

Summer Nutrition Summit

January 12-13, 2026



 **NO KID
HUNGRY**®

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.

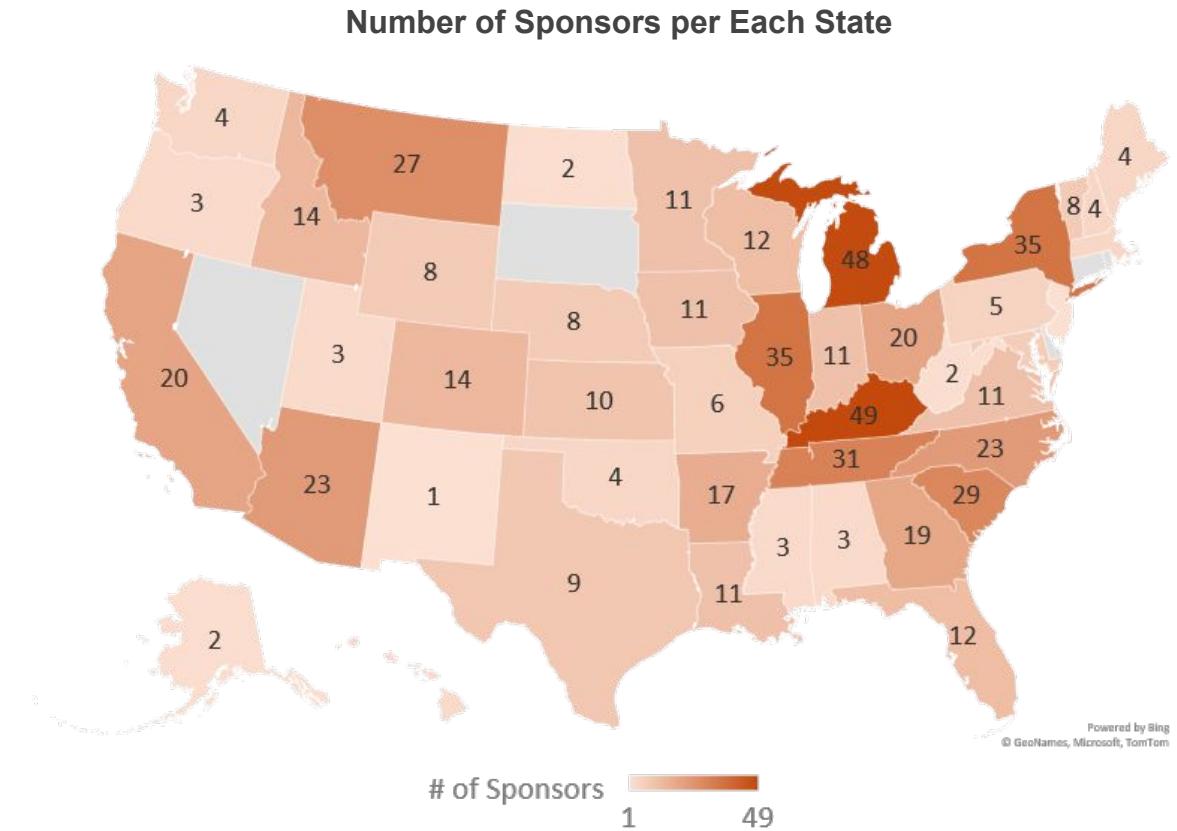
This survey was conducted to capture how sponsors operated the program, identify successes and challenges, and inform future technical assistance and support.

Survey Overview

Respondents: 589 sponsors
across 45 states and DC

Survey period: August 25 to
September 26, 2025

Completion rate: 51.5%

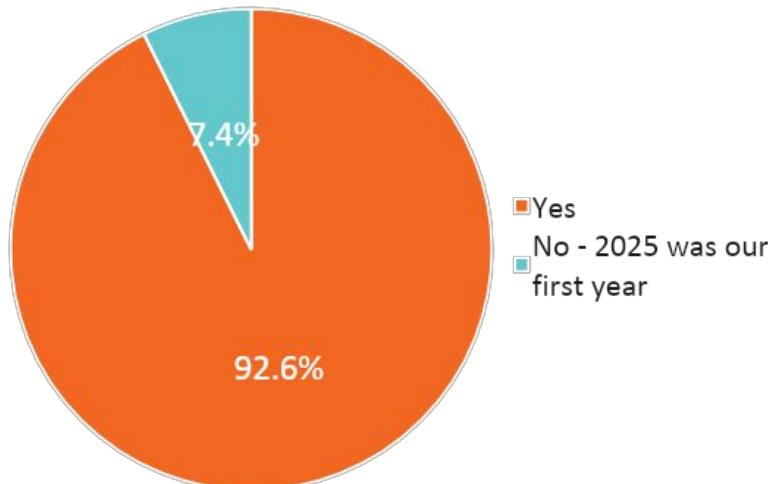


Numbers not shown in map: CT (n=0), DE (n=0), HI (n=3), MA (n=4), MD (n=7), NJ (n=1), RI (n=0); Puerto Rico (n=0)

