

The Simplified Summer Food Program

Program Overview

- The Simplified Summer Food Program provides free meals and snacks to low-income children 18 and under when school is not in session.
- Local governments, school districts and non-profits can sponsor summer food sites, which may be located at schools, parks, recreation centers, housing projects, migrant centers, Indian reservations, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, houses of worship, summer camps, and others places where children congregate when school is out.
- To qualify, a site must be located in a low-income area, where 50 percent or more of the children in the area are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, or must serve primarily low-income children (at least half the children enrolled in the program must be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals). Migrant sites and camps qualify under different rules.
- Reimbursable meals must meet federal nutrition standards.



Summer Food Plays an Important Role in Communities

- When school lets out, millions of low-income children lose access to the school breakfasts, lunches and afterschool snacks they receive during the regular school year.
- The Simplified Summer Food Program fills this gap by providing free meals and snacks to children who might otherwise go hungry.
- Currently, the program is underutilized. Nationally, only 1 out of 5 children who receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year continue to receive meals during the summer months.

Summer Meals Benefit Low-Income Children and Families

- The Simplified Summer Food Program contributes to the healthy growth and development of low-income children by providing them with nutritious snacks and meals when school is out so they are better able to continue learning when they return to school.
- Many Summer Food sites provide not just meals, but educational enrichment and recreational activities that help children continue to learn and stay safe when school is not in session. The meals provided through the Simplified Summer Food Program act as a "magnet" to draw children to these activities.
- Providing meals during the summer months also helps parents stretch their food dollars at home.

It Pays to Serve Summer Meals

- The reimbursements from the Simplified Summer Food Program provide essential financial support to programs that serve low-income children when school is not in session.
- In the summer of 2008, Summer Food sponsors will receive \$1.69 for every breakfast they serve, \$2.99 for every lunch, and \$0.70 for every snack. Sponsors located in rural areas or those that prepare their own meals on-site will receive a slightly higher reimbursement- \$1.73 for breakfast, \$3.04 for lunch, and \$0.72 for snack.
- Summer nutrition funding can really add up. For example, a summer program serving breakfast and lunch to 50 children for eight weeks would receive approximately \$8,700 in federal funding through the Simplified Summer Food Program.
- Programs that provide meals but have not received federal funding through the Simplified Summer Food Program can now be reimbursed and use the money previously spent on food to serve additional children, offer more activities or hire additional staff.

New Accounting Requirements Make the Program Easier to Operate

- Sponsors are no longer required to keep records and accounts separately for administrative and operating costs. Instead, sponsors simply follow a "meals times rates" formula that allows them to claim the maximum reimbursement.
- This change in accounting procedures dramatically reduces the paperwork involved in operating Summer Food. Now you can focus on what really matters, providing meals to hungry children.

Getting Started

- Summer meals provide nutritious food to hungry children when school is out. To get started, contact the state child nutrition agency. State agency contact information is available at www.frac.org/afterschool.
- The state agency can provide potential sponsors with more information about the program, an application and let them know when the next Summer Food training will take place.

