Picking Up the Pieces:

What went wrong in the District of Columbia's Summer Food Service Program in 2002, and how to rebuild in 2003

D.C. Hunger Solutions
a project of the Food Research and Action Center

D.C. Hunger Solutions, a project of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), is dedicated to fighting hunger and improving the nutrition, health and well-being of children and families in the District of Columbia. D.C. Hunger Solutions advocates for better and expanded access to federal nutrition programs for District residents, schools and non-profits; and provides training, technical assistance, outreach materials, research and policy guidance to the many stakeholders in the nutrition programs.

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Background

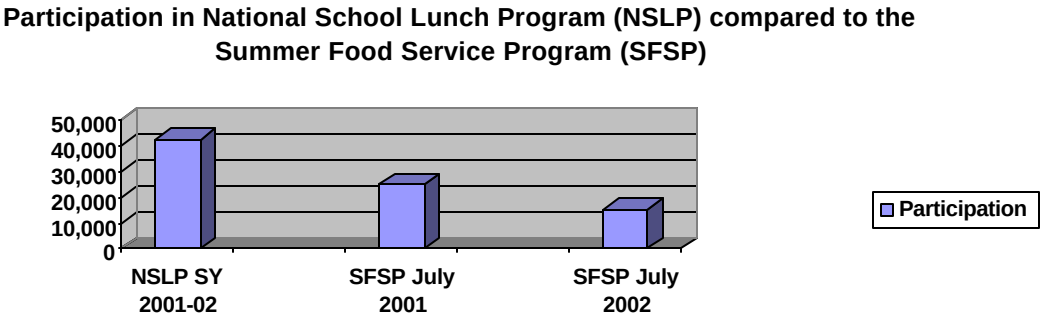
Working parents everywhere are concerned about what their children do when school lets out for the summer. It's no different for families here in the District of Columbia. And for the thousands of low-income District families struggling to make ends meet, there is an additional worry – without access to the regular school year meals programs, will there be enough food during the summer for their children to eat well, or at all?

Fortunately, two federal programs are available to fill this gap: the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides federal funding to reimburse schools, local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and others for meals and snacks served to low-income children; and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) continues to operate during the summer to provide lunches and snacks to children in summer school or year-around schools. In addition to food, these programs provide a focal point and catalyst for programs offering child care, recreation, cultural activities, continued learning or enrichment over the summer, keeping children and youth safe and engaged.

Federally funded child nutrition programs are a response to national concern about hunger and under-nutrition, and their adverse health and educational effects. The large number of young men who arrived for military service in the 1940s bearing the signs of inadequate nutrition triggered the creation of the NSLP in 1946. In the 1970s Congress created the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to help meet children's needs when school is out.

According to the Food Research and Action Center's Annual *State of the States* report, during March of the 2000-2001 school year, 49,753 children participated in the National School Lunch Program, in the District of Columbia. Of these, 42,210 received free or reduced-price lunches because of their low household income (below 185 percent of the federal poverty level). The rest of the children paid the school for their lunches, although the federal government makes a nominal payment to the school for each of these lunches.

Children who participate in free or reduced price NSLP during the school year are also eligible to eat free meals in the summer, but too often the reality is that summer food programs aren't available or children do not know about them. In the District of Columbia, last summer, only 14,848 low-income children of the 42,210 children receiving free or reduced price lunch during the school year received the nutritional, educational and social benefits of these programs. This was an astounding 40% decrease from the previous summer when 24,890 children ate in the summer food programs.



The Need for Summer Programs

The nutritional risk to children when school is out is real. Assuring access to free meals in the summer – through either the Summer Food Service Program or summer-time use of the National School Lunch Program – is vital to helping children get enough to eat, stay active and healthy, and develop when school is not in session.

As with the school year's school nutrition programs, the benefits of summer programs extend beyond nutritious meals. There is a growing interest in what is filling children's out-of-school time, a term that includes summer and other school vacations as well as after school hours during the school year.

