



MAKING THE CASE - SUMMER & AFTERSCHOOL MEALS IN LIBRARIES

Libraries are open to all and serve as essential community hubs. They welcome children and teens, provide engaging programming, and are a trusted environment.

Kids and teens need healthy meals to learn. However, when school is out – either over the summer or after the school day ends – too many students go without the nutrition they need.

Libraries have a unique opportunity to nourish both mind and body through summer and afterschool meals programs.

Benefits to the Library

- Feed hungry kids and teens
- Attract new, consistent patrons – kids, teens, and families – to the library and its programming
- Increase the library's visibility as a strong, year-round community asset
- Develop opportunities for new partnerships with food providers, schools, and childcare programs
- Save money (if already providing snacks or meals through the library's budget)
- Decrease behavioral issues

What are the Summer and Afterschool Meals Programs?

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP, or summer meals) allows schools and non-profit organizations to offer free, nutritious meals and snacks to kids and teens while school is out over the summer.

Similarly, the Child and Adult Care Food Program At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program (CACFP At-risk Afterschool, or afterschool meals) allows schools and non-profit organizations to offer free, nutritious meals and snacks to kids and teens after the school day ends and on weekends during the school year.

Both are federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

What Do You Need?

- Staff and/or volunteers to serve meals and supervise. For afterschool meals only, staff and/or volunteers also collect an attendance list. This can be as simple as a first name and last initial.
- A designated space (inside or outside!) for kids and teens to eat
- Plenty of trash cans and a cleaning kit for small spills
- A Summer Food Service Program and/or a CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program sponsor (a sponsor is responsible for the financial, administrative, and food procurement aspects of the programs)
 - Learn how you can find a sponsor in your area [here](#).
- The site must be located in an [“area eligible” location](#) meaning the site is located in a school attendance zone where 50% or more of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced price meals.
 - Check out [Navigating Area Eligibility in the Summer and Afterschool Meals Programs](#) to learn more!
- An offered activity or enrichment component like worksheets, story-time, or games (kids and teens are not required to participate in order to receive a meal or snack)
 - *Offered activities are required for afterschool meals programs and encouraged for summer meals programs*
- An open mind and attitude and a willingness to try – sometimes the program takes a few iterations to find the right fit!

What Don't You Need?

- Libraries do not need to buy or prepare food.
- Libraries do not have much paperwork. The majority of the paperwork is the responsibility of sponsors.
- Libraries do not need a lot of storage space for food. Many sponsors are able to deliver meals daily. However, libraries with storage space may opt for less frequent deliveries.
- Libraries do not need a kitchen to run the programs. Most sponsors provide equipment (e.g. coolers, ice packs, etc.) that a library may not have in order to serve cold meals. Many sponsors also offer shelf-stable meal options...no refrigeration necessary!
- Libraries do not need to register students for the meal program. They can serve any kid or teen that would like a meal!

Helpful Resources

- U.S. Department of Agriculture's [summer](#) and [afterschool](#) meals webpages
- No Kid Hungry's [summer](#) and [afterschool](#) meals webpages
- A [case study](#) and [webinar](#) about summer and afterschool meals programs in libraries
- A [webinar](#) about afterschool meals in libraries

Want to learn more?

Check out No Kid Hungry's webpage dedicated to information about nutrition programs in libraries: bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/summer-and-afterschool-meals-libraries