

Welcome!

We'll get started in just a few minutes. While you wait, answer the **Question of the Day** in the chat box:

How do you collect feedback on your summer meals program?

Tell us in the chat!



School's Out, Food's in!

Strategies to Improve the Summer Meals Experience for Children and Families

May 23, 2023





HOUSEKEEPING





Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Resources from No Kid Hungry

- Paige Pokorney, Share Our Strength

Strategies to Improve the Summer Meals Experience

- Kara Moore, Lowcountry Food Bank, SC
- Debbi Davidson, Arkansas City Recreation Center, KS

Q&A





**Resources from
No Kid Hungry**





Listening to your community

Who?

- Young people (those who attend your program *and* those who don't)
- Parents, guardians, and caregivers
- Community partners and other youth-serving organizations

How?

- Surveys
- Listening sessions
- Conversations at sites
- Community data and research reports



Listening to your community

What?

- How do they like the food?
- What food options do they wish were offered?
- Does the site feel inviting and inclusive?
 - Are young people and families comfortable visiting the site? Do they feel safe?
- Is the site location convenient to access?
- Are the site times convenient to access?
- What would they change to make the program better?

Survey tips

- Offer an incentive like a raffle entry or small token (e.g., stickers, small toys, etc.)
- Offer in multiple languages and verbally administered
- Kid-friendly options
 - Smiley face surveys
 - Make it a game



Listening session tips

- Offer multiple times, convenient for participants
- Consider translation services
- Offer childcare or vouchers for childcare if possible



Let your community shape your program

Let Your Community Shape Your Program

Conversation Starters for Designing More Inclusive School Meals Programs

Students and their families are the most important stakeholders in school nutrition programs. These questions can be used to guide conversations with school nutrition staff for the purposes of identifying barriers that students and their families may face in accessing school meals.

Questions for Identifying Barriers that Students and Families May Face in Accessing School Meals

- Have you connected with your district's McKinney-Vento liaison to identify ways to support students experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity within your district?

If so, how are you tailoring the meals programs to meet children's and families' needs?

For example, a school district in CA made special accommodations for families experiencing housing instability, including offering daily hot meal pick-up for families without refrigeration or freezer capacity required to participate in their standard weekly meal service that includes a mix of hot, refrigerated, and frozen meals.

- Are there any families with immigrant or refugee status within your district?

If so, how are you adapting to meet dietary preferences, communicate in preferred languages, and create an environment at meal sites where families feel represented, welcomed, and respected?

Families with immigrant status may be hesitant to access public benefits, including school meals, fearing immigration consequences due to public charge action. FRAC's resource, [Food Over Fear: Overcoming Barriers to Connect Latinx Immigrant Families to Federal Nutrition and Food Programs](#), features important recommendations from immigrant

families on opportunities to connect families to federal nutrition programs, including school meals.

- Are there students who speak languages other than English in your district? What are the primary languages?

If so, are communications about the meals programs in those languages? Is there an opportunity to hire someone from the communities who speaks languages other than English to be a part of the team and communicate with students and their families?

- Are there transient/migrant populations in your district, including seasonal workers, families with unstable housing, military families, and children in foster care?

If so, how are you tailoring your meal program to meet various needs?

You may consider surveying families to better understand their schedules and then tailoring meal service accordingly so that families who may not have permanent residence in your district can still participate in school meals. For example, if seasonal farmworkers and their families live in your school district, are you making meals available at times and locations that families can access and that fit within their schedules?

Continued on next page



LET YOUR COMMUNITY SHAPE YOUR MEALS PROGRAM

Children and families are invaluable thought partners in designing school and out-of-school time meals programs. When families are brought in at every stage of program design and delivery – instead of a “top-down” approach that excludes community involvement – families are better able to access and are more excited about the meals served, and consequently, a greater number of children receive healthy and nutritious food.

The discussion questions and stories presented here are meant to serve as a resource for schools and nonprofit organizations looking to more meaningfully engage kids and their families in program design and delivery. Consider soliciting input from families and those working closest to families as you continue to develop these questions and stories with your full team.

Have a story to share about how your community shapes your meals program? Email us at bestpractices@sternfi.org.