These concerns are well-founded. Children left unsupervised have an increased risk of getting into trouble, such as drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes, and may fall prey

to the summer learning gap. According to the National Institute on Out of School Time, 24 million school-age children between the ages of five and 14 require care while their parents are at work. The D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation reports that programs are necessary for children 5-18 between the critical hours of 3 and 6 p.m., as well as during the evenings, weekends and summertime, but existing programs are not sufficient to meet this vital need.

Funding available through the summer food program can act as a catalyst for summer programs for children of working parents, thus helping to ensure that they are engaged in safe activities during the long summer break.

Summer Effect on Learning

Since 1906, educational researchers have been documenting setbacks in educational achievement during summer vacation, a phenomenon so accepted and so robust it is often simply referred to as the “summer effect.” Of course, since this discovery, the educational stakes have grown: participation in the modern economy is increasingly dependent on educational achievement. Without a good education, a child is more at risk of being left behind than ever before. A review of studies of summer programs by Johns Hopkins University has revealed “all students experience learning losses when they do not engage in constructive activities over the summer.”

The cumulative effect of summer learning losses may even account for gaps in achievement between lower and higher income students throughout the course of their education. Summer enrichment programs can maintain and boost achievement. In New York City, 40 percent of those students who attended summer school saw their performance increase by a full grade. One important explanation for the differing rates of academic gain during the summer is that higher income families are better able to afford learning and enrichment activities for their children. Urban Institute research suggests that lower income families rely more on relatives to care for children over the

summer, while higher income families can afford summer programs and camps for their children.

Despite the importance of summer programs, cities all around the country, like the District of Columbia, face budget shortfalls that are being used to reduce or eliminate summer programs. Summer programs are being threatened at the same time as school districts are coming under more pressure to ensure that all students meet standardized testing goals.

The federal nutrition programs and funds can help address this problem. The meal reimbursements provide crucial and dependable financial support to both public and private programs that serve low-income children when school is not in session. In addition, the meals act as a magnet drawing children to these important summer activities, and ensure that, because of their nutritional contribution, children are as ready to learn during the summer as they are during the school year after receiving school breakfast and lunch.

The Federal Summer Nutrition Programs

There are two federal programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to low-income children, like those they would receive in school during the school year. These meals, most often, are provided in supervised recreational or educational settings. For working families, these activities also provide children with a safe and structured environment for at least part of the time while parents are away from home. Indeed, summer nutrition programs are among the largest of federal efforts to provide care for children when school is out.

Summer Food Service Program. The primary summer nutrition service is the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Administered at the federal level by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and in the District through the Special Nutrition and Commodities (SNAC) office which is housed within the State Education Office (SEO) –-

the SFSP is an entitlement program funding public and private non-profit organizations to serve low-income children nutritious meals when school is not in session.

Here's the way the program works in the District of Columbia: USDA provides funding through the SEO-SNAC to reimburse eligible sponsors for nutritious meals and snacks served to children at summer programs. Sponsors are organizations that operate one or more sites where programs for children provide meals. Eligible sponsors can be:

- public or private nonprofit school food authorities,
- local government agencies,
- private nonprofit organizations,
- residential camps,
- National Youth Sports Programs.

The SFSP is operated in either "open sites," programs in neighborhoods where at least half the children in the geographic area are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and in "enrolled sites," where 50 percent or more of the children participating in the particular program are determined eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on individual applications. Once the site is eligible, all children (up to age 18) in the program can eat SFSP meals and snacks for free. Open sites must also be open for food to children in the neighborhood, regardless of whether they are enrolled in the overall program or not.

National School Lunch Program. The other nutrition service that helps low-income families in the summer is the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). While normally thought of as the key nutrition program during the school year, this program can also be offered as part of summer school.

