

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

During the school year children from low-income homes typically receive at least one-third of the nutrients they consume each day from school lunch. Unfortunately, for many children school vacation represents a hungry time because school lunch is no longer available. As a result, emergency food providers often report an increase in requests during the summer months.

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to fill this gap. Among the organizations providing this service are Boy and Girl Scout Troops, YWCAs and YMCAs, school districts, community action agencies, churches, camping associations, 4-H Clubs, food banks, and municipal agencies. Feeding sites include local school buildings, recreational centers and parks. Rural sites can present onerous obstacles, such as transportation, but sponsors have developed creative solutions like a school bus turned into a mobile cafeteria to help overcome them.

 <p>Who can provide the service?</p>	<p>School districts, units of local government, camps, and private nonprofit organizations are eligible to be sponsors. (School districts can also apply to the PA Department of Education for a waiver to serve summer meals throughout the community using the National School Lunch Program.) To be a summer food sponsor, an organization must be certified by the PA Department of Education (PDE).</p> <p>Local sponsors provide summer meals. Some sponsors prepare and distribute the meals, while others contract out meal preparation to vendors such as schools or private food services. In another configuration, summer feeding sites are operated by non-profits and administered under the auspices of local sponsors responsible for finances and paperwork.</p>
 <p>How is it financed?</p>	<p>SFSP is an uncapped federal entitlement program administered by PDE. During 2010-11, PA received about \$13 million to cover the meal costs of over 103,000 children during a portion of the summer. To date, Pennsylvania has made no investments in the program.</p>
 <p>Who can receive this service?</p>	<p>An "open site" is located in an area where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free or reduced price school lunches. At such a feeding site, all children 18 and younger can receive free meals without documenting a child's family income. At an "enrolled site", where only children enrolled in an activity program at the site can receive a free meal, the area need not be low-income, but at least 50% of the enrolled children must have family incomes of less than 185% of poverty. At a residential camp, children who are not eligible for free or reduced price school meals may be charged for their meals.</p>
 <p>What is provided?</p>	<p>Both open and enrolled sites can provide up to two meals/snacks a day, with the exception that they cannot provide both lunch and supper. At residential camps, children can receive up to three meals a day. PDE reimburses sponsors according to the number of reimbursable meals served. Combined operational and administrative rates for self-preparation or rural sites: \$1.8800 per breakfast; \$3.2925 per lunch or supper; and \$0.7750 per snack. Rates for vended or urban sites are \$1.8450 per breakfast, \$3.2375 per lunch or supper, and \$0.7575 per snack.</p>
 <p>Contact</p>	<p>More information about SFSP is available by calling the Pennsylvania Department of Education at 1-800-331-0129. Information about whether a geographic area qualifies as an "open enrollment site" is available from your local school district, PA Hunger Action or from the PA Department of Education.</p> <p>To find an SFSP site in your area, visit www.pasummermeals.com/ or call 1-800-331-0129.</p>
 <p>Suggestions for advocacy</p>	<p>Encourage local municipalities, schools, houses of worship, and other community organizations to become a summer food sponsor or site and visit www.pahunger.org for ways to maximize participation at these sites next summer.</p> <p>SFSP, along with SNAP, WIC, school meals, afterschool snacks and meals, and child care food, make up our nation's nutrition safety net and must be protected during the Super Committee's works to produce \$1.5 trillion in entitlement cuts and any and all following efforts to reduce the deficit through cuts to programs that protect the most vulnerable Americans. Visit www.pahunger.org for related advocacy opportunities.</p>