

Summer Food Service Program Fact Sheet

Overview

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (the Department), Office of Nutrition, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SFSP reimburses program operators who serve free healthy meals and snacks to children and teens in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session.

Additional information is available on the [USDA website](#).

Who can apply to participate in the SFSP?

- Any public or private non-profit school food authority (SFA)
- A public or private non-profit college or university
- A public or non-profit residential summer camp
- A unit of local, county, municipal, state, or federal government
- Any other type of private non-profit organization

All sponsors must be tax exempt, demonstrate the administrative and financial ability to manage a food service effectively, serve low-income children, and not be seriously deficient.

What type of sites can operate the SFSP?

- Open Sites operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, making them eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are served free to any child at an open site.
- Restricted Open Sites are meal sites in low-income areas that may limit attendance to address space, security, safety, or control issues. Meals are served free to any child at an open site.
- Closed Enrolled Sites provide free meals to children enrolled in an activity program at the site where at least half of the children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.
- Day Camps and Residential Camps also may participate in the SFSP. They receive payments only for the meals served to children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.
- Migrant Sites are sites where the majority of children receiving meals are from families of migrant workers.
- National Youth Sports Program Sites serve meals to children enrolled in a program administered by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.
- Conditional Non-Congregate Sites are sites approved to operate non-congregate meal service only under specific conditions, such as being

located in a rural area where congregate service is not feasible, or during unanticipated school closures or emergencies. These sites must be reviewed and approved annually by the State agency, with documentation that includes a food safety plan and a compliant meal distribution method (e.g., home delivery or parent pick-up). Sponsors must also complete pre-operational visits and demonstrate their capacity to manage non-congregate service in accordance with SFSP regulations.

Who is eligible to receive meals?

Any student under age 18 may receive free meals and snacks through the SFSP. Meals and snacks also are available to individuals with disabilities through age 21 who participate in a recognized school program for individuals with developmental or physical disabilities.

General Program Requirements

Conduct a Non-Profit Food Service

Sponsors must operate food services through SFSP that are not for-profit. A sponsor is operating a non-profit food service if the food service operations are principally for the benefit of participating children and all of the Program reimbursement funds are used solely for the operation or improvement of such food service.

Demonstrate Financial and Administrative Capability

Potential and returning sponsors must demonstrate that they have the necessary financial and administrative capability to comply with Program requirements. They must accept final financial and administrative responsibility for all their sites, in accordance with 7 CFR 225.6(d).

Serve Low-Income Children

Sponsors must agree to provide regularly scheduled meal service for children in designated low-income areas (called “areas in which poor economic conditions exist”), or for sites that qualify as a camp or a conditional non-congregate site.

Not Be Seriously Deficient

No applicant can be approved if it has been declared seriously deficient or terminated from the SFSP or any other Child Nutrition Program in previous years. However, an applicant may be approved if the State agency determines that it has taken appropriate corrective actions to prevent recurrence of the deficiencies and has repaid any outstanding debts.

Exercise Management Control Over Sites

In general, sponsors must demonstrate that they have adequate supervisory and operational personnel for overall monitoring and management of each site, including a site supervisor, and adequate personnel to conduct the required visits and reviews.

Provide Year-Round Service

Sponsors must provide a year-round public service to the area in which they intend to provide the SFSP. However, the Department may grant an exception if the sponsor:

- Operates a residential camp site.
- Operates a site that primarily serves children of migrant workers.
- Operates a site in an eligible area where children otherwise would not have Program access if not for this site.
- Operates a site in a lower-income area where a significant number of children will not have reasonable access to the Program.
- Proposes to serve an area affected by an unanticipated school closure.

Conduct Pre-Operational Visits

Before approving a site's application, sponsors must complete pre-operational visits for new sites, sites that experienced operational problems the previous year, and existing sites that are new to serving non-congregate meals. Sponsors must certify that the required pre-operational site visits have been conducted and that sites have the capability and the facilities to provide meal service for the number of children as planned.