In the summer, USDA provides NSLP funding to the SEO-SNAC to reimburse public schools, private non-profit schools and residential child care institutions for serving nutritious lunches and snacks. Meals are served free to children with family incomes below 130 percent of the federal poverty line ($19,526 yearly for a family of three in 2002), and at a reduced price (the school can't charge the student more than 40 cents)

when income is between 130 and 185 percent of poverty (185% is $27,787 for a family of three in 2002). The program also provides a small reimbursement for all other ("paid") students for administrative support of the meal program.

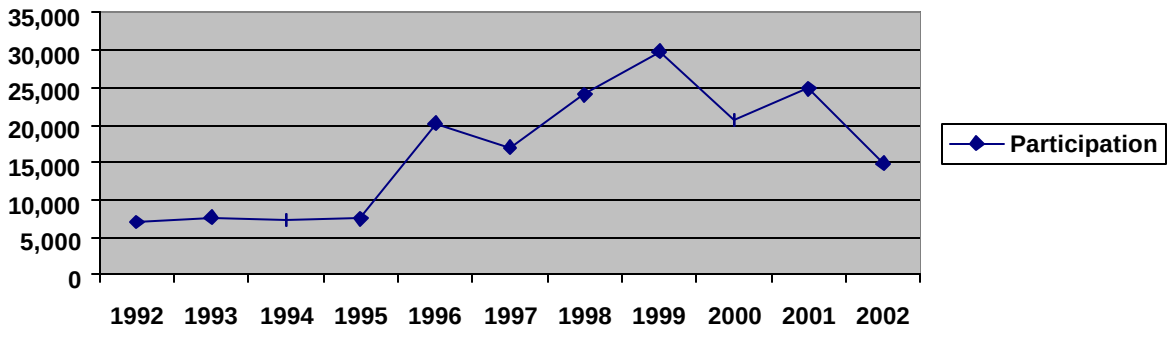
For the purposes of this report we refer to the SFSP recognizing that all participation is based on lunches counted from both the SFSP and the NSLP that operates in the summer. Unless otherwise noted, we generally draw on data from both programs for July when discussing program growth and the District's performance. However, we emphasize that children need to be fed throughout the entire summer. July, the peak month for summer nutrition, is the one summer month when schools are least likely to be in session and is the month for which the most data are available, making comparisons with prior years possible.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM 2002

What went wrong?

Since 1992, SFSP in the District of Columbia certainly has seen ups and downs. Participation numbers and meals served have increased in some years, and decreased slightly in others. The program reached its all time high in 1999, but was unable to maintain its success or see continued growth. Most alarming, there were substantial drops in two of the last three years (2000 and 2002). Expectations were high in 2001 and leading into 2002 as the SFSP participation increased in 2001and was thought to be on its way back up to record levels. Instead participation fell dramatically in 2002.

10-Year Trend of Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Participation in D.C.



In order to improve the summer feeding program for 2003, there must be a clear understanding of what occurred in 2002. D.C. Hunger Solutions has evaluated the D.C. Summer Food Service Program for 2002 to determine participation and the causes of the decreases in the program. Here's what we found:

1. The District's Summer Food Service Program participation decreased by 40 percent, thus feeding 10,042 fewer children in 2002 than in 2001 (and fewer than in 1999). The program's reduction in participation is a huge detriment to low-income children in the city. Instead of expanding the program to reach the thousands of eligible children who were not served in 2001, the City dropped summer feeding as a priority and allowed thousands more low-income children to lose what should be their right, to eat during the summer months.

2. The total number of sponsors and sites decreased, leaving many communities without any summer feeding sites. In 2001, the City reimbursed 18 sponsors, including schools, day camps, parks and recreation programs, and non-profits serving food to 24,890 children at 167 sites. One year later there were only 15 sponsors serving 14,848 children at 138 sites.

The total number of sponsors and sites decreased, leaving many areas of the city without sufficient summer feeding sites. The District found itself with three fewer sponsors and 29 fewer feeding sites during the 2002 summer months than in the previous year, even though a large organization (Capital Area Food Bank) stepped up to become a first-time sponsor. Organizations like the housing authority and the D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation should have been engaged to participate in the program as sponsors. They both have large networks of partners, which could have been recruited as additional feeding sites to serve more children.

