

Summer Nutrition Summit

January 12-13, 2026



AMPLIFYING IMPACT:

Advocacy Strategies
for Rural,
Non-Congregate
Programs

Summer Nutrition Summit 2026



Disclaimer

Our speakers represent their own experience with non-congregate summer meal programs in their states and localities. Certain program models and implementation methods may be restricted in some states. Check with your local state agency before implementing any new meal service models or implementation methods.

Our Agenda

Discuss

Panel Discussion

React

Audience Q & A

Do

Ecosystem Mapping

Reflect

Share-Out



Speaker Slide - Kelly Earnhardt



Child Nutrition Director **Sabinal ISD**

Kelly Earnhardt is the Child Nutrition Director for Sabinal Independent School District in Sabinal, Texas, a role Kelly's held since September 2021.



Speaker Slide - Heather Senecal



Director, Learning and Evaluation United Way of the Greater Capital Region

Heather Senecal facilitates the Summer Meals Collaborative, a 25+ agency platform transforming summer meal provision for children and teens by boosting access, quality, and activities. She is also a founding member of the Schenectady County Food Council and was active in NYS Health Schools Meals for All and NY Can End Child Poverty Coalitions. She co-authored an upcoming paper on the "Ten Year Impact of a Summer Meals Collaborative Model."



Summer Meals Collaborative: Our Role as an Rural Non-Congregate Advocate

Model: Collective Impact Coalition focused on transforming summer nourishment in 8 counties of Upstate NY

Goal: Making the Capital Region the BEST place to be a kid in the summer!

2025 Advocacy Focus:

- Rural Non-Congregate Working Group
- Activity Working Group
- Summer Meals Ambassador Program



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SUMMER MEALS COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



Summer Meals Collaborative



OUR RAINBOW OF ARTWORK



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Come Together. Eat Together. Have Fun Together!

Guided by these pillars, the Summer Meals Collaborative continues working toward making the Greater Capital Region the **BEST** place to be a kid in the summer!

Come Together.

TO MEET THE GROWING NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY, THE COLLABORATIVE LAUNCHED TWO INITIATIVES.

- **Summer Meals Ambassadors program:** activated our community members to help spread the word about how we are making the Greater Capital Region the BEST place to be a kid in the summer.
- **Working groups:** enabled us to collaborate more purposefully. They provided an excellent opportunity to involve more partners in our initiatives, boost participation, create enriching experiences for children and families, and roll out rural non-congregate programs.



Eat Together.

THE COLLABORATIVE IS GROWING! WE ADDED PARTNERS AND EXPANDED OUR REACH TO MORE KIDS AND MORE COMMUNITIES THIS SUMMER!

- 16 school districts participated in Summer Meals.
- This summer, **212,342 meals** were served to kids and teens.
- The Collaborative **hosted 87 sites** across the Greater Capital Region.
- Increased rural sites this summer. **22 sites** across Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schoharie counties.
- Approximately **44% of all meals** served by the Collaborative this summer were in rural communities.



Have Fun Together!

THE SUMMER MEALS COLLABORATIVE KNOWS HOW TO HAVE FUN!

- Hosted **10 Block Parties and Summer Cookouts** in Schenectady, Albany, and Troy, serving 1,000+ family meals.
- Launched the region's first summer meals activity challenge, **Color Your World**, with weekly art, literacy, science, and movement activities.
- 66% (more than half) of the meal sites offered **free exciting, engaging and enriching programs** for kids and families.
- More than double the number of **kids stayed at meal sites and had fun** engaging in activities and being with friends.



Speaker Slide - Petra Colindres



Director of SFSP and Farm to CNP Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Petra Colindres is a registered dietitian with over a decade of experience in pediatric nutrition. Committed to equitable food access and strengthening child nutrition systems across the state, she supports communities through nutrition education and program development. Petra enjoys life with her spouse, two children, and three dogs.



