

Notes: A Conversation on Staffing Summer Meals

6/2/21

[Webinar Recording Here](#)

- **So you're looking for kitchen staff... who can you reach out to?**
 - Culinary department at your schools
 - Local universities with dietetic interns or undergraduate students in the nutrition department (great for resumes for future dietetic interns!)
 - Restaurants – ask restaurant staff if they want a few hours in the AM to prepare summer meals
 - Paraprofessionals and teachers: need extra money over the summer?
 - Bonus: school staff spread the word about the summer meals program in the community!
 - Substitutes during the school year? Ask them to join the summer meals program
 - Retired school nutrition employees, retired paraprofessionals, retired teachers
 - Advertise at job fairs
 - Unemployment office – put up a sign in the office
 - Hire students!
 - Ambassadors for the program and for increasing participation
 - Very hard workers
 - Students recruit their friends and siblings
 - Benefits for teens: no nights or weekends; casual dress; cash for the summer; employment for resumes
 - Are there kids of existing food service employees who may qualify to work?
- **How can you make due with fewer labor hours?**
 - Rotating schedule – give everyone Fridays off
 - Take advantage of waivers: instead of serving every day, serve every other day or twice a week, e.g. prep Monday and Wednesday, serve Tuesday and Thursday
 - Weekly meal boxes
 - Cut down expenses, staff time, packaging
 - Opportunity for nutrition education through the boxes
 - Send home information about hiring!
 - [Donna's weekly meal box recipes here](#)
- **So you're looking for site staff... who can you reach out to?**
 - Parks and Rec Departments
 - Boys and Girls Clubs
 - Food pantries/food banks
 - Cultural centers
 - Family resource centers
 - Churches and religious centers
 - These can all double as sites, too!
 - Students who need volunteer hours

- **So you're looking for drivers... who can you reach out to?**
 - o Drivers for summer school: do short runs in between summer school pick-up and drop-off to deliver summer meals
 - o Teachers and paraprofessionals if they get CDLs (may even get more salary from the district for getting a CDL license)
 - Package the job in food services with other departments to help school district employees reach the hours they need to get benefits, e.g. 3 hours in food service + 4 hours in busing
 - o Consider using vans or small buses instead of big buses because you don't need a CDL to drive those
 - o Food banks who deliver food to families' homes already – can they also deliver child nutrition boxes?
 - o Social workers or orgs that do home visits?
 - o [Case study on creative UPS delivery partnership here](#)
- **What can sponsors do to ensure accountability?**
 - o Ask “How many meal boxes are you picking up for today?” then “How many of those are in summer school?” and adjust accordingly
 - o “Tell me the names of the children and their birthdates”
 - o Pre-registration for grab 'n go pick-up to cross-reference with summer school
 - o Make pick-up sites closed enrolled sites
- **How can sponsors save costs this summer?**
 - o Flexibility with menus
 - o Remember: higher reimbursements in the summer
 - o Multi-day meal pick-up to save packaging and staff time
 - o Use commodities!
 - o Run the buses 1-2 days instead of 4-5 days
 - o Mix of delivery and site pick-up vs. all delivery
 - o Identify families without transportation (with social worker) and deliver to those families only – the rest pick-up
- **What can sponsors do if they are worried about bringing staff on and not needing them?**
 - o Don't overpromise
 - o Start small then increase hours as you're able to
 - o It's a lot easier to add hours than take away hours
 - o Get your core team together then expand as needed
- **How can sponsors fight burnout, keep staff energized, and boost morale?**
 - o Get out there with your staff! Directors should join the line, too, or get out in the community and serve meals
 - o Not a hierarchy, a team
 - o Bring in lunch or donuts or pastries to remind them how appreciated they are
 - o Honor vacation time requests
 - o Get superintendent, principals, or Board to recognize the food service department
 - o Buy little surprises like bags of candy here and there
 - o Buy team shirts or jackets