3. The District lost $580,477 in federal reimbursement by feeding fewer children in July 2002 than in July 2001. In the month of July 2001 alone, the SFSP brought $1,651,973 million in federal funding to the District's economy for operating (food and

related costs) and administrative reimbursement. But, in July 2002, the federal reimbursement to the City was only $1,071,496 – a loss of $580,477 to the city's agencies, non-profits and child care.

If 100 percent of the children who receive free and reduced price meals during the school year (49,753) would have participated in the summer food program in the month of July, at least $2,923,735 million in federal funding could have flowed into the City.

A strong summer food program could result in a significant amount of additional federal funds flowing into the City. In these tough fiscal times, the additional federal funds mean more resources to out-of-school time providers and ultimately for low-income children and their families, and mean a stronger District economy as well.

Reasons for the Decreases in Sponsors, Sites and Children

◆ **The City did not recruit enough sponsors and sites.** The SEO-SNAC office is responsible for recruiting and maintaining relationships with existing and new sponsors of the SFSP. In 2002, there were four different child nutrition directors during the year. It's very difficult to maintain and expand a program with inconsistent leadership. Consistent leadership was not present to organize stakeholders, form relationships with current sponsors, manage summer nutrition staff, or reach out to potential new sponsors in order to ensure expanded participation for the summer.

The District struggles to retain experienced sponsors and attract new sponsors due to its lack of outreach and technical assistance with potential sponsors as well as timely, appropriate strategic planning.

◆ **The number of schools open for summer school was far fewer than during the previous year, resulting in a loss of sites to feed children in the community.** Much of the loss in sites was due to significant cuts in the District of Columbia Public Schools

(DCPS) summer school schedule for budgetary reasons. DCPS had to decrease, by 24, the number of schools operating summer school.

Unfortunately, there was no preparation at the City level to identify alternative feeding sites for the neighborhoods that lost summer school. This outlines a clear need for early planning and community collaboration in a summer food strategy.

◆ **Sponsors and sites report unresolved logistics as a barrier to successful summer feeding.** Another obstacle to feeding hungry children in summer 2002 was a lack of communication from SEO-SNAC about the logistics of the program. Delivery of meals and confusion about paperwork are cited as two noteworthy barriers.

Sites were unsure of delivery logistics such as times, locations and alternative options for the delivery of meals. Sponsors and sites reported confusion around transporting children from their base locations to nearby summer feeding sites. These two issues are not small in that they directly relate to the experience of the sites and the sponsors retention and effect willingness to participate in the program in the future. They are both issues that are easily resolved with appropriate training and technical assistance, which the SEO-SNAC is responsible for conducting.

Many of the problems associated with the summer feeding program for 2002 were due to a lack of strategic planning, timely training, as well as proper communication between the SEO-SNAC and sponsors.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUMMER 2003

There are a variety of factors that dictate the success of a Summer Food Service Program. Having sufficient sponsors and sites is important, but is just a part of the full picture. In order for the program to run smoothly, it must have the support of all levels of District leadership. City elected officials must play a part in assuring there is consistent leadership in the SEO-SNAC to effectively administer the programs. The SEO-SNAC must collaborate with other stakeholders in the City to provide effective training,

technical assistance, and program monitoring. Success also needs leadership from other stakeholders in the community: anti-hunger groups, schools, community-based organizations and advocacy groups to help spread the word that the SFSP is available. The commitment needs to come from the larger community.

To maximize the number of eligible children served through the Summer Food Service Program in the District of Columbia in 2003, the following recommendations should be implemented as soon as possible.

The City

1. Assure consistent leadership at the SEO-SNAC office. Advocates in the District are concerned about the constant change in leadership in the SNAC office. In 2002, the office had four Child Nutrition Directors. This inconsistency affects the SNAC relations with the City Council and the political leadership, and affects the SNAC staff, as well as sponsors and sites. Ultimately it negatively affects the number of children being served throughout the District.