**FIND MEAL SITES
NEAR YOU** 

https://bit.ly/summer_meals

Making Summer Meals More Accessible - Rural Non-Congregate Meals

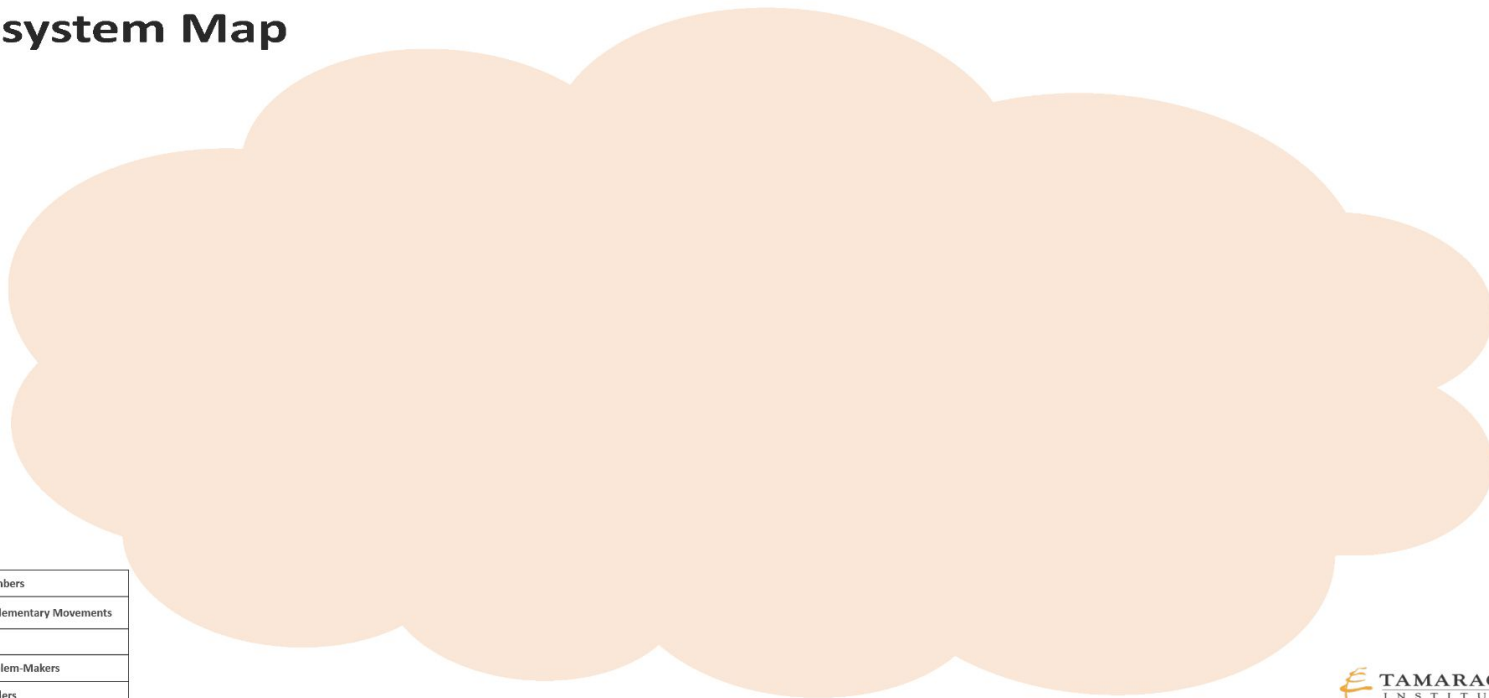


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Activity

Eco-system Map



	Collaborative Members
	Key Allies & Complementary Movements
	Key Beneficiaries
	Opponents & Problem-Makers
	Influential Bystanders

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 TAMARACK
INSTITUTE

 NO KID
HUNGRY®

Ecosystem Mapping: What is it?

Ecosystem mapping helps us understand the full environment in which rural, non-congregate (RNC) summer meal programs operate. By identifying the key players—people, organizations, systems, and forces—you can uncover gaps, opportunities, and leverage points that strengthen access for rural children and families.

Purpose:

- Understand the landscape surrounding RNC summer meals
- Reveal gaps, connections, and opportunities
- Identify leverage points for stronger advocacy and impact
- Clarify where your organization fits—and where partnerships are needed

Ecosystem Mapping: Identifying Players

Who shapes, supports, influences or is affected by RNC in my community?

- **Resource Providers:** Individuals/organizations actively working to operate or strengthen RNC programs.
- **Key Allies:** Partners whose work aligns with or strengthens RNC access.
- **Key Beneficiaries:** Individuals and groups who benefit most from strong RNC programs.
- **Opponents & Problem-Makers:** Systems, forces, or individuals that hinder RNC access (intentionally or unintentionally).
- **Influential Bystanders:** People or groups with influence who are not yet engaged—but could be.

Ecosystem Mapping: Making Sense of It

After identifying players,

- Consider proximity, influence, and relationships
- Look for gaps, overlaps, and tensions
- Notice where new partnerships could increase impact

Making sense of it,

- What dilemmas or opportunities do you see?
- What conditions must change to expand RNC access—and how can we influence that?
- Who is missing from this map?
- What new functions or innovations could strengthen the ecosystem?



Kathy Saile
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No Kid Hungry California
Ksaile@strength.org

Liz Lucas
Sr Program Manager
No Kid Hungry New York
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We want to hear from you!
Scan to take our survey:

Summer Nutrition Summit 2026 -
Post Summit Feedback



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NOT A SLIDE for Presentation

Accessibility Considerations

Text:

- size 12 or larger, simple fonts
- Ensure the text is a strong contrast color from the background of a document.
- The text in your materials should be easily distinguishable from the background. Black text on white background, or the reverse, is the best general practice.

Use of Color

- Ensure the use of color is not the only means of conveying information.
 - People who are colorblind or who experience low vision may have a hard time understanding information solely conveyed by colors.

Tables and Charts

- Avoid using complex charts, tables, etc. Use simple table structures that include data only.
 - Tables should have distinct and clear column and row headings.

Images: Show strength of programs, happy healthy children and families





Slides We Aren't Using

Speakers



Petra Colindres
*Director, Summer Meals
Farm to School Programs*



Kelly Earnhardt
Child Nutrition Director



Heather Senecal
*Director, Learning &
Evaluation*