Questions to Consider

- Who might your meals program be missing?** Compare school enrollment to participation, and compare current participation to a normal school day or summer day. If demographic data is available, consider breaking down data by race, ethnicity, age, and geography to help you identify gaps in program access. If data is not available, consider bringing together a representative group of community stakeholders, including parents and caregivers, to explore ways you can collectively identify communities that your meals program may not be reaching.
- How can you seek input from the kids, teens, and families you are trying to reach?** If you have never asked kids or their families to provide feedback, start with informal conversations. Those that do participate likely have a hunch about why others may not be participating. Just asking a few simple questions can be a great way to assess how you might improve your program. If you're looking for more formal feedback, think about administering a short survey or hosting a focus group. Make sure surveys and conversations are in hosted in languages that families feel comfortable speaking, and if possible, appropriately compensate parents/caregivers for their time. If current staff cannot hold a conversation or translate a document into the languages that families speak, consider bringing local caregivers onto your team as staff, volunteers, or board members.

In practice: Edenton Chowan School District

Edenton Chowan School District in NC was struggling with low breakfast participation among high school students. Because the Superintendent's Council of Students met regularly with Superintendent Rob Jackson, Dr. Jackson used this forum as an opportunity to ask students why they were not participating. Many shared that breakfast was served too early in the morning, and others found it inconvenient to get to the cafeteria and eat breakfast before the bell rang. Students thought a better model would be a “second chance breakfast,” which students could grab from stations in the hallways after their first class and eat in their next. Some teachers initially opposed the idea, so Dr. Jackson met with them separately to express the importance of breakfast to academic success and eventually won their support. With approval from all staff, high school students made a plan to design and build three breakfast carts themselves in their woodworking class. Students in the apparel class sewed the cart covers, and visual arts students designed flyers and digital promotion materials. The high level of student engagement and ownership over the new “second chance” breakfast program made breakfast a regular part of the school day and increased participation.




A breakfast cart made by Edenton Chowan high school students

1

Serving tasty, culturally inclusive foods

Meal Quality: Adaptability, Creativity and Fun

Rural Communities Leading the Way: Introducing Local Foods to Meal Service



NO KID HUNGRY

RURAL COMMUNITIES LEADING THE WAY: INTRODUCING LOCAL FOODS TO MEAL SERVICE

Rural schools and community providers utilize their agrarian geographies to bring local fruits, vegetables, and even meats and eggs to their meal programs. This close connection to their local farmers and ranchers has created a system that can overcome common supply chain disruptions, invest in their local economy, and create engaging educational opportunities.


Rural communities create these local school food systems by partnering with local and regional businesses, buying directly from farmers, and combining meals with agricultural education. Hear from three different organizations on how they use these local food procurement strategies to create stronger bonds in their communities, purchase local seasonal foods, and create unique educational opportunities for children of all ages.

Read on to learn how these local food procurement strategies can be replicated in your community.

1. Partner with Local/ Regional Businesses

Partnering with local businesses not only invests in your local economy but also allows you to circumnavigate supply chain disruptions.

Local produce distributors, restaurant suppliers, and farmer cooperatives can be great partners to solicit donations or purchase commonly used menu items. When gathering bids for suppliers, think about including a preference for local produce and meats in your selection criteria.



Meal Quality: Adaptability, Creativity and Fun

Meal quality is an integral component of any meal program. It can mean many different things, including serving culturally appropriate foods, offering a hot meal on cold days, and making sure the appearance of the meals are appealing to students. This resource shares promising practices from school nutrition teams across the nation that have utilized their creativity and ingenuity to master meal quality.



Tony is enjoying his Grab and Go meal. Photo credit: No Kid Hungry/Jordan Hay

Promising Practices

Focus on Customer Service and Inclusivity

Kids and families are the customers of the meal programs. Keeping them in mind throughout all aspects of the meal program will help to ensure their needs are being met. It's also important to provide meals that are culturally appropriate and appealing to the communities in the district. Offering taste tests, and surveying students and families can provide valuable insight regarding the likes and dislikes of the meals being offered.

Supporting Resources

- No Kid Hungry's [Let Your Community Shape Your Meals Program](#) provides discussion questions and stories that can serve as a resource for schools and nonprofit organizations looking to more meaningfully engage kids and families in program design and delivery.
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation's [Marketing and Customer Service Center](#) provides tips and resources to collect student and family feedback.
- [National PTA's Student and Family Perception Survey](#) is an example of a simple survey asking about meal quality.
- Online surveys can be a simple and effective way to collect feedback. This [Google Forms Survey](#) is an example of a parent survey that can be emailed out to families, or families can fill out the survey via an electronic tablet while picking up meals.
- No Kid Hungry's [Adapting School Nutrition During COVID-19](#) spotlights the Food Services team at Vaughn Next Century Learning Center and how they redesigned their school nutrition program by collaborating with families and the entire Vaughn staff.

