

# Summer Nutrition Summit

January 12-13, 2026



# **Reaching the Last Mile: Strategies for Serving Ultra-Rural Populations**

**Summer Nutrition Summit 2026**







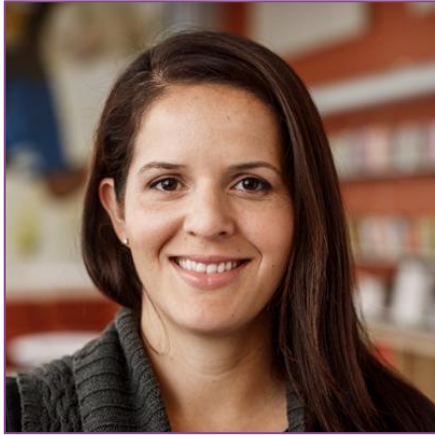
# What do we mean by “Ultra-Rural?”

**Extreme Geographic Isolation:** Significant distance from major metropolitan or urban centers.

**Very Low Population Density**

**Limited Access:** Fewer services, such as healthcare, broadband internet, transportation

# Session Moderators



Mariela Donis  
Share Our Strength



Josh Proffitt  
Share Our Strength



# Agenda

- Unique Challenges for Ultra-Rural Communities: Data Snapshot
- Panel Presentation
- Q&A
- Group Work: Brainstorming Solutions
- Share Out/Closing





# **2025 Sponsor Survey on Rural Non-Congregate Summer Meal Programs:Preliminary Findings**

# Survey Methodology

In summer 2025, sponsors implemented rural non-congregate (RNC) summer meal programs to expand access to nutritious meals for children who may not have been able to attend congregate sites. This survey was conducted to capture how sponsors operated the program, identify successes and challenges, and inform future technical assistance and support.

