



# FRAC: Summer Nutrition Programs

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## Model Programs

### Creative Community Partnerships Expand Summer Feeding Yuma Union High School, AZ

#### Overview

- The Yuma Union High School District started a Summer Food Program in 2002.
- To reach the different sectors of the Yuma County community, the school worked to expand the Summer Food Program from two sites to 18 sites over 3 years.
- These 18 sites vary in size, location, and activities.

#### Process for Meal Service

- One group of sites includes Yuma County's high schools.
- Other sites are located at local community organizations, including public libraries, community centers, and family shelters.
- The Yuma Public Library runs a Children's Summer Reading program, making it a logical partner.
- The children check out a book from the library and go outside, where they pick up a packaged lunch and have a picnic in the adjacent park.
- In the first year of the partnership 1,072 students participated in the Summer Reading Program and the Summer Food Service Program.
- Last year, participation increased to 1,910 students, with part of this increase attributable to the Summer Food Program.
- The school recently began working with a family shelter in an economically depressed area.

#### Creative Practices

- In addition to these unique partnerships, the school has used the Summer Food Program to provide a positive outlet to local teens.
- Yuma County has one of the highest rates of drug use and teenage pregnancy in the state.
- Through the local Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) - a work training program for teenagers – the school has recruited local teenagers to work at SFSP sites, preparing and serving meals to children.
- In addition to reducing labor costs for the SFSP sites, this program has taught these teenagers about food safety, baking, preparing meals, and the responsibility of holding a job, and by extension, helped them stay out of trouble and become better prepared for school.

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## Model Programs

### Bookmobile and Nutrition Classes Attract Children to Summer Food Pulaski County Schools, KY

#### Overview

- Pulaski