

## Tips for Developing an Effective Summer Plan

The following tips are designed to help you develop an effective Summer Meals plan, as outlined in the [Creating and Managing the Plan](#) section of the [No Kid Hungry Summer Collaborative Planning Toolkit](#).

### Tips for the Planning Meeting:

**Timing:** The meeting should be early enough in the year to give you time to implement the plan. But it should also come at a time when you have had a chance to collect and analyze data from the previous year. Many groups find January or February to be the ideal time.

**Space:** Your meeting space should meet the needs of your participants as well as the demands of the agenda. Consider the following questions when planning the location of the meeting:

- Is the location easy and/or convenient to your attendees?
- Does the space have the requisite technology (projection, phones, etc) to match your plans?
- Can you fit easels and chart paper in the space?
- Will you be able to access break-out space if that is part of the agenda?
- Is the space neutral or welcoming to new members of the collaborative?

**Pre-Meeting Call:** Planning requires planning; holding a pre-planning call with other organizers and the facilitator will make sure that everyone is clear on their role and ready to contribute.

**Invitation:** An invitation is a very important tool to drive participation at your meeting and sets initial expectations for the meeting. Below are tips to keep in mind while developing an invitation:

- Connect the recipient to the event – why are they receiving the invitation?
- Help people see a reason to take the time to attend
- Explain what they are expected to bring or contribute
- Legitimize the event with names of leaders and/or logos for host organizations
- Provide clear instructions on how to RSVP and attend
- Consider who will be an effective messenger to send or reinforce the invitation

**Facilitator:** For this meeting it may be helpful to bring in an external facilitator, both for their expertise in leading meetings and to allow you to fully participate in the conversation. If you do not choose an external facilitator, you may want to break up sections of the meeting among different leaders in the collaborative.

**Following Up:** Sharing meeting notes and next steps soon after a meeting is critical for maintaining momentum and reinforcing to collaborators that their contribution matters. If possible, get back in touch with the group within two weeks of the time together.

## Tips for Finalizing and Implementing the Plan

**A Shared Plan:** Once the planning process has helped you developed your approach for the year, you can put that plan into a format that will allow it to effectively guide everyone’s work. The full plan may be too lengthy to share as a presentation, so consider developing a brief presentation version as well.

Additional suggestions for keeping your plan actionable include:

- Save the plan as GoogleDoc or make available for download so that collaborators can access the latest version easily
- Develop a color-coding system for actions that are coming up, currently being done, and completed
- Save iterations of the plan by the date so you have historical versions to keep track of how the plan is progressing

**Tracking Progress:** To keep everyone on the same page you will want to establish regular communication with collaborators, most likely as a monthly check-in call.