



# Summer Food Service Program

Volume Two, Number One  
February 2009

[www.alaskafood.org](http://www.alaskafood.org)

Summer Food Service Program .....	1
How to Participate .....	1
Tips for Success .....	2
More Resources .....	2

*“Unfortunately, only 20 percent or fewer of those children who are eligible for free/reduced price meals during the school year, eat at a food program site during the summer.”*

## Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is the single largest Federal resource available for local sponsors who want to combine a feeding program with a summer activity program. SFSP was first created as part of a larger pilot program in 1968. It became a separate program in 1975. Almost 2 million children participated at almost 31,000 sites in the summer of 2005.

During the school year, nutritious meals are available through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. But those programs end when school ends for the summer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Summer Food Service Program helps fill the hunger gap.

Last summer, the average daily attendance at SFSP sites in Alaska was nearly 1, 800 kids and almost 160,000 meals were served. Additionally, the program brought more than half a million federal dollars to our state economy.

Reimbursements are based on the number of meals served. SFSP targets low-income areas to reach the neediest populations. Unfortunately, only 20 percent of kids in the United States who are eligible for free/reduced price meals during the school year eat at a food program site during the summer.

## How to Participate

SFSP provides federal funding in the form of reimbursements to schools, government agencies, camps and private non-profit organizations for meals served to children 18 and under during the summer months when school is not in session. There are several ways your organization can become involved:

**Become an SFSP Sponsor** - As a sponsor, you can make a difference to the nutritional well-being of the children in your community. Not only will you receive training, but you will also be able to establish eligible sites; arrange for meal preparation and delivery; hire, train, and supervise staff; and perform other valuable community services for the children near you.

**Run an SFSP Site** - Some organizations do not have the financial or administrative ability to become a sponsor, but can supervise food service for children, along with recreational or enrichment activities. You may want to consider supervising a site. You will receive valuable training by a

# Strengthening Alaska's Anti-Hunger Network

sponsor on how to run a site. For more information about organizations that can sponsor your site, contact the State of Alaska Summer Food Service Program Specialist, Shodie Akin at [shodie.akin@alaska.gov](mailto:shodie.akin@alaska.gov)

**Be an SFSP Vendor** - Organizations with kitchens and food service staff, including schools, can participate in SFSP as vendors. As a vendor you will prepare and deliver meals meeting federal nutritional guidelines to sponsored sites.

**Volunteer at an SFSP Site** - If your organization cannot take on the responsibilities of a sponsor or a site, you can team up with a sponsor to assist in activities that help make summer healthy and fun for the children in your community. As a volunteer, you may teach a child to swim, fly a kite, garden, cook, read, and many other activities important to the well-being of a child.

## Tips for Success

Five Keys to Success in the Summer Food Service Program:

1. **Serve quality meals:** If kids don't like what you serve, your program won't survive.
2. **Keep sound financial records:** Calculate how much money you have to spend, what your maximum reimbursements are and don't overestimate your participation.
3. **Ensure access to program:** If you need to transport kids to your site, consider working with organizations that have vehicles to transport or working with the school district to get buses. An alternative option would be getting a vehicle to have mobile delivery of food to the children.
4. **Include activities:** By including an activity program—athletic, academic or arts and crafts—at your site, you can help maintain high attendance. Partnerships with schools, parks and recreation departments, and nonprofit organizations can help keep costs down by organizing and supervising these activity programs.
5. **Publicize the program:** The Summer Food Service Program is not widely known. Including promotion in your SFSP plan can make the difference in having a successful program. Promote your program through the media and the community to get more kids to your site.

**Next Month:  
Planning a  
Special Event**

## More Resources

For more information on eligibility requirements and the ways you can participate in the SFSP, refer to the USDA publication, "A Guide to Starting the Summer Food Service Program in Your Community," at [www.summerfood.usda.gov](http://www.summerfood.usda.gov) or contact the Food Bank of Alaska Child Nutrition Coordinator at [agawreluk@foodbankofalaska.org](mailto:agawreluk@foodbankofalaska.org) or 222-3107.