Sign Written Agreements with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce

An approved sponsor must sign a written, permanent agreement with the Department, as required in 7 CFR 225.6(i).

How many meals do participants receive each day?

At most sites, children receive one or two reimbursable meals each day, usually lunch and/or breakfast. Camps and sites that primarily serve migrant children may be approved to serve up to three meals to each child, each day.

How much reimbursement does the government provide?

SFSP sponsors are reimbursed on a per-meal basis for the meals they serve to participants meeting program requirements. Funds received may be used for documented costs of running the program. The reimbursement rates are available on the [USDA website](#).

What are the meal service requirements for the SFSP?

To be eligible for reimbursement, participating sponsors must prepare and serve meals that meet the federal nutrition requirements. The following rules must be followed when serving meals at each site:

- Serve the same meal to all children
- Ensure that children eat all meals on site
- Ensure all children receive a meal
- Adhere to local health and sanitation regulations
- Plan for inclement weather
- Serve meals on-time

What recordkeeping is required?

To receive reimbursement, a sponsor must prepare a claim each month and submit it to the Department via the [Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System \(CRRS\)](#).

Sponsors must keep records that support the number of meals claimed for reimbursement for the past three program years plus the current year. The following are required records that must be kept for three program years plus the current year:

- Daily menus
- Daily meal counts
- Training records
- Site visit records
- Site review records
- Site review documents
- Food costs (on-site preparation or vended)
- Administrative costs
- Labor Costs

Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service Eligibility

Certain rural areas can now distribute nutritious meals to kids outside of the typically required group (congregate) settings through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO). Approved program operators in low income, rural areas can use alternate service models that are tailored to the needs of the children and communities they serve.

Sponsors: New and existing SFSP and SSO sponsors in good standing

Sites:

- Meet the definition of rural ([USDA Rural Designation Map](#)); Ohio Rural County List ([CRRS](#))
- Meets area eligibility (as applicable)
- Serves an area where there is no congregate meal service
- Approved integrity plans. Submitted integrity plans must include:
 - Planned meal service methods
 - Planned meal distribution dates/times
 - Food safety plan
 - Description of the internal operating procedures for the selected meal service option
 - Integrity Measures
 - Civil Rights Compliance
 - Meal Counting
 - Menu

Non-Congregate Meal Service

- The proposed site area should not be served in whole or in part by another site.
- Not in close proximity to a congregate meal site. Close proximity is defined as within one half mile between rural sites operating on the same day for similar meal types.
 - Documentation required to support a proposed site that is in close proximity to a congregate meal service.
 - Non-congregate meal service can potentially be provided by sites that are in close proximity to congregate service sites, such as camps or closed enrolled sites.
- Sponsors must ensure that the congregate and non-congregate sites will not serve the same population of children for the same meal service.

Hybrid Meal Service

A hybrid program provides both congregate and non-congregate meal services. The proposed site may only conduct a non-congregate meal service when the site is not providing a congregate meal service. The sponsor must also have an organized and supervised system which prevents overlap between meal services. Sponsor must reasonably ensure children are not receiving more than the daily maximum allowance of meals. The non-congregate option is not intended to replace congregate meal service.

Non-Congregate Meal Service Methods

- Home Delivery
- Meal Pick Up

Non-Congregate Meal Service Options

Multi-Day Meal Issuance

- Allowable up to a 10-calendar day period
- Sponsors providing a multi-day issuance and using registration or enrollment forms prior to meal distribution must be approved as a closed enrolled site only.

Parent or Guardian Pick-up of Meals

- Guardians may include other adults, such as caregivers, babysitters, grandparents, or siblings, that have documented permission by the parent or legal guardian to pick up meals for the child.

Bulk Meal Components

- Self-preparation sponsors only
- Allowable up to a 5-calendar day period.

