



United States
Department
of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain Plains
Region

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Dear School Official,

Are there children in your community who will go hungry this summer? Children in low-income communities are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. But these programs stop when school ends for the summer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** helps fill the hunger gap.

The SFSP was created to ensure that children in lower-income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations, when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast. But, although nearly 15.3 million children depend on nutritious free and reduced-price meals and snacks at school for 9 months out of the year, only about 3.2 million receive the free meals provided by the SFSP during the summer months.

SFSP sponsors receive payments for serving healthy meals and snacks to children and teenagers, 18 years and younger, at approved sites in low-income areas. Schools, public agencies, and private nonprofit organizations may apply to sponsor the program. Your state education department can tell you where and how to apply. All sponsors receive training before starting the program to learn how to plan, operate, and monitor a successful food service program.

FNS is seeking your help to increase the number of sponsors -- ranging from schools to churches to recreation centers -- participating in the SFSP in 2003. Why not take advantage of this valuable resource to provide nutritious meals to children in your community?

If you sponsored the program last year, we extend our appreciation along with the hope that you will continue and perhaps expand to additional sites or extend the duration of the program. If you are not a current sponsor, we urge you to give serious consideration to becoming one.

Our agency is committed to ensuring that no child is left behind. This means caring for our children throughout the entire year whether or not schools are in session.

I sincerely hope we can work together to make the SFSP more available to those children who are most in need and can benefit greatly from increased nutrition in the summertime.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM E. LUDWIG
Regional Administrator
USDA Food and Nutrition Service
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