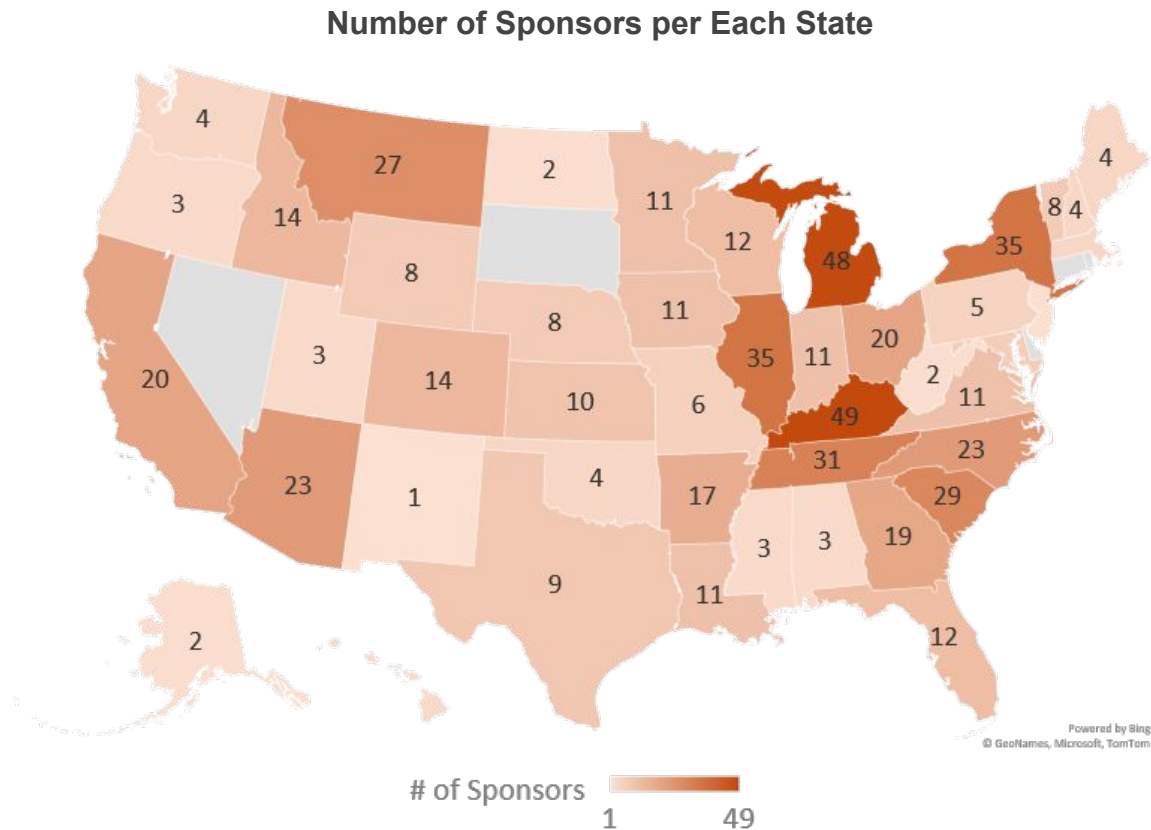


# Survey Overview

**Respondents:** 589 sponsors across 45 states and DC

**Survey period:** August 25 to September 26, 2025

**Completion rate:** 51.5%

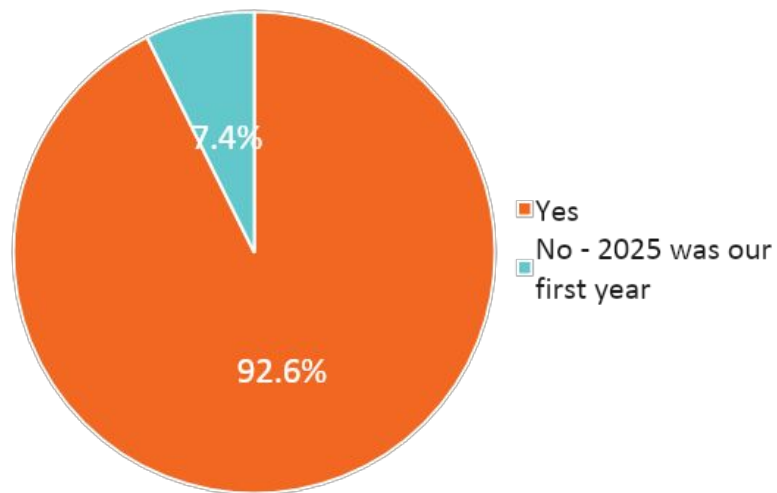


Numbers not shown in map: CT (n=0), DE (n=0), HI (n=3), MA (n=4), MD (n=7), NJ (n=1), RI (n=0); Puerto Rico (n=0)

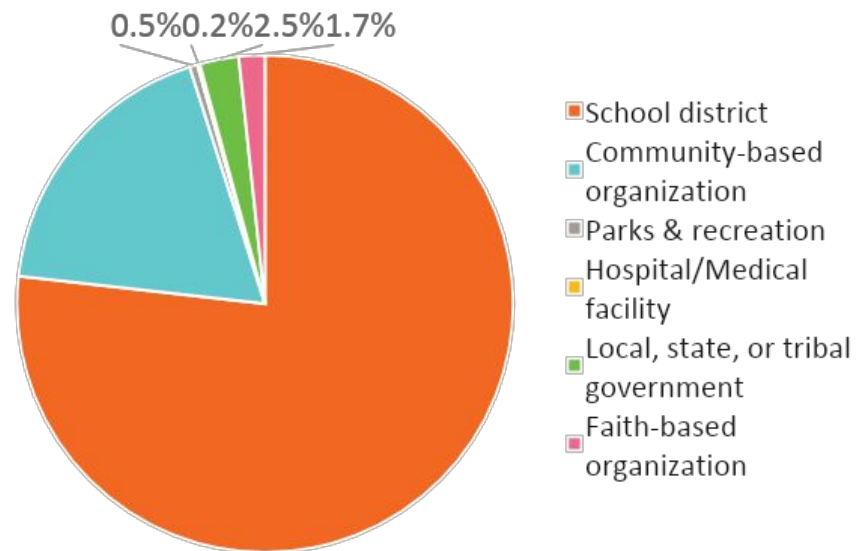
# Preliminary Findings: Summer Meals Sponsor Characteristics

Most respondents are returning sponsors (92%) and school districts (76%).