The Director's role is an important one. She is responsible for fiduciary accountability of federal program dollars reimbursed to community feeding programs; motivating and leading the SNAC office staff, building and maintaining relationships with current and potential providers and sponsors in the community and collaborating with the community on ways to expand the programs so that more hungry children have access to well-balanced, nutritious meals. In addition, it is the role of the director to identify the training needs of SNAC staff and community providers and sponsors, which are on the front lines serving meals to children on a daily basis. When there is no clear or consistent leadership, many of these very important responsibilities go unfilled. Children go hungry, needlessly, programs lose the important nutrition dollars that help sustain them, and the City loses important federal dollars that spur the economy. There is no other office or agency that picks up the pieces.

The Mayor and other elected officials in the City must ensure that - in addition to consistent and effective leadership in the SNAC office – there are appropriate resources available for the agency to do its job efficiently. Resources such as additional staff, timely electronic claims processing, and up-to-date technology are just a few of the items that allow the administration of the program to run more smoothly.

SEO-SNAC

2. Increase technical assistance to struggling sponsors. The SEO-SNAC must increase its responsiveness to sponsors. It must expand technical and administrative support to those programs which have difficulties running the program.

3. Recruit more non-school sponsors. Community-based nonprofit organizations serving low-income children need to be made aware of and encouraged to participate in summer food. Many of these small nonprofits face difficulties planning and operating summer feeding sites. Technical assistance and outreach are broadly needed to reach potential sponsoring organizations in high need areas. Sponsors also should be encouraged to take on additional sites as they become more experienced with the program.

4. Assess the gaps in the city and identify locations in which additional summer feeding sites are needed. Developing a map of the city and its current feeding sites is critical so underserved areas can be easily identified. Sponsor and/or site outreach could then be targeted, which is a much better use of time and dollars.

5. Create a Summer Food Service Program Strategic Planning Committee. The SEO-SNAC needs to plan the summer feeding program by collaborating, in a timely manner, with stakeholders of the SFSP such as anti-hunger advocates, sponsors - schools (both public and private), community-based organizations, parks and recreation, and housing authorities - which have an interest in making sure low-income children in the District of Columbia are fed throughout the entire summer. The planning

committee should continue to meet throughout the year, improving and evaluating the program. In the Appendix is a Summer Food Service Program Timeline that a committee such as this could follow to ensure a successful SFSP for 2003.

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)

6. The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and all other schools – private and Charter - should offer summer feeding at all possible school facilities throughout the city. These sites need to be open throughout the summer months, beginning the Monday after the school year ends until the end of August. Contrary to popular belief, DCPS schools can and should remain open throughout the entire summer as feeding sites, regardless of whether or not a summer school academic schedule is in session.

Advocates and Community-Based Organizations

7. Organizations providing direct services to children should learn more about participating in the SFSP as a sponsor or a site. The SFSP needs community-based organizations to help fill in the service gaps. When organizations that run summer programs for children participate in the SFSP, they receive reimbursement for nutritious meals served, as well as helping the city to feed as many low-income children as possible.

8. Engage in aggressive outreach for program success. Any organization that advocates for or serves children and families should use all possible resources to provide information on summer feeding sites. One way to do this is by developing a list of all feeding sites in the city, including times when the programs will be operating; and making it available through a SFSP hotline and distributing the list in massive numbers, especially in low-income neighborhoods, as well as to the media.

Conclusion

Although participation in the District's Summer Food Service Program decreased last summer, it is not too late to pick up the pieces for this summer. This report has identified the barriers to participation in 2002. With a concerted effort and vital will, stakeholders from all across the city can come together to design a plan that assures (1) no low-income neighborhood is without a feeding site, (2) those on the front lines of feeding our children get the support and assistance they need; and (3) parents in the District can rest assured that their children are continuing to get the proper nutrition during the summer months that they receive while in school throughout the year.

