

Serving Summer Meals Just Got Easier...

Hunger doesn't take a vacation when school lets out for summer! Fortunately, the DC Free Summer Meals Program provides children and teens with healthy meals and snacks during June, July, and August!



New guidance from United States Department of Agriculture Department of Food and Nutrition Services (USDA FNS) can help ensure that more District youth have access to the meals they need to learn and thrive. Below are some highlights of the new provisions related to eligibility and meal service flexibility. For a detailed explanation of each provision click on the links below.

Meal Service Flexibility:

Mobile Feeding Options: <http://1.usa.gov/1mJXIEv>

Mobile feeding allows sponsors to transport meals to children rather than requiring children to travel to a meal site. This option can help reach children who are unable to access a traditional site locations such as churches, recreation centers, libraries, etc. because of limited transportation, concerns about safety, or other barriers. This new guidance allows expenses associated with vehicles used as part of summer meal operation to count as an allowable program cost.

Meal Service Requirements: <http://1.usa.gov/1oe1Wm6>

There are no Federal meals service time limits and no requirements pertaining to the amount of time that must elapse between the beginning of one meal and the beginning of the next.

Offer vs. Serve: <http://1.usa.gov/1oe1Wm6>

According to this guidance, sponsors may take advantage of the "offer versus serve" option (OVS), which permits children to decline a certain number of menu items. OVS provides kids with more choices and can help reduce food waste and costs. State agency approval required.

Meals Served to Adults: <http://1.usa.gov/1oe1Wm6>

While the decision to serve meals to adults is at the discretion of the sponsor, guidance allows meals to be served for free to program adults, who work directly with the meal service either as a paid employee or volunteer. These meals cannot be claimed as a reimbursable meal but can be counted as an allowable program cost. The cost of meals served to non-Program adults may be counted as part of the sponsor's operating costs only if the adult pays the full cost of the meal and the money received is reported as income to the Program.

Taking Meals Off Site: <http://1.usa.gov/1oe1Wm6>

To be eligible for reimbursement, summer meals must be consumed on site, unless the meal is served on a State agency approved field trip. Sponsors may now allow a child to take one fruit, vegetable, or grain item offsite for later consumption with prior State agency approval required.



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Excessive Heat: <http://1.usa.gov/1lnYIX7>

Through this memorandum, USDA is extending the 2013 demonstration project allowing children to take meals off site at certain outdoor summer meal sites experiencing excessive heat, days when the National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a Heat Advisory, an Excessive Heat Warning, or an Excessive Heat Watch for the area in which an approved outdoor feeding site is located. Interested sponsors, who serve meals outside during the summer and lack a temperature controlled alternative, can notify OSSE of their intent to participate in this demonstration.

Expanded Eligibility:

Area Eligibility Using Census Data: <http://1.usa.gov/SIfRnW>

New guidance allows sites to qualify using Census Tracts in addition to Census Block Groups (CBG). The previous policy allowed only CBG. This change also applies to Seamless Summer sites and can help more sites in low-income areas qualify to serve summer meals.

Use of School Data: <http://1.usa.gov/1oOJgH6>

Areas in which 50 percent or more of children qualify to receive free and reduced price meals can participate in the summer meal program. Previously, sponsors could only use data from the month of October to determine area eligibility. Now State Agencies are encouraged to accept school data from any month to determine area eligibility to qualify sites that would otherwise be ineligible.

If you are interested in learning about additional USDA memos to help expand participation in the summer food service program, visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/policy>.

For more information call OSSE's Wellness and Nutrition Services Division at 202-727-1839 or D.C. Hunger Solutions at 202-640-1088.