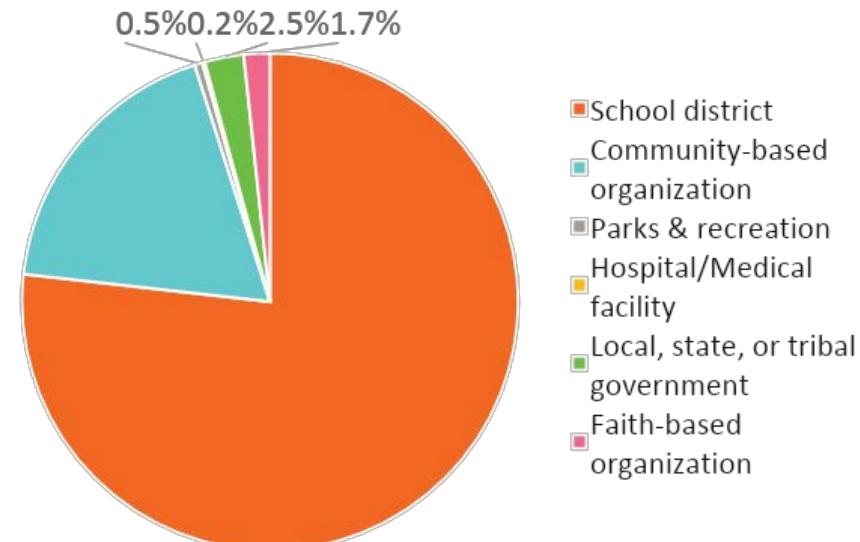
Preliminary Findings: Summer Meals Sponsor Characteristics

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

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

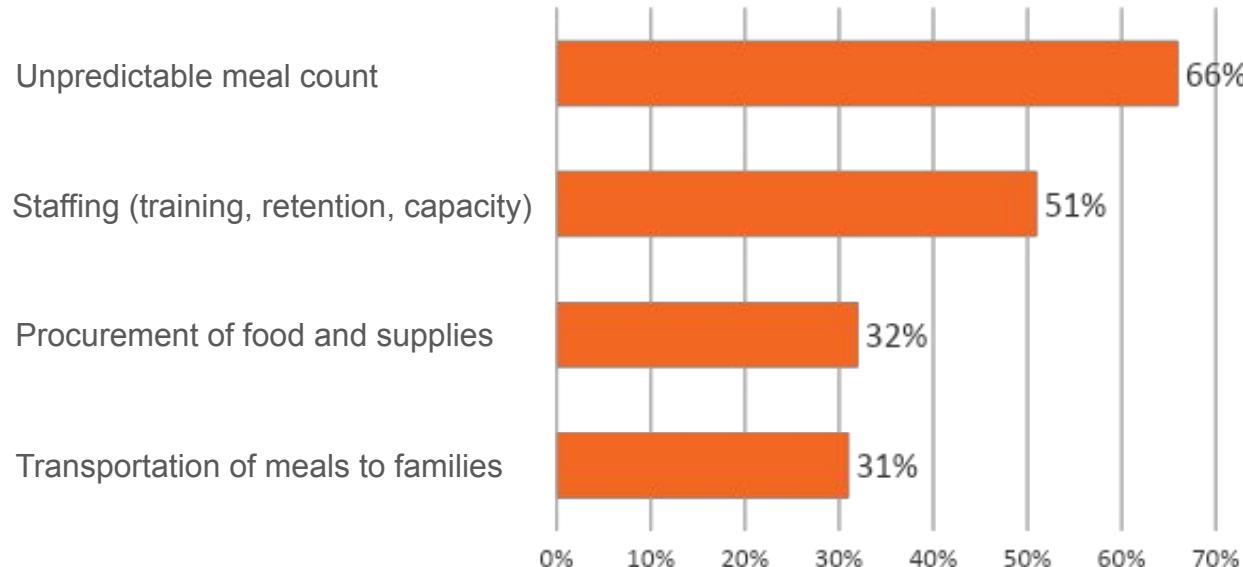


Organization Types Represented (n=589)



