer Meals Webinar please visit:

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBccton6gOdrMM068BgMhIBuk-Xl2AhFg