

WASHINGTON SUMMER FOOD GUIDE



FEEDING HOPE FEEDING WESTERN WASHINGTON



This Summer Meals Guide was developed by a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow, Rebecca Van Maren, who was placed at Food Lifeline September 2010-February 2011. It was written as her Hunger Free Community Report. It is intended as a way to engage community organizations, such as food banks, in providing summer meals throughout the state of Washington.

WHAT IS THE SUMMER MEAL PROGRAM AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?

For many kids who rely on school meals during the year, summertime leaves them wondering how they'll be able to fill their empty tummies. Communities need a program that can help provide children food they need for healthy development through the summer and to begin their new school year.



The Summer Food Service Program is a federal entitlement program to help meet the needs of children during the summer. This program helps organizations provide free, nutritious meals to children when school is not in session. Schools, public agencies, and private nonprofit organizations may apply to sponsor the program. Sponsors of the program can provide up to two healthy meals or snacks per day to children eighteen and under. They also receive reimbursement through US Department of Agriculture (via OSPI) which can help to cover the necessary costs of food and administering the program. In Washington, the program is overseen by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Meal sites are located in areas where more than half of the kids in the local school are eligible for free or reduced-price meals during the school year in low income communities.

OSPI encourages innovative ways to feed hungry kids during the summer, and there are multiple ways that an organization can become involved. The program may be run by one organization working alone, or by an organization working in partnership with several other organizations or individuals. The key measure of success is feeding more hungry kids in your community this year than the year before.

THERE ARE DIFFERENT ROLES YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN TAKE WITH SUMMER FEEDING:

ADMINISTRATIVE SPONSORS can be a school district, school, local government agency, non-profit organization (including faith based organizations), tribe, or camp. The sponsor accepts financial and administrative responsibility for managing the meal program. They attend OSPI's training, select sites, arrange for meals, train and monitor sites, and maintain and complete paperwork, including the reimbursement claims.

VENDORS are organizations with core competencies in meal production. They could be school districts, food service management companies, restaurants, hospitals, casinos, or others. Sponsors may choose to contract with a vendor to provide some, or all, of their meals. Partnering with a food vendor may be a good option for sponsors who don't have the facilities, staff, or knowledge to prepare meals that meet USDA guidelines.

SITES are physical locations where meals are served during a supervised time period. Sites could be located at parks, pools, community centers, churches, apartment complexes, schools, or libraries. Sponsors may operate their own sites or partner with other agencies which will provide a location and staff. Sites must have a *Site Supervisor* who is responsible for setting up and cleaning up the site, supervising the food service at the site, serving meals to the kids, and recording and reporting the number of meals served each day. The two most common types of sites are *open* and *closed enrolled* sites.

Open sites must be located in a geographic area where at least one school has 50 percent or more of the students qualifying for free or reduced school meals or 50 percent or more residents are low income (at or below 185% of federal poverty level). These sites must be able and willing to serve any child under the age of eighteen. These sites are able to serve up to 2 meals or snacks per child per day.

Closed sites qualify children individually and at least 50 percent must be from households at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Typically these sites are used to provide meals to children enrolled in activities with limited available space, such as a day camp. These sites may also be used to feed youth in summer programs that are not located in high-need areas, but are specifically intended to serve at-risk youth.

What role can your organization play with Summer Meals? Who can you partner with in your community to feed kids during the summer?

PROGRAM FLOW CHART

FEDERAL

USDA Food & Nutrition Services



**STATE
AGENCY**

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

Child Nutrition Services



SPONSORS



SITES



PARTICIPANTS

Children under the age of 18

SUMMER MEALS TIMELINE

OCTOBER-DECEMBER:

Find out if there was a summer meals program in your area the previous summer by searching www.parenthelp123.org under "Food Resources". Be thinking about if you have the capacity to run a program, or ability to expand your current capacity. Talk with your peers who are currently running a program. Approach your board with your intent to research the program further. Take into consideration your organizations fiscal year and budget.

JANUARY:

OSPI releases the current year's eligibility information that will tell you which schools have 50% or more students signed up for free or reduced meals. This information will help you decide where you could locate your summer meal sites. Some existing sites may be in your area. Look to see how many days they operated; some only run for a week or two during the summer. Think about how your organization can help to better serve your community. Hold a planning meeting with school food services staff, community agencies, church and local leaders to identify existing program summer meal programs, areas of need and suitable meal sites. Contact your local health department and inform them of your intention to operate a food service program and ask them for specific requirements you must meet, such as food handler's permits or other issues.