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



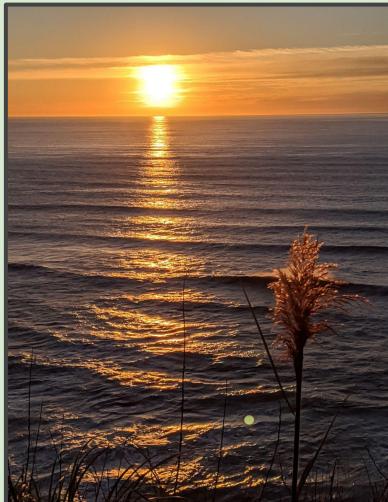
Scott Germain
Food & Nutrition Services
Supervisor
Garrett County Schools
Western Maryland



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

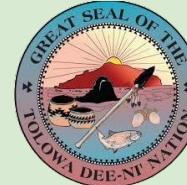


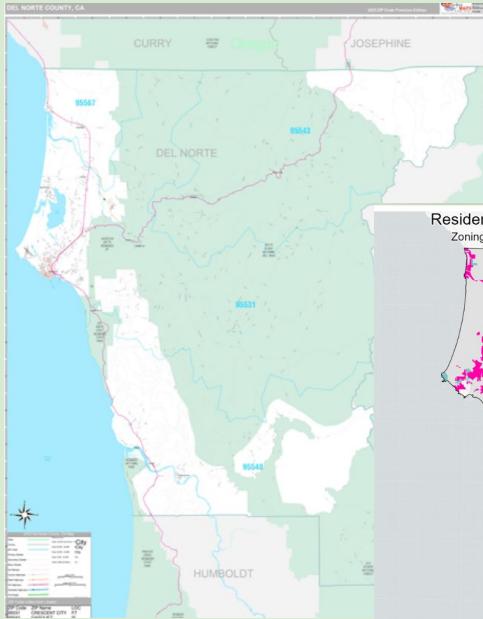
Del Norte County, CA

Redwood Gate to the Golden State



- Del Norte 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



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

(parents must be able to check & swear)

WHERE: Del Norte High School Cafeteria

1901 El Dorado St
Breakfast 6:00 a.m. - Lunch 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

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

Del Norte Community Health Center

665 E. Washington Blvd
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

1901 El Dorado St
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

44th Parallel Ave
Breakfast 9:00 - 9:30 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.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture
wants up-to-date information
about the Summer Food Service
Program. Call (800) 222-1222.

seamless SUMMER FOOD program

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

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
1124 El Dorado St., Crescent City
Breakfast 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

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

Del Norte Child Care Council
(Mon-Fri Except Wednesday)
212 K Street, Crescent City

Mountain School
55 Azalea Ln., Gualala

Open Door Health Center
(Wednesday Only)
1901 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

House of Deliverance
2455 Oliver Street, Crescent City

Willow Line Tрапroom
330 Terwer Riffle Rd., Klamath

Summer Park Apartments
1500 Summer Park Court, Crescent City

Youth Opportunity Center
1115 Williams Dr., Crescent City

For more information call or email Julie Clark at jclar@DNUSD.org or call (707) 464-0246

Breakfast & Lunch
Monday thru Friday
FREE Nutritious Meals
Kids and Teens Ages 0-18
MEAL PICK-UP
10am - 11am
Sites Listed

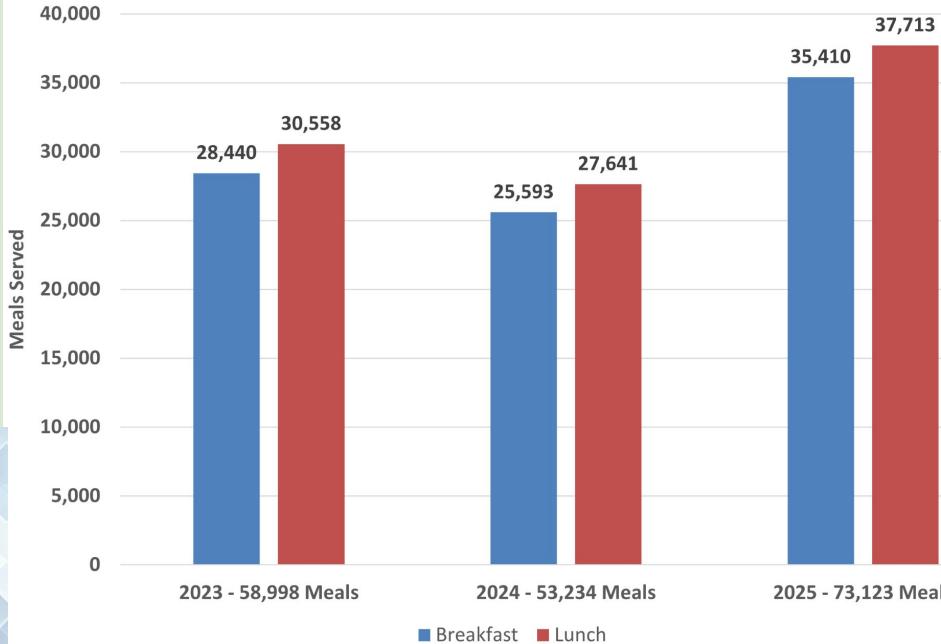


NO MEAL SERVICE
Wed, June 19th
or
Thurs, July 4th



For more information call or email Julie Clark at jclar@DNUSD.org or call (707) 464-0246