Appendix A

Methodology

For the purposes of this report we refer to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to refer to participation in lunches counted from both the SFSP and from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) as it operates in the summer. Unless otherwise noted, we generally draw on data from both programs for July when discussing program growth and the District's performance. However, we emphasize that children need to be fed throughout the entire summer. July, the peak month for summer nutrition, is the one summer month when schools are least likely to be in session and is the month for which the most data are available, making comparisons with prior years possible. Also, throughout this report NSLP participation and meals data only refer to those children receiving free or reduced price services due to limited family income.

When reviewing the data submitted by the SEO-SNAC office to USDA, there were inconsistencies in the participation numbers. Therefore, the average daily participation in this report is based on the most consistent numbers available, which are the USDA numbers of meals reimbursed. We used the following formula to determine the average daily participation (ADP).

	July 2001	**July 2002**
# of NSLP free and reduced price lunches served (USDA data)	15,052	37,597
+		
# of SFSP lunches served (USDA data)	507,632	303,901
Total lunches served	522,684	341,498
▼		
÷		
# of weekdays in the month of July	21	23
Average Daily Participation (ADP)	**24,890**	**14,848**

Appendix B

District of Columbia SFSP only, July Sponsor/Site Participation data

	Sponsors		Sites	
	2001	2002	2001	2002
Schools	4	3	100	76
Govt. Agencies	1	1	54	51
Non-profit	8	7	8	7
Camps	3	2	3	2
Sports	2	2	2	2
Total	**18**	**15**	**167**	**138**

District of Columbia SFSP only, July Meals Served

	Breakfast		Lunch		Suppers		Snack		Total	
	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002
Schools	191,264	91,212	411,544	195,386	0	0	1,516	153	604,324	286,751
Govt. Agencies	61,034	72,338	68,158	82,771	0	0	0	0	129,192	155,109
Non-profit	9,939	12,440	16,719	19,324	1,248	636	756	1,834	28,662	34,234
Camps	4,219	2,957	3,965	3,170	0	0	2,833	2,254	11,017	8,381
Sports	3,297	1,298	7,246	3,250	14,482	16,363	14,482	16,363	39,507	37,274
Total	269,753	180,245	507,632	303,901	15,730	16,999	19,587	20,604	**812,702**	**521,749**

Appendix C

Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2002

48 CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, GUAM AND TERRITORIES						
Household size	Reduced Price Meals - 185%			Free Meals - 130%		
	Annual	Month	Week	Annual	Month	Week
1.....						
2.....	15,892	1,325	306	11,167	931	215
3.....	21,479	1,790	414	15,093	1,258	291
4.....	27,066	2,256	521	19,019	1,585	366
5.....	32,653	2,722	628	22,945	1,913	442
6.....	38,240	3,187	736	26,871	2,240	517
7.....	43,827	3,653	843	30,797	2,567	593
8.....	49,414	4,118	951	34,723	2,894	668
For each	55,001	4,584	1,058	38,649	3,221	744
add'l family	+5,587	+466	+108	+3,926	+328	+76
member add						

Appendix D

District of Columbia NSLP only, July Meals Served

	Free		Reduced		Total	
	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001
Lunch	35,206	14,799	2,391	253	37,597	15,052

Maximum Federal Reimbursement Rate Per Meal (In Whole or Fractions of U.S. Dollars) Effective January 1, 2002- December 31, 2002			
		Administrative Costs for Meals Served at	
Type of Meal Served	Operating Costs	Self-Preparation Sites	Other Sites
Breakfast	1.32	.13	0.1025
Lunch or Supper	2.30	.24	0.2000
Supplement	.53	.0650	0.0525

Appendix E

Summer Food Service Program Timeline

The following is a proposed Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) timeline for 2003. It is based on SFSP best practices from various programs across the country.

January

- Distribute fact sheet for summer 2003 recruitment.
- Identify eligible areas that need additional sites.