Conditional Non-Congregate Meal Service

A site which qualifies for Program participation because it conducts a non-congregate meal service for eligible children in an area that does not meet the definition of “areas in which poor economic conditions exist” and is not a “Camp.”

- For locations that do not meet area eligibility
- Approved for reimbursement only for meals served free to enrolled children who meet the Program's income standards.
- May charge for meals served to children who are not served meals under the Program.
- If charging separately for meals must also include additional public information
- Submit a copy of its hearing procedures with its application.
- Include the number of children enrolled who meet the income standards in the application. If such information is not available at the time of application, this information must be submitted as soon as possible thereafter for reimbursement.

Full Management Plan

On Sept.19, 2022, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the [Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP](#). This rule amended SFSP regulations to strengthen program integrity. The rule aligns program requirements with other child nutrition programs such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Sponsors must submit full management plans at a minimum, every three years. Potential new sponsors must submit a full management plan to apply to sponsor the program. Experienced sponsors must submit a full management plan if they have experienced operational problems in the prior program year.

Performance Standards

[7 CFR 225](#) identifies three performance standards that all sponsors must demonstrate:

- Financial Viability
- Administrative Capability
- Program Accountability

Non-Profit Verification

[Per 7 CFR 225.6\(i\)\(1\)](#) SFSP Sponsors must operate a nonprofit food service. *Nonprofit food service* means all food service operations conducted by the sponsor principally for the benefit of children, all of the revenue from which is used solely for the operation or improvement of such food services. Sponsors must show that their Program operates as a *nonprofit food service* and must use any unused reimbursement remaining at the end of the Program year to pay allowable costs of other Child Nutrition Programs or for SFSP operations the following Program year.

Net cash resources means all monies, as determined in accordance with established accounting systems, that are available to or have accrued to a sponsor's nonprofit food service at any given time, less cash payable. Such monies may include, but are not limited to, cash on hand, cash receivable, earnings on investments, cash on deposit and the value of stocks, bonds, or other negotiable securities. Reimbursements [may not](#) result in the accumulation of net cash resources and should not exceed one month's average expenditures for sponsors operating only during the summer months and three months' average expenditure for sponsors operating Child Nutrition Programs throughout the year.

Unused reimbursement means the difference between the amount of reimbursement earned and received and allowable costs, when reimbursement exceeds costs. If a sponsor receives more reimbursement than expended on allowable costs, the sponsor should use this unused reimbursement to improve the meal service or management of the Program. Sponsors must monitor the nonprofit food service account to ensure the net cash resources do not exceed the monthly average at the end of the Program year. If the net cash resources exceed the monthly average, this is considered an excess cash balance and sponsors are required to have an approved SFSP Spend Down Plan with the Office of Nutrition.

Resources

Training

Ohio Child Nutrition Training Courses: These on-demand courses are available year round as Program trainings and resources. Participants will receive a certificate upon successful completion.

DEW-150: Civil Rights Training in Child Nutrition Programs

DEW-174: Promoting and Marketing Summer Meals

DEW-175: Improving Food Safety at SFSP Sites

DEW-178: Planning and Administering the SFSP

DEW-179: SFSP Annual Refresher Training

DEW-523: SFSP Meal Planning for Summer Success

DEW-629: SFSP Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service

SFSP Manuals:

[2024 SFSP Administration Guide](#)

[2017 Site Supervisor's Guide](#)

[2017 SFSP Monitor's Guide](#)

[2018 SFSP Nutrition Guide](#)

[CRRS Summer Food Service Program User Manual](#)

USDA Resources

[SUN Meals \(SFSP\) Reimbursement Rates](#)

[SUN Programs: USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids](#)

Please contact the Office of Nutrition:

Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Office of Nutrition

25 South Front Street, MS 303 Columbus, OH 43215

614-466-2945

1-800-808-6325

Additional Information is also available at <http://education.ohio.gov> or www.fns.usda.gov

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- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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