Summer Meals Participation: 3-Year Trend



Seamless Summer Over The Years



For more information email or call Julie Bjorkstrand at ns.dpt@dnusd.org or call (707) 464-0246.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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



Seamless Summer Food Program
June 16, 2025 - August 15, 2025
Meals will be served at **Monday and Wednesday 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. Tuesdays: 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
Beachfront Park - 11240 Playa del Rio Street, Crescent City
Boys and Girls Club of Humboldt - 1100 10th Street
Downtown Farmers Market - 240 1st 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
Humboldt County Fair - 1000 10th Street, Crescent City
Humboldt Hall (At Playground Area) - 101 Indian Court, Smith River
Mountain School - 55 Azalea Ln., Casperet
Open Door Health Center - 550 E. Washington Blvd, Crescent City
Summer Park Apartments - 150 Summer Park Court, Crescent City
Willow Lane Taproom - 330 Terrier Riffle Rd, Klamath
Youth Opportunity Center - 1115 Williams Dr, Crescent City

FREE Nutritious Meals
Breakfast & Lunch 8-10 AM
Breakfast & Lunch 11AM-12PM
Monday & Wednesday

For more information email or call Julie Bjorkstrand at ns.dept@hnsusd.org or call (707) 464-0246

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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 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

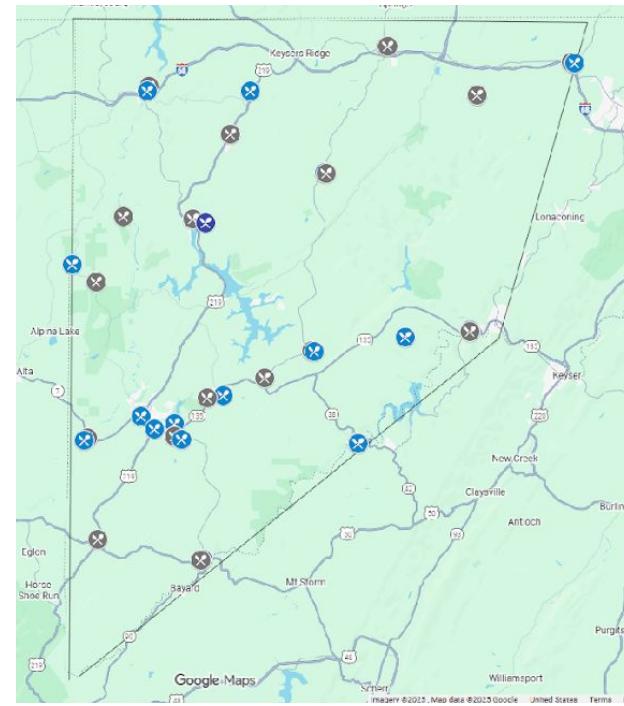
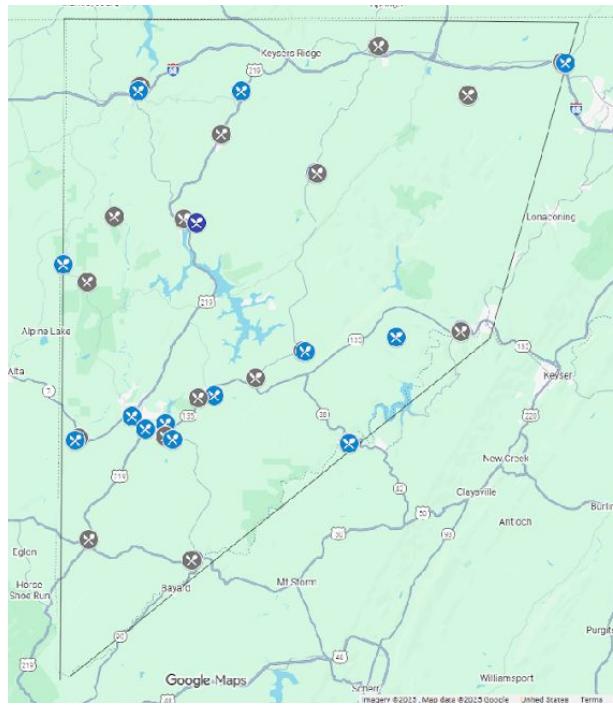
Deliveries

- 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!