FEBRUARY:

You will need to submit your intent to participate to OSPI explaining how you will structure your program. Now is a great time to start thinking about some questions before you submit your application. Where will your sites be located? What is your Summer Food budget? Which model would work best for your organization -will you prepare your own meals or use a meal vendor? Will you hire additional staff or rely on volunteers? Call OSPI to talk with **Nancy Van't Hul** to see how sites would qualify. Also ask to be put on their mailing list to receive further information on trainings for the upcoming summer. Start to solicit potential partnerships (food vendor, summer programs, and site locations), asking if they would be interested in assisting to operate a free lunch site for needy children.

MARCH:

The application paperwork you will need to fill out is usually emailed to you this month. It is strongly recommended that you complete the application forms and submit them as soon as you

MARCH-APRIL:

can.

OSPI holds its mandatory trainings throughout the state during this time. It is strongly encouraged that you attend the training in your area as early as you can to help maximize the time you have to plan. Try to accomplish some of your planning before you attend OSPI's training. However, the training will provide you the opportunity to learn more about the program, and answer any questions you might have. Identify your staffing and training needs to run a successful program and develop a budget that meets these goals. Keep talking to local agencies and organizations that serve families and kids about your summer meal plans; start planning a collaborative outreach campaign to families.

MAY:

OSPI usually holds a makeup training this month. However, keep in mind that your application to OSPI is due by the end of May and early planning leads to more successful programs. Conduct SFSP training for your site monitor, supervisors, and volunteers. Conduct any pre-operational site visits. Make purchases necessary for the program's operations (coolers, canopy, tables, trash cans, etc). Prepare your outreach materials once you've located your sites. If you are doing outreach with nearby schools, make sure you give them the materials with enough notice to disperse them before school ends. There are other resources available to you with some great outreach ideas. Review the "47 Ways to Promote your Summer Meal Program". Also, the USDA has a great outreach toolkit on their website as well.

JUNE:

It is strongly encouraged that you submit your paperwork to OSPI *before* the first week of June. This is the month that summer meals begin; celebrate with a kick-off party and continue your outreach efforts.

JUNE-SEPTEMBER:

Continue your outreach efforts; it may be helpful to do outreach reminding people of the program during the month of July. Submit your reimbursement claims to OSPI; continue to conduct site monitoring. Evaluate your menu, and make necessary changes to better serve the kids and have a successful program. Evaluate your program and sites; solicit input from site supervisors, families, kids, etc.

TO ENSURE HIGH QUALITY SERVICE AND TO PROVIDE SAFETY OSPI REQUIRES:

- Monitoring of the sites to insure that the guidelines are being followed. Each sponsor must complete for each site: a preoperational visit, a first week visit, and a review within the first four weeks. However, additional monitoring should be conducted; this could be daily, weekly, monthly, or only as per federal regulation.
- Checking with your local health department to ensure you are meeting the safety standards that they require.
- Taking exact count of meals during the meal service – not afterwards. Because programs are reimbursed with federal funds, proper meal counts are very important. You will be submitting your meal counts to OSPI on a monthly basis. It's important to keep track of the meals daily to reduce questions later in the month. You will be reimbursed a flat rate for all qualifying meals. Kids are allowed to eat the meal only on site. Sponsors are only reimbursed for the meals that are correctly served, counted, and reported to the state agency, so having adequately trained staff or volunteers working at the site is critical.



BEST PRACTICES

Here are some great examples of how your peers throughout the state are using innovative ways to reach kids during the summer. Keep in mind there are various ways you can implement your program and these are just some best practices.

ST. LEO'S FOOD CONNECTION

St. Leo's Food Connection hires high school and college aged staff for their program. Every morning the staff prepares the sack lunches onsite. Then they are counted and put into coolers which are delivered by the staff to multiple sites. Staff members drive their own vehicles and are reimbursed for mileage and gas, in addition to their hourly wage. Depending on the site locations, they may deliver meals to multiple sites each day. Typically they arrive at the site, serve meals, and then move on to the next site 30 minutes later. For St. Leo's, sites at apartment complexes worked really well, especially when they were able to gain the manager's buy-in for the program. During the summer of 2010, St. Leo's sponsored 25 sites; they evaluated the number of kids participating at each site and adjusted plans for 2011: they will be concentrating on fewer sites and planning for higher participation at each site.

