



Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

How to Become a Sponsor

Thank you for your interest in helping to feed children in your community as a sponsor in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)! Here is information about how the program works and the role of sponsors and feeding sites—as well as the steps to apply to become a sponsor.

How SFSP Works:

SFSP is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). FNS decides overall program policy and publishes regulations and payment rates. State education agencies administer SFSP in most States. Other State agencies may also be assigned to run the program.

The State agency approves sponsor applications, conducts training of sponsors, monitors SFSP operations, and processes program payments. Sponsors sign agreements with their State agencies to run the program.

SFSP reimburses approved sponsors for serving meals that meet Federal nutritional guidelines. Sponsors receive payments from USDA, through our office, based on the number of meals they serve. All meals are served free to eligible children.

Role of a Sponsor:

Sponsors are organizations that manage SFSP feeding sites. As a sponsor, you will:

- Attend your State agency's training
- Locate and recruit eligible sites
- Hire, train, and supervise staff and volunteers
- Arrange for meals to be prepared or delivered
- Monitor your sites
- Prepare claims for reimbursement
- Ensure that your Summer Food project and sites are sustainable through community partnerships, fundraising, and volunteer recruitment.

Who Can Be a Sponsor?

Sponsors must be organizations that are fully capable of managing a food service program. To be a sponsor, you must follow regulations and be responsible, financially and administratively, for running your program.

The following types of organizations can be sponsors:

- Public or private nonprofit schools

- Units of local, municipal, county, tribal, or State government
- Private nonprofit organizations
- Public or private nonprofit camps
- Public or private nonprofit universities or colleges

What is a Site?

A site is the physical location, approved by the Office of Child Nutrition, where you serve SFSP meals during a supervised time period. SFSP meal sites are approved by our office and can open, closed enrolled, camp, migrant, or NYSP:

- Open sites operate in low-income areas where at least 50 percent of children residing in the area are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, based on local school or census data. The meals are served free to any child at the site on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Closed enrolled sites are established for a specific group of children who enroll in an organized activity program or who do not reside in an eligible low income area. The site becomes eligible for SFSP if at least half of the enrolled children qualify for free and reduced-price meals. Because the site is not open to the community, meals are served free only to enrolled children.
- Camps are sites that offer regularly scheduled food service along with organized activities for enrolled residential or day campers. The camp receives reimbursement only for meals served to enrolled children who qualify for free and reduced-price meals.
- Migrant sites primarily serve children of migrant workers. The site qualifies by providing appropriate certification from a migrant organization.
- NYSP College or university participating in the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP). Children must be enrolled in NYSP to participate.

Who Can Become a Site?

Meal service sites may be located in a variety of settings, including schools, recreation centers, playgrounds, parks, churches, community centers, day camps, residential summer camps, housing projects, and migrant centers, or on Indian reservations.

Some organizations do not have the financial or administrative ability to run the program, but they can supervise a food service for children, along with recreational or enrichment activities, at a site. If you supervise a site, you will:

- Attend your sponsor's training
- Supervise activities and meal service at your site
- Manage volunteers
- Distribute meals by following SFSP guidelines
- Keep daily records of meals served
- Store food appropriately
- Keep the site clean and sanitary
- Help your sponsor promote the program in the community

How to Prepare Meals:

A sponsor may prepare its own meals, purchase meals through an agreement with an area school, or contract for meals with a food service management company (vendor).

If your site has its own kitchen, you may want to prepare meals yourself. If your kitchen is not on the premises, you may still want to prepare your own meals, and then transport them to the site. Meals that you prepare yourself receive a slightly higher rate of reimbursement. You would receive “self-prep” rates, whether you prepare the meals from scratch or purchase the components and assemble the meals yourself.

Many government and private nonprofit sponsors lack the kitchen facilities to prepare meals themselves. In that case, you may arrange to purchase meals from a school or another public or private food supplier with approved meal preparation facilities.

How to Apply:

For additional information and to apply in North Carolina, please contact Cynthia Ervin at the NC Department of Public Instruction at (919) 807-3505 or Cynthia.Ervin@dpi.nc.gov

For additional information and to apply in South Carolina, please contact Andrew Thomas at the SC Department of Social Services at (803) 734-8194 or athomas@ed.sc.gov