Had your organization ever operated a summer meals program before 2025? (n=569)

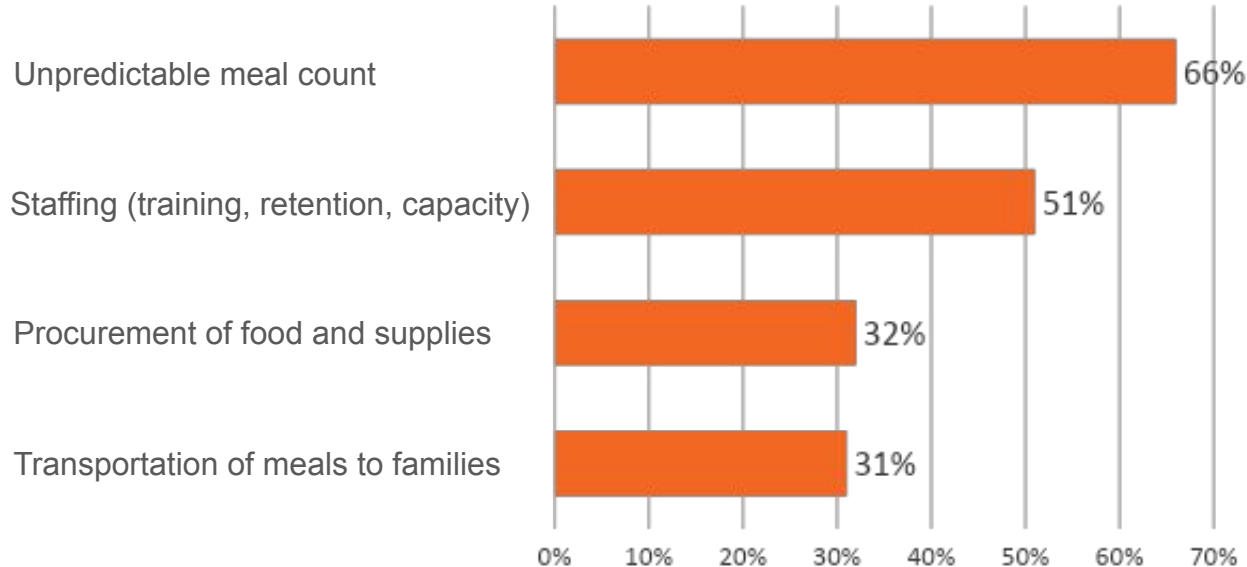


Organization Types Represented (n=589)



## Preliminary Findings: Sponsors' Top-Ranked Challenges for Program Operation (n=543)

Overall, sponsors found challenges surmountable and found the program straightforward to operate. Still, sponsors reported the following as top challenges to program operation:





# 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.

# Meet Our Speakers



Julie Bjorkstrand  
Director, Nutrition Services  
Del Norte Unified School  
District  
Northern California



Janette Broda  
School Nutrition Director  
Transylvania County  
Schools  
Western North Carolina



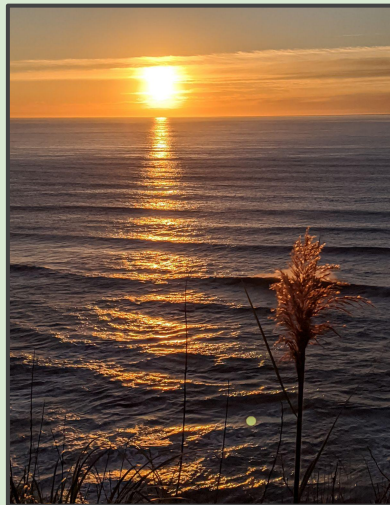
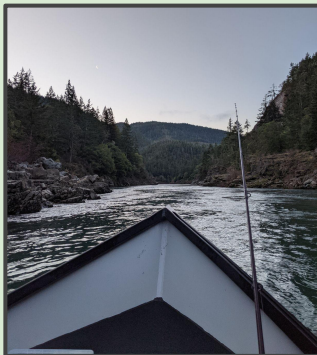
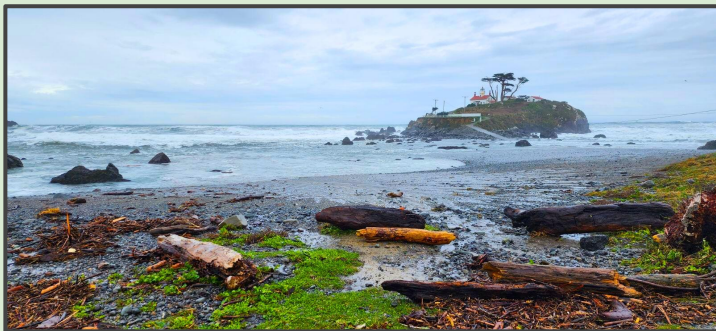
Scott Germain  
Food & Nutrition Services  
Supervisor  
Garrett County Schools  
Western Maryland



