

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM



In 1969, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to provide meals to low-income children when schools were out for the summer. Federal nutrition guidelines are used for SFSP free meals which are to be concentrated in areas with large numbers of low-income children below the age of 18 years.

Federal funds are provided to state agencies to administer SFSP. Other child nutrition assistance programs include the National School Lunch, Child and Adult Care Food, School Breakfast and Women Infant and Children (WIC).

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/program-history>

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/programs-and-services>

Summer Food Service Program

Summer Food Service Programs are generally operated by sponsoring organizations that handle administrative functions i.e. reporting, accounting, personnel and contracting with sites. Sponsoring organizations are responsible for ordering, preparing and distributing meals to sites. Meals are prepared in a central kitchen or contracted out with qualified food vendors.

While the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service provides funds for both programs, the Summer Food Service is a separate but related program than the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that began in 1946. NSLP is a federally subsidized meal program that provides nutritional low-cost or free lunches to children each school day.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>



Purpose

The SFSP targets students who are eligible for and receive free or reduced price lunches during the school year. The purpose is to fill the nutrition gap by providing meals year round to children who have limited access to food during the summer months. The SFSP strategy is to reduce hunger and its related health issues that impede healthy child development.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/how-become-sponsor>

Comparison of Number of Meals Served

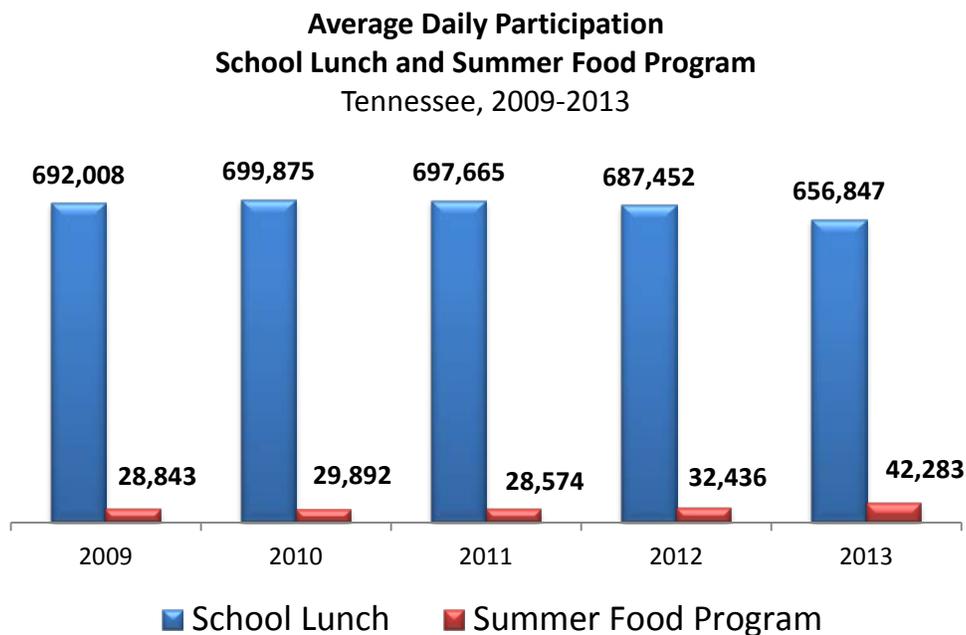
The number of children who receive school day lunches is far larger than the number of children who receive summer meals. The Food Research Action Council estimated that the number of meals served through the Summer Food Service Program in the summer of 2013, was only 1/7 (14%) of the number of free or reduced lunches served during the 2012-2013 school year. The Food Research Action Council also noted that in many states the number of sites serving summer meals has been reduced due to lack of participation and funding in some low-income communities.

USDA data indicates an overall increase in several child nutrition programs including WIC, school lunch, school breakfast and child and adult care food, SFSP participation declined in some states in recent years.

<http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/summer-programs/>

Tennessee

In Tennessee, the SFSP is operated by the Department of Human Services that contracts with several sponsoring organizations. In Tennessee SFSP, average daily participation rates are improving. The chart below indicates that SFSP participation grew from 28,843 students in 2009 to 42,283 students in 2013.