St. Leo's is also looking toward summer 2011 with the hopes of hiring adults as site supervisors. They are interested in hiring moms to run the sites as a way to increase site participation, and as a way to provide low income families with some income.

THURSTON COUNTY FOOD BANK

Thurston County Food Bank sponsored 5 traditional (OSPI) sites during the summer. They provided unitized meals (prepackaged) purchased from a vendor. Most of these meals were frozen to thaw and serve, or shelf stable. Milk and other perishables were provided separately. They used vans to transport meals to their sites, and typically have 2 staff per van. They also operated a self funded mobile meal program.

DES MOINES AREA FOOD BANK

Des Moines Area Food Bank ran their first Summer Meals Program during the summer of 2010. They chose to prepare their meals using volunteers and in the church kitchen adjacent to their food bank. They put the sack meals into coolers with ice packs and drove their van to each site. Employees would drive the food bank's trucks, so to minimize insurance costs; they hired 2 staff drivers who were over the age of 25. They also hired an additional staff, younger than 25, to assist with the program. Staff stayed at each site for 30 minutes, and then moved on to the next site. At the beginning of the summer they started with 2 sites, which were locations used with their backpack program during the school year. By the end of the summer, they added an additional site.

CITY OF SEATTLE

The City of Seattle has structured their program differently than those mentioned above. The City's Summer Food Service Program serves as sponsor and does not operate any site directly. Instead, they work with existing agencies that already have summer activity programs (such as Parks & Rec programs, neighborhood family centers, summer enrichment programs, etc.) to host the meal sites. Through a contract with Seattle Public Schools as the

meal vendor, meals are delivered to the sites daily, providing both breakfast and lunch for interested sites. In the summer of 2010, they operated 90 sites in Seattle and employ college work study students to monitor up to 20 sites each. Each meal is a unitized unheated lunch. They have enjoyed working with the school district because food service workers already know USDA standards and easily are able to provide the large quantity of meals that the City of Seattle needs.

AUBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Auburn School District has exemplified what it means to make summer meals accessible to kids. Noticing that kids weren't able to make their way to parks to eat lunch while parents were at work, they started bringing the meals to the kids. They have 49 sites at locations such as parks, summer schools, YMCA, apartment complexes and day cares, in addition to school sites. They outfitted 7 small school busses which the district had sent to the surplus with hot boxes, insulated containers, and other needed supplies. They use 6 of the district's central kitchens to prepare the food for up to 8 sites each. The food is then put onto the bus and driven to meet the kids for lunch. Once at the site, they unload a table from the bus and set it up with their variety of food. The kids enjoy their meal, and then they pack up and move onto the next site. They primarily use employees for this model, having 2-3 staff per site. However, they were able to use 3 volunteers this past summer.

WALLA WALLA PARKS AND RECREATION

Walla Walla Parks and Rec partners with their local school district to make summer meals. They have about 16 sites around the city of Walla Walla serving between 20,000-22,000 kids every summer. They have a staff member who, with the help of a volunteer, drives a van and delivers food on a daily basis. Their sites are located at parks, schools, and housing complexes. Their sites are comprised of summer school and established summertime programs, as well as other sites with lots of kids.

To help make their food more culturally appealing, and due to the high Hispanic population, they encourage their sites to have hot sauce, salsa and other condiments on site for the kids to use with their meals.

MASON SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Mason School District uses the Simplified Summer Food Service Program. They are a small district with 1 elementary school and use its central kitchen to prepare meals. Their cook prepares all the meals and delivers them by himself to their 5 locations. They serve breakfast and lunch at one elementary school, 3 low income housing complexes, and at a church that runs a vacation bible school. Their program typical serves less than 200 kids and it has a big impact for the participants in a small community.

Transportation can be one of the main barriers for kids to participate in Summer Meals. You'll need to think about different ways to either transport the kids to the meals, or more effectively, the meals to the kids. While we know that the best sites are located where children can walk safely, that isn't always an easy thing to accomplish, especially if you're located in a rural area.

OUTREACH

- WithinReach is OSPI's statewide outreach partner for the Summer Meals program; they have a great tool on their website that helps providers and families find the closest summer meals sites. Search "Food Resources" at www.ParentHelp123.org or call the Family Food Hotline (888-4-Food WA).
- Food Lifeline and Northwest Harvest were able to collaborate and deliver over 50,000 flyers to food banks throughout the state to help to spread awareness of Summer Meal Programs. Through this partnership, thousands of families visiting their local food bank went home with flyers advertising the statewide Family Food Hotline and online search tool to find a meal site in their communities.