**Julie Bjorkstrand**

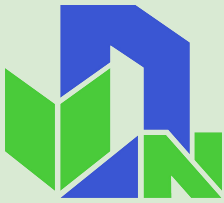
Julie Bjorkstrand is the Director of Nutrition Services for Del Norte Unified School District. With resilience and optimism, she oversees the Child Nutrition Program that serves around 3,600 district-enrolled students.

Julie brings over 12 years of experience to her role, and she is especially dedicated to this community, as she grew up attending the very schools she now serves. She manages all operations, budgeting, and staff leadership for an amazing team of over 30 across a warehouse, central kitchen, and 12 schools in this rural community.



Photos by Julie Bjorkstrand





# Del Norte County, CA

## Redwood Gate to the Golden State

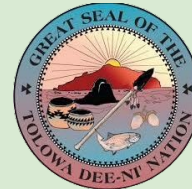
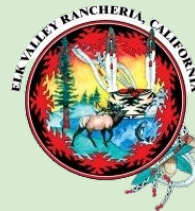


DEL NORTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Nutrition**  
SERVICES

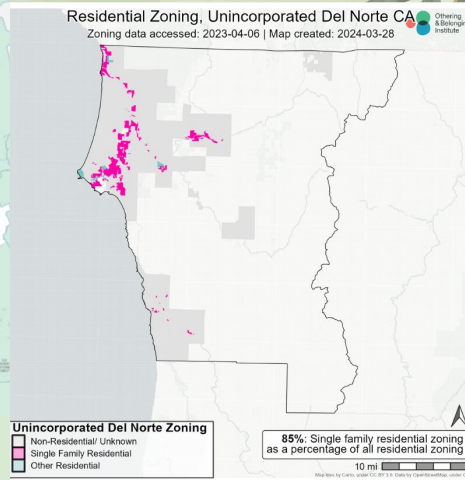
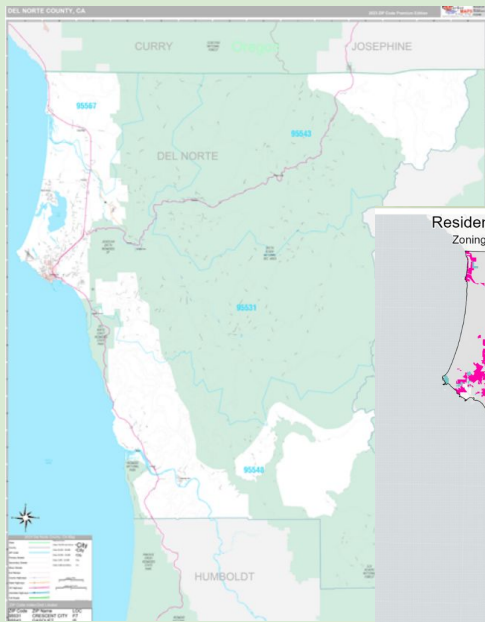


- **Del Norte County Population: 27,743**
- **4 federally recognized tribes**
- **1,000 sq. miles**
- **788 sq. miles owned by state or federal agencies**
- **37 miles of coastline**
- **Crescent City, only incorporated city**
- **5 other towns/ communities**
- **Average 65 inches of rain per year**



# Coastal & Remote

Landslides, trees and boulders....oh my!!