Cycle Menus: Some districts find cycle menus to be helpful with customer service because they allow popular menu items to be served regularly and can incorporate a fun theme into the menu, such as "Taco Tuesday" or "Pizza Friday". Unpopular items can be swapped out of the menu rotation to better accommodate student preferences. Cycle menus also give students multiple opportunities to try foods, as it often takes several times for a child to be exposed to a food in order for them to try it and determine whether they like it.





Youth engagement strategies

- Hire students and young adults
- Include volunteer opportunities for young people at your sites (serving, playing with children, etc.)
- Create a youth advisory council to help design and promote your program

[Tips for Staffing Summer Meals Programs](#)

Programming resources

- USDA's [Summer Food, Summer Moves Resource Kit](#)
- [National Summer Learning Association](#)
- Partner with local youth-serving organizations



Additional Resources

[SFSP & SSO Requirements - Comparison Chart Of Usual Vs. COVID-19 Waiver Operations](#)

[Feeding A Crowd - Tips For Congregate Meal Service](#)

Staffing

- [Hiring & Retaining Staff: Your Most Precious Commodity](#) (webinar recording)
- [Staffing Up: Strategies For Working Through Labor Shortage Challenges](#)
- [Tips For Staffing Summer Meals Programs](#)

Area Eligibility:

- [Navigating Area Eligibility In Summer And Afterschool Meals](#)
- [USDA's Capacity Builder Map](#)
- [Averaged Area Eligibility Map](#)

Non-Congregate Resources from No Kid Hungry

Why non-congregate meals:

[Making the Most of a Moment: Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas](#)

Webinar:

[Making the Most of a Moment: Non-congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas](#)

Implementation guide:

[Successful Non-Congregate Meal Service Models For Rural Areas: Implementation Guide](#)

Case studies:

- [Grab & Go Success Stories - Missoula Food Bank & Community Center, Montana](#)
- [Grab & Go Success Stories - Lowcountry Food Bank, South Carolina](#)



Successful Non-Congregate Meal Service Models for Rural Areas: Implementation Guide

In approved states beginning summer 2023, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and NSLP Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sponsors can operate non-congregate programs in rural communities without access to a congregate meal site. Find more information in [USDA's Implementation Guidance for Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas](#).

This resource outlines effective models for non-congregate meal service. Use this guide to find strategies and tactics to execute a successful non-congregate summer meals program in your rural community.

Please reach out to your state agency to confirm the availability of non-congregate meal service and allowable models. Note: States are not required to make the non-congregate option available this summer. State agencies had to submit a plan to USDA for approval by April 1, 2023 to allow non-congregate meal service in summer 2023.

Sections of this Implementation Guide

- [Definitions](#)
- [Considerations for Non-Congregate Meal Service](#)
- [Meal Distribution Models](#)
 - [Drive Thru or Curbside Pick-Up](#)
 - [Walk-Up Distribution](#)
 - [Mobile Route Distribution](#)
 - [Direct Home Delivery](#)
- [Meal Distribution Logistics](#)
- [Communication](#)
- [Partnerships and Additional Services](#)

Resources from No Kid Hungry

Summer Meals Outreach Toolkit

- Sample social media posts
- Website blurbs
- Customizable flyers
- Template letters to caregivers
- Template FAQs

All in English and Spanish!



No Kid Hungry Texting Line and Free Meal Finder Map

Text “FOOD” or “COMIDA” to 304-304 to find the nearest summer meals site to you!

You can also visit NoKidHungry.org/Help or NoKidHungry.org/Ayuda for our interactive Free Meal Finder map of summer meals sites.



School's Out, Food's In!

No Kid Hungry Summer Webinar Series

February 28th at 3pm EST - [Planning for Summer Meals: Strategies to plan smarter, not harder](#)

March 28th at 3pm EST - [Make it Mobile: A deep dive into mobile meal programs](#)

April 25th at 3pm EST - [Spread the Word: Summer Meals and Summer Pandemic EBT outreach and promotion](#)