February

- Public release of program svailability
- SEO-SNAC submits Management and Administration Plan to USDA Mid-Atlantic Regional Office.
- The SNAC-SEO should make public its Summer Food Service Program Plan with a timeline and its plan to expand SFSP so that community-wide efforts are complementary.
- Application and program materials mailed to potential sponsors upon request.

March

- Notice of program availability to private non-profit organizations.
- Schedule and promote the sponsor training. (The training is when sponsors learn the paperwork and other requirements for SFSP and get technical assistance on how to operate the program.)
- Meet with sponsors to discuss their capacity and their willingness to take on additional sites, as well as what sites need to do to sign up with the sponsor.

March and April

- Training Sessions conducted for sponsors, food service management companies, health inspectors, and auditors, as needed.

April

- Ask Pepco to include information about SFSP in its June bill. A number of other entities may be will be willing to include SFSP information on its communication with their customers or clients. For example, food stamp or TANF offices can include SFSP information in their mailings of checks or recertification letters, or, in areas that have switched to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), information can be added to the ATM or cash register receipt. Similarly, banks can include information on their monthly statements.
- Work with school PTA's to get information on summer food to parents and make presentations at their spring meetings.
- Work with local movie theaters to have a slide on SFSP shown at the start of movies.
- Work with local newspapers, radio, television, and cable stations to promote the program through a Public Service Announcement, interviews or op-ed pieces.

May

- The United States Department of Agriculture is proclaiming the week of May 12th as Summer Food Service Program Week. The Proclamation calls upon communities to recognize schools, city agencies and private nonprofit organizations that participate as sponsors the opportunity to promote SFSP. A local official, such as the mayor or a city council member, can make a similar proclamation for the city. USDA's Proclamation will be available on its summer food website www.summerfood.usda.gov as Summer Food Service Program Week approaches.
- Deadline for submission of sponsor applications.
- Develop eye-catching flyers, brochures, and posters that can be distributed or posted throughout the community. Flyers can be handed out and posters can be hung at churches, community and cultural centers, low-income housing common areas, WIC clinics, Food Stamp/Medicaid/TANF offices, job training programs, and restaurants and

grocery and other stores that have community bulletin boards. Posters also can be hung on buses and trains, and at bus and train stations.

- Utilize the Capital Area Food Bank's summer food hotline that families can call to locate the nearest SFSP site. The summer food hotline could have a list of open sites and refer the caller to the closest site.

June

- Application for advance payment request due by eligible approved sponsors.
- Ask elected officials – the Mayor, city council members, school board members – to include information on SFSP in their regular mailings to their constituents.
- Schedule a training for Sites that outlines responsibilities in storing and serving the meals and recording the number of meals that are served (the "meal counts").
- Encourage schools to send information on SFSP and its locations home with children as the end of the school year approaches. Schools may be willing to send the information home multiple times to ensure that parents receive the information.
- Distribute door-knockers throughout neighborhoods. (Door-knockers are flyers that are designed to be hung on door-knobs.)

June 23

- First Day of Summer Food Service Program Feeding
- Press Conference and Kick-off for Summer Feeding Program
- Begin monitoring and providing technical assistance to all sponsors as needed to ensure compliance of regulatory and program requirements.

July

- June claim for reimbursement due.

August

- July claim for reimbursement due.
- Administrative review of sponsors covering June & July.

August 30

- Last day of Summer Food Service Program feeding

September

- Final administrative review

October

- Summer Food Service Program Planning Committee - Evaluate Summer 2003.

November

- Contact previous sponsors and distribute Intent to Participate Forms for Summer 2004.

December

- Develop a fact sheet that includes information on the SFSP and how it operates, how to apply to be a sponsor, number of children in the community receiving free and reduced-price school meals, the number of children participating in SFSP, and the resources SFSP could bring to the community.
- Recruit potential sponsors by meeting with the schools, city agencies, or private non-profits. Some of the large non-profits to consider meeting with include: the D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, United Planning Organization, community centers, faith-based institutions, and others that are serving the children in the City. At the meeting, discussion should center around the need and the benefits of the SFSP.

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