- Highway 101 - north/ south access
- Highway 199 - east/ west access
- Frequent road closures impact travel
- Population center, Crescent City but families are spread across rural areas



## Summer Nutrition Service Program Food That's In When School Is Out 2014

Hey Kids and Teens...  
Join us for Nutritious Summer Meals

**FREE TO ALL ages 0-18**

Children do not need to be attending Summer School to receive meals (infants must be able to chew & swallow)

**WHERE: Del Norte High School Cafeteria**  
1801 E Dorado St  
June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

Breakfast 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Lunch 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

**Del Norte Community Health Center**

400 E. Washington Blvd  
June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

Breakfast 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Lunch 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.

June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

**Smith River School Cafeteria**

604 W. First  
June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

Breakfast 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Lunch 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.

June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

**First 5's Family Resource Center**

404 Pacific Ave  
June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

Breakfast 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Lunch 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

June 16, 2014 - July 11, 2014 Monday - Friday

\*No service July 4, 2014, in observance of Independence Day.

**ALL FOOD MUST BE CONSUMED ON SITE.**

## SEAMLESS SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM JUNE 17th THRU AUGUST 9th, 2024

Meals will be handed out Monday through Friday each week at the below listed locations. Children and youth 18 and under will be provided two meals on each service day. Children **MUST** be present to receive meals.

**Bess Maxwell School**  
1024 El Dorado Street,  
Crescent City

Boys and Girls Club of Klamath

400 Klamath Drive, Klamath

Del Norte Child Care Council

(Main Floor, West Wing)  
212 K Street, Crescent City

Downtown Farmers Market

(Wednesday Only)  
190 Price Mall, Crescent City

Faith Christian Center

117 Brookings Ave, Smith River

Family Resource Center of the

Redwoods  
494 Pacific Avenue, Crescent City

Hidden Creek Apartments

1000 Scenic Creek Drive,  
Crescent City

Howonquet Hall

(At Playground Area)  
101 Indian Court, Smith River

House of Deliverance

2455 Oliver Street,  
Crescent City

Mountain School

55 Azalea Ln, Gasquet

Open Door Health Center

550 E. Washington Blvd,  
Crescent City

Redwood School

2920 Lakeview Drive,  
Crescent City

Summer Park Apartments

1500 Summer Park Court,  
Crescent City

Willow Line Taproom

330 Terwer Riffe Rd, Klamath

Youth Opportunity Center

1115 Williams Drive,  
Crescent City

**DEL NORTE**  
for the First 5's Family Resource Center

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Breakfast & Lunch

Monday thru Friday

FREE Nutritious Meals

Kids and Teens Ages 0-18

MEAL PICK-UP 10am - 11am Sites Listed

NO MEAL SERVICE Wed, June 19th or Thurs, July 4th

For more information call or email Julie Clark at [jclark@DNUSD.org](mailto:jclark@DNUSD.org) or call (707) 464-0246

Seamless Summer Food Program

June 16, 2025 - August 15, 2025

Meals will be handed out Mondays and Wednesdays ONLY.

Children and youth 18 and under will be provided breakfast and lunch meals on each service day. Mondays: Families will receive two breakfast meals and two lunch meals per child - for Monday and Tuesday. Wednesdays: Families will receive four breakfast meals and four lunch meals per child - for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Children **MUST** be present to receive meals.

Beachfront Park (Kids Town Parking Lot) - Play Street, Crescent City

Bess Maxwell School - 1124 El Dorado Street, Crescent City

Boys and Girls Club of Klamath - 168 Klamath Blvd, Klamath

Downtown Farmers Market - 240 H Street, Crescent City (Wednesday Only)