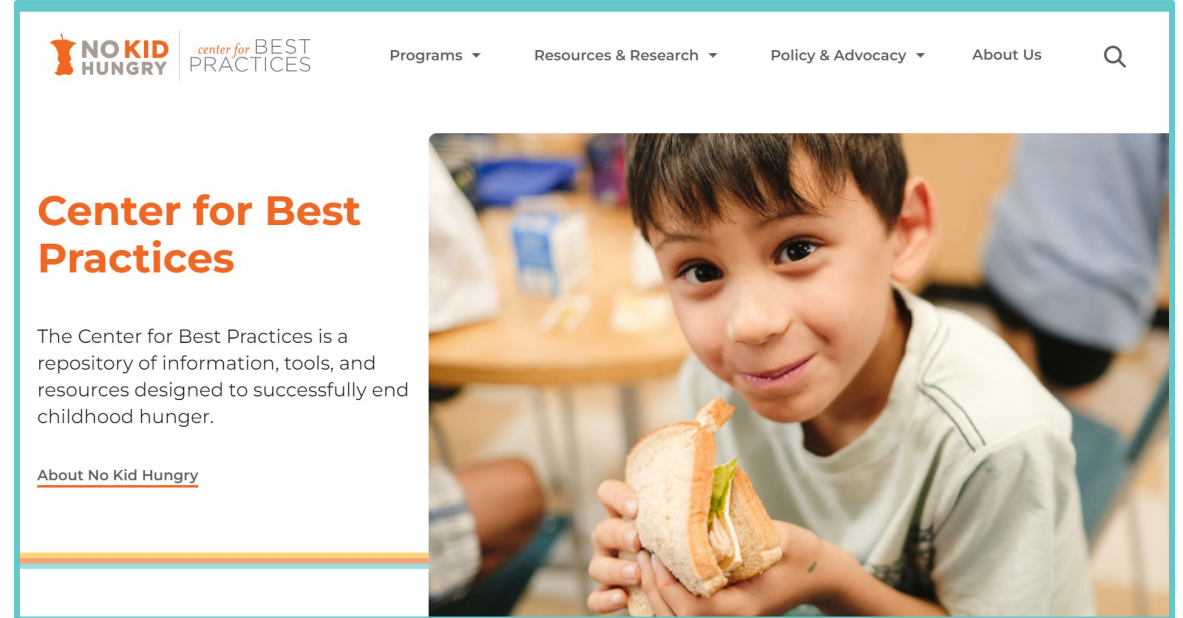
May 23rd at 3pm EST - [Strategies to Improve the Summer Meals Experience for Kids and Families](#)

June 20th at 3pm EST - [Year-Round Meals: Tips for transitioning from summer to afterschool meals](#)

We have a new website!

New features!

1. [No Kid Hungry Focus Area Map](#) that identifies areas with the highest number of children in need and potentially under-resourced communities within each state
2. [CEP Opportunity Finder](#) tool helps No Kid Hungry advocates and local education agencies identify districts with schools that are eligible for the Community Eligibility Program but are not currently participating in CEP.



And all of our great content!

