



Office for Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education  
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TO: District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Schools  
Chief Administrators of Nonpublic Schools  
Governmental Agency Administrators

FROM: Frances N. O'Donnell, Coordinator

SUBJECT: The Summer Food Service Program

The State Education Department is seeking school and government sponsors, as well as schools that are interested in providing meals for other sponsors, for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and serves children in areas where poor economic conditions exist. The Department's goal in administering the SFSP is to increase its availability in order to assist children, 18 years and younger, in maintaining adequate nutrition throughout the year, especially during the summer months when many school children may be at risk for hunger.

Although over 1 million children in this State receive free and reduced-price meals daily during the regular school year, only 400,000 children participate in the SFSP during July and August.

Children, who maintain adequate nutrition, perform better in school, are sick less frequently and have fewer behavioral problems. The vital link between nutrition, learning, growth and development does not end when school vacation begins. Over 65 percent of the children residing in New York State are from families who may lack the resources in the summer to replace that percentage of daily nutrients provided by the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. Children from these families may not be adequately nourished and ready to learn when they return to school in the fall.

The most significant barrier to participation in the SFSP is a lack of sponsors in many areas across the State. Schools are ideal sponsors of the SFSP and can qualify to serve meals free of charge under the SFSP at schools (sites) where 50 percent or more of the children enrolled during the school year are eligible for free and reduced price meals. Sites which meet this criteria would be considered open sites, where all children from the community would be allowed access for summer meals. Attachment A identifies schools which qualify as open sites for the SFSP this summer, based on March 2000 free and reduced price application data.

School buildings which have a substantial number of free and reduced price eligible children enrolled during the school year, but fall below the 50 percent criteria, can use US Census data, or identify "pockets of poverty" within district boundaries for possible site selection. For example, targeted serving areas may be comprised of low-income apartment complexes or mobile home parks. Family eligibility criteria, already on file in your district/school can be used to establish an enrolled meal service site in these "pocket" areas.

Attachment B addresses the most common questions and answers posed by schools and government entities interested in becoming sponsors, including summer school eligibility and federal reimbursement rates.

For more information about the SFSP please contact Paula Tyner-Doyle at (518) 473-2185. If you are interested in starting a program this year, please contact us as soon as possible so we can assist in ensuring that you plan and prepare for a successful summer.

[Summer Feeding Questions and Answers](#)