Faith Christian Center - 117 Brookings Ave, Smith River

Family Resource Center of the Redwoods - 494 Pacific Avenue, Crescent City

Hidden Creek Apartments - 1000 Scenic Creek Drive, Crescent City

House of Deliverance - 2455 Oliver Street, Crescent City

Howonquet Hall (At Playground Area) - 101 Indian Court, Smith River

Mountain School - 55 Azalea Ln, Gasquet

Open Door Health Center - 550 E. Washington Blvd, Crescent City

Summer Park Apartments - 1500 Summer Park Court, Crescent City

Willow Line Taproom - 330 Terwer Riffe Rd, Klamath

Youth Opportunity Center - 1115 Williams Dr, Crescent City

FREE Nutritious Meals

Breakfast & Lunch

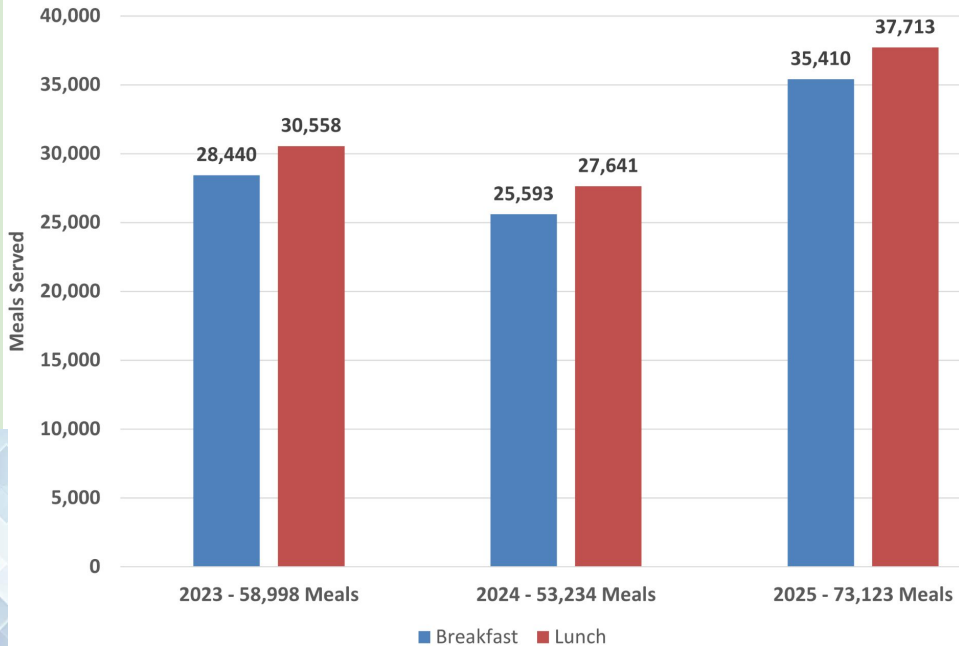
Kids and Teens Ages 0-18

Monday & Wednesdays 11am-12pm

For more information email or call Julie Bjorkstrand at [ns.dept@dnusd.org](mailto:ns.dept@dnusd.org) or call (707) 464-0246.

This Institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Summer Meals Participation: 3-Year Trend



# Seamless Summer Over The Years

## seamless SUMMER FOOD program June 17 to Aug 15, 2019

FREE Nutritious MEALS Breakfast & Lunch  
kids & teens ages 0-18 MON - FRI

Open Door Community Health Center

550 E. Washington Blvd, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Downtown Farmers Market

Cornier St Front St, and K St, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Coastal Connections

401 S. St, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Summer Park Apartments

1500 Summer Park Ct, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Hidden Creek Apartments

1000 Scenic Creek Dr., Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Totem Villa Apartments

1405 West 1st North, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

For more information call or email Julie Clark at [jclark@DNUSD.org](mailto:jclark@DNUSD.org) or call (707) 464-0246

No meals will be served July 4th

Bess Maxwell School

1124 El Dorado St., Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Family Resource Center

494 Pacific Ave, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Howonquet Hall

101 Indian Ct., Smith River

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Lighthouse Community Church

2455 Oliver Ave, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Yurok Tribal Office

190 Klamath Blvd, Klamath

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Klamath Glen

10000 Hwy 101, Klamath

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

DN Recreation Department

1005 S. St, Crescent City

Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

DN Child Care Council

112 S. St, Crescent City

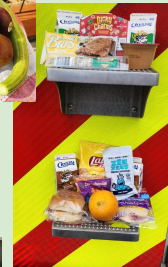
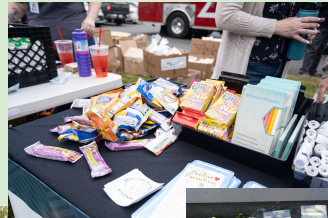
Breakfast 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Lunch 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm





# Change can be hard but sometimes you just have to do it and hope for the best...



# Obstacles provide opportunities, challenges provide chances.

## Obstacles:

- Limited staffing
- Low participation
- Inconsistent participation

## Opportunities:

- Community partners help distribution
- Increase interest use food hubs to feature CA grown, fresh produce
- Reduce number of distribution days
- Increase number of meals distributed by adding Saturday meals





**Janette Broda**

Janette Broda is a Registered Dietitian and School Nutrition Director for Transylvania County Schools, located in a small, rural community in the mountains of Western North Carolina. With 13 years of experience in School Nutrition—spanning three counties as well as service at the state level, Janette Broda is committed to ensuring all students have access to high-quality, nutrient-dense meals.

Janette values the opportunity to help shape the next generation by supporting their health, well-being, and readiness to learn. She is married with two children, ages 8 and 10. This is her son Oliver, pictured right, trying out the new pizza boxes in the cafeteria.

He is the department's strongest food critic!





# Serving Transylvania County

## Transylvania County - “Land of Waterfalls”

- Located in Western North Carolina
- Rural, mountain community b/t Asheville, NC and Greenville, SC
- Population - 34,000
- 250 waterfalls throughout county
- Home to Pisgah National Forest, Gorges State Park & Dupont State Forest
- Main industry - tourism
- Three main grocery stores located within 1 mile of each other in Brevard

## Transylvania County Schools

- District enrollment: 3,361
- 9 school sites
- 100% CEP
- Offering SBP, NSLP, FFVP, CACFP At-Risk, SFSP and Farm to School Programs
- Catering Services to community and local daycares
- Backpack buddy program providing meals during weekends/extended breaks

# Summer 2025 Site Information

## Congregate Meal Sites

- Served 12 closed enrolled day camps
- Monday-Friday
- Variety of breakfast and lunch served daily

## Non-congregate Meal Sites

- NCM Pick-up Sites - we offered 2 locations daily
- NCM Home Delivery - we offered this service county wide
- NCMH Site - weekend meals were offered during summer school weeks.

**16 Total Sites**

## Total Meals Served in Summer 2025

44,745



35% increase  
in summer meals served from  
summer 2024



## How did we increase by 35%?

1. Expanded our NCM Home Delivery route to offer meals county wide
2. Provided uninterrupted meal service compared to previous years at all NCM sites



# NCM Home Delivery Successes

- Served our community better by reaching more children in need and closing the nutritional gap
- Hot lunch and breakfast were provided Monday-Thursday plus weekend meals were offered
- Offering meals every week of summer break provided consistent & reliable employment for staff
- Staff remained open-minded to allow adjustments to routes at a moments notice
- We were awarded a grant through Share Our Strength to purchase materials, supplies and a vehicle
- Serving as a NCM Home Delivery Sun Meals To-Go model



# Sun Meals To-Go North Carolina



**Delivery/pick up summer meals  
for youth in some rural areas**

Learn more and find meals at:

<https://summermeals4nckids.org/sun-meals-to-go/> ↗



# NCM Home Delivery Daily Challenges

- Planning meal delivery routes
- Managing meals per labor hour
- Shelf-stable food costs are higher
- Food Waste
- Providing consistent delivery times to secure participation
- Ensuring staff safety







## Scott Germain

**Supervisor, Food & Nutrition Services,  
Garrett County Public Schools**

Scott has been the Supervisor of the Garrett County Public Schools Food & Nutrition Services Department for 27 years. He has 43 total years of food service experience.

He has expanded the Food & Nutrition Services Program to include Supper and Summer Food Service in order to provide meals for children who otherwise might not have access to them.

Scott earned an AA from Garrett Community College in McHenry, MD and a BA in Travel Industry Management from Concord College in Athens, WV. Scott is a member of the School Nutrition Association, a certified ServSafe Instructor with the National Restaurant Association, and past president and current member of the Maryland Association of School Business Officials.