<http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>

Tennessee Department of Human Services contracts with sponsoring agencies to provide meals to eligible communities. Sponsors must provide meals that meet approved nutrition standards during the summer month. According to data from the Tennessee Department of Human Services, in 2013 over

ninety organizations contracted with the Department to serve as Sponsoring agencies serving more than four million meals.

http://tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/afs_cafp.html

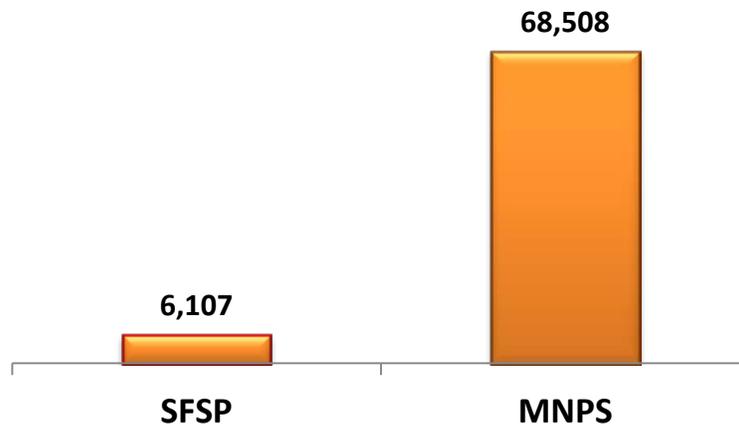
Davidson County

In Davidson County, the Metro Action Commission (MAC) and Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee are the primary sponsors of SFSP. The Summer Food Service Program at MAC reports that in 2013, it operated 109 sites and served on average between 4,000-6,000 meals per day for a total of 225,098 during the summer. Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee operated 34 sites that served 43,599 summer breakfast and lunch meals.

The number of meals served during the summer months represents only a small portion of the meals served to students during the school year. According to Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the nutrition department serves more than 8.4 million lunches and 4 million breakfasts during the school year.

The chart below indicates that SFSP serves less than 10% of the meals served than on a typical day during the Metro Nashville Public School year.

Daily Average Meals Served - SFSP and MNPS
Davidson County, 2013



<http://www.nashville.gov/Metro-Action-Commission/Community-Programs/Food-Service-Program-for-Children-and-Youth.aspx>

<http://secondharvestmidtn.org/learn/programs/kids-cafe/>

<http://www.mnps.org/Page56795.aspx>

More Summer Food Service Program Sponsors Needed

Various types of organizations can serve as program sponsors for the SFSP, including local government agencies, camps, faith-based and other non-profit community organizations may be program sponsors, as long as they have the capacity and ability to manage a food service program. Traditional sponsors

include Agriculture Extensions programs (4-H), USDA Rural Development programs, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Communities, congregations and local government entities.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SFSP-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

In a number of other cities, the public school systems serve as program sponsors because they have the equipment and space available. USDA provides the funding and technical assistance to the Tennessee Department of Human Services, which recruits and reimburses sponsoring organizations. Organizations interested in serving as sponsors may obtain additional information at this link:

<http://tennessee.gov/humanserv/SFSP/index.shtml>

Summer Program For Hungry Kids Gets Creative With Food Delivery from NPR (July 23, 2014) reported on the significant difference between the number of meals for hungry children provided during the school year and the summer. It noted, “More than 21 million children get free or reduced priced meals during the school year. But in the summer, that number drops to only three million.” It noted that nonprofit initiatives work to improve the situation, although the disparity continues.

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/07/23/334041056/summer-program-for-hungry-kids-gets-creative-with-food-delivery>

Best Practices

As noted, earlier in this report in some states participation in SFSP is declining despite the increase participation in other child nutrition programs. USDA highlights some promising practices to improve SFSP participation.

- *Midway Park, North Carolina* – The SFSP discovered that buying fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables enhances meal quality and supports local farmers. The SFSP worked with area farmers so that participants could eat SFSP meals featuring vegetables that were harvested the same day.
- *Franklin, Louisiana, St. Mary Community Action Agency, Inc.* – St. Mary SFSP provided transportation to rurally isolated children who had limited transportation options with the support of the congregation. The program collaborated with the local health department to provide safe food handling training for SFSP staff.
- *Moundsville, West Virginia Moundsville Housing Authority* – The SFSP Housing Authority Summer Program featured a diverse menu from around the world. The sponsor held Ethnic Days that featured culturally appropriate food, signs and banners in foreign languages designed to attract English Language Learner students and their families.

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

Additional information about Summer Food Service Program is available from USDA: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp>