- Resources
- Webinars
- Program pages



**Kara Moore,
Director of Child Hunger
Programs, Lowcountry
Food Bank, SC**





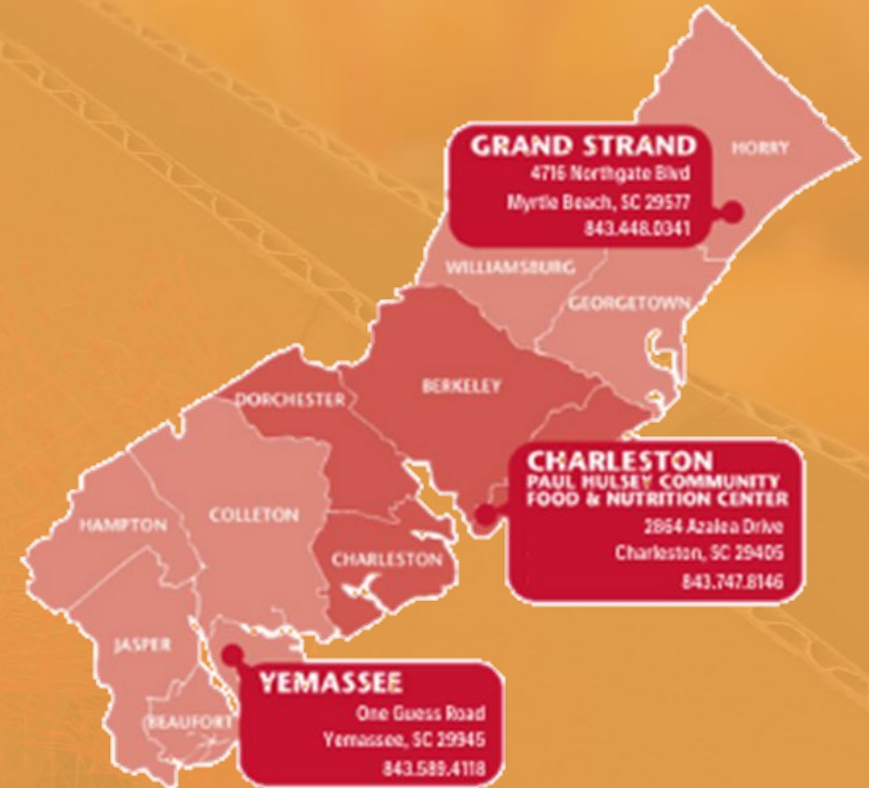
Lowcountry Food Bank Charleston, SC

Kara Moore, Director of Child Hunger Programs



Summer Meals at LCFB- 2023

- 20 SFSP sites in five counties
- Self-Prep
- Combination of urban and rural
- All unaffiliated
- Non-congregate program operating in Williamsburg County-
10 additional sites (grant funded)



Engaging Kids and Families at Sites: Nutrition Education

- Summer Learn and Grow
- Kids in the Kitchen
- Cooking Matters courses and store tours



Wrap-Around Supports: Feeding the Whole Family

- Pop-Up Produce
- School Markets
- Pantry Boxes and Produce for Agricultural Workers
- Backpack Buddies
- Local Food Pantries
- Fresh For All and Mobile Pantry distributions



Program Evaluation: Gathering and Using Neighbor Feedback

- Annual surveys are used to help us understand the experiences of both the site coordinators who run summer meal sites and the parents and children who visit them



2022 Summer Meals Parent Survey

This survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. All responses are kept confidential.

Please complete this survey only **ONE** time, even if you have more than one child participating in the program.

We value your input! Your information and responses help us make improvements to our programs to better serve the community. As a way to say thanks, you can be entered into an optional GIFT CARD drawing for completing this survey.

Agape Family Life Center

1) How many children between 0-18 years of age live in your household?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5-9
- 10 or more



2022 Summer Meals Site Coordinator Survey – Summer Break Café

This survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. All responses are kept confidential.

We value your input! Your information and responses help us make improvements to our programs to better serve the community. As a way to say thanks, you can be entered into an optional GIFT CARD drawing for completing this survey.

Williams Memorial Elementary School

1) What type of feedback, if any, have you received from children in the program?

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- None

Program Evaluation: Gathering and Using Neighbor Feedback

Key Learnings from 2022:

- Just over a third of households report that they currently receive SNAP and/or WIC while almost 60% report they are not eligible and 8% do not know if they are eligible.
- Over two-thirds of households reported that having access to the summer meal program often or sometimes helped them worry less about feeding their family.
- Almost 40% of respondents said that having a “grab and go” meal option (non-congregate) available at their site would be helpful and 20% said they would love to be able to pick up meals and snacks for more than one day at a time.

Contact Information

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**Debbi Davidson,
Arkansas City Recreation
Commission,
Arkansas City, KS**



Welcome to Arkansas City, Kansas



Kansas



- South Central Kansas
- 12,000 Population
 - Very Rural



Feeding Kansas Kids

Very financially challenged community

80+% of kids K-12 Free/Reduced Lunches

Kansas Statistics – 1 in 5 children are Food Insufficient

Entire Community of 18 years and younger qualifies (no income check)



Serving Sites

- SFSP
 - 3 sites
 - IYQ Day Camp-Lunch & Snack-Congregate
 - Paris Park Pool-Snack at safety break
 - KIDZ CAFÉ-Supper & Snack-non congregate 3 meal packet service
- CACFP
 - 1 site
 - KIDZ CAFÉ-Supper & Snack



Everybody Helps!!



This is Why We Do It!!!



This Is How We Do It!!



Activities to Increase Participation

Recreation Activities

Crafts

Little Library

Drop a Ticket

Sports Camps

Theater Program



Training

- All day Bootcamp Style
- Menus
- Production Records
- Portions
- Recipes
- Equipment
- Customer Service
- Record Keeping
- Shopping Lists
- Safe Food Handling
- Civil Rights





Contact Information

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Q&A



Stay in Touch!

Sign up for our newsletter:

www.bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/subscribe

Visit the CBP website:

www.bestpractices.nokidhungry.org



We Want Your Feedback!

After exiting the webinar, a short survey will appear on your screen.

Please take a moment to complete the short survey!



THANK YOU

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