IDEAS FOR PROMOTING YOUR PROGRAM

- Press release – all sponsors are required by USDA to issue a press release with information about their program; be creative and make it engaging to ensure widespread use of it by local media.
- Radio ads and PSA
- Send home information on the school breakfast and lunch menus
- Have a kickoff event at the end of the school year with a sample meal
- Give away extra items at your site (bag of produce for them to take home, first aid kit, etc)
- Hang flyers at pediatricians' offices
- Post banners, posters and yard signs
- Hang door hangers throughout neighborhoods with a meal site
- Encourage word of mouth advertising
- Recruit apartment managers, school principals, mayors and others to promote the local program
- Post information in PTA newsletters, library, post office, and other community bulletin boards
- Coloring pages or book marks for kids
- Distribute flyers to staff at local WIC and DSHS Community Service Offices to share with their clients
- Equip your van with a music player, like an ice cream truck
- Have special visitors like firefighters, mascots, magicians, librarians to your meal sites
- Have activities for kids at your sites; read, play games, nutrition education, contests, or arts and crafts
- Work with local movie theatres to have a summer food slide show before movies start
- Send home a flyer for the program wrapped around a piece of produce (ex: apple or potato)

The City of Walla Walla Parks and Recreation Department sends out the schedule of their sites with the Water bills that are sent to over 9,500 people in their city. They also are able to send out an email to their database of people who have registered for activities within the Parks and Rec Department.

RESOURCES:

- *Feed Your Brain grants* are possible through a partnership with *School's Out Washington, Children's Alliance and Discuren Charitable Foundation* and provide funding only for rural communities to offer summer literacy programming and open summer meal sites. This program not only addresses the child's need for food, but also helps address summer learning loss. Programs may apply for up to \$5,000, which may be used for a range of program costs (e.g. salaries, training, transportation, curriculum, supplies, equipment, furniture, and contracted services) except for food costs. The request for proposal is available in January on School's Out Washington's website; applications are due late March/early April. For more information, please visit their website: <http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/228/FeedYourBrainGrants.htm>
- *Meals for Kids Grants* are provided through state funds administered by OSPI Child Nutrition Services. There is approximately \$70,000 specified for Summer Meals grants, for sponsors that are starting up a new summer program or expanding an existing program. The funds can be used for equipment, outreach materials, staffing, or other needs related to starting up or expanding a program. These funds must be used by June 30, so it's hard to use these funds for staffing; recipients mainly use grants for equipment and/or outreach.
- An *Advanced Payment from OSPI* is available upon request. These advanced payments can provide you with funds early to help off-set the costs of starting your program, rather than having to wait for reimbursement payments. These funds, if provided early, would be deducted from funds you would later receive from the program.
- *Food Lifeline is in the process of developing a Summer Meals Program. We are looking to act as a sponsor providing food delivery to sites throughout Western Washington. If you are interested in participating in our pilot program for during summer 2012, please contact us at childnutrition@fll.org. You do not have to be a current Food Lifeline agency to inquire.*

OTHER RESOURCES FOR SUMMER MEALS

- The US Department of Agriculture (USDA): <http://www.summerfood.usda.gov>
- The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC): <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/summer-programs/>
- Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon: <http://oregonhunger.org/summer-food>

CONTACTS:

For information on guidelines and how to qualify your sites:

OSPI - Child Nutrition Services
Nancy Van't Hul, RD
(306) 664-3631
Nancy.vanthul@k12.wa.us

OSPI-Child Nutrition Services
Donna Parsons, MS, RD
(360) 725-6220
Donna.parsons@k12.wa.us

For information on outreach, best practices, and advocacy efforts:

Children's Alliance
Linda Stone
(509)747-7205
linda@childrenalliance.org

WithinReach
Claire Lane
(206) 830-7642
clairel@withinreachwa.org

For information existing summer programs in your community or the *Feed Your Brain grants*:

School's Out Washington
Danielle Baer
(206) 323-2396
dbaer@schoolsoutwashington.org

For self-prep models:

St. Leo's Food Connection
(253) 383-5048
keving@foodconnection.org

Thurston County Food Bank
Robert Coit
(360) 352-8597
director@thurstoncountyfoodbank.org

Des Moines Area Food Bank
Kris Van Gaskin
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Auburn School District
Carol Barker
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For vended models:

Walla Walla Parks and Recreation
Angela Potts
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