- Enrollment – 3,358
- 12 Kitchens
- 13 Buildings
- 10 Full Time Managers
- 1 Full Time staff
- 34 Part Time Staff
- 3 Full Time Office Staff
- 100% CEP (this year)
- ADP Lunch 56%
- ADP Breakfast 53%



# Challenges in Rural Summer Food Service

1. Staffing
2. Deliveries
3. Getting to everyone
4. Finding locations



## Staffing

- Not everyone wants to work year-round
- Those that do often have vacations or County Fair to attend

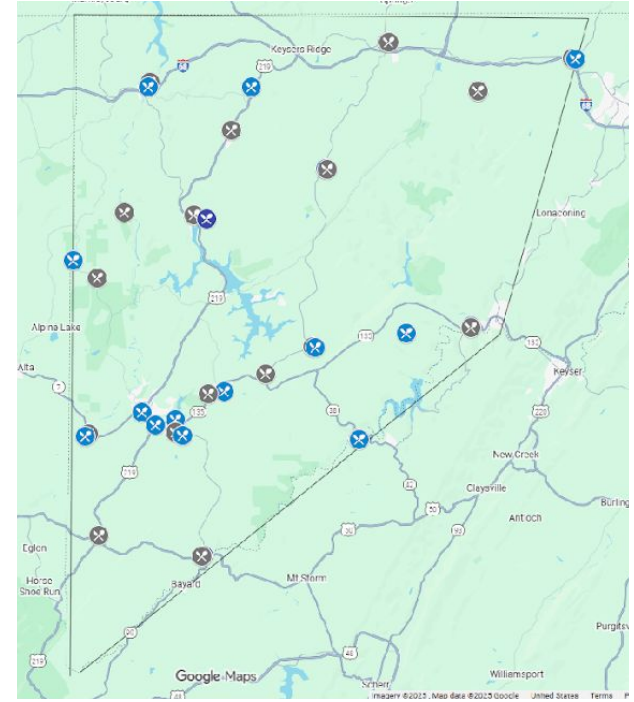
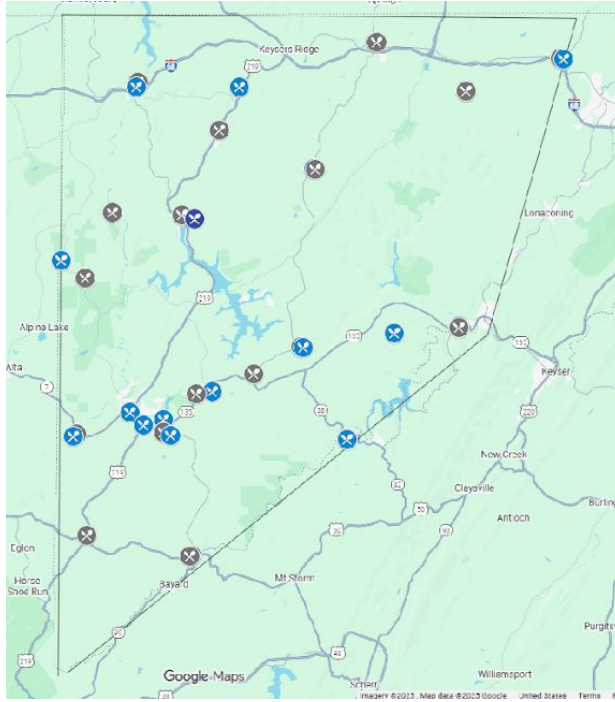
## Deliveries

- Vendors are coming from 2 to 4 hours away
- Sometimes need to make deliveries during odd hours
- If you miss the delivery, must wait until next week for another

## Distance

- Over an hour drive from one end to the other end of the county
- Families might live 20 minutes from distribution sites

# Locations



Years	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Summer Meals Served	103,746	256,574	230,562	143,770	175,170	172,140	12,746







# Questions for our Panelists?







## Table Discussion Questions

What ultra-rural community challenges resonate with you?

What unique challenges do you face, and how can they be overcome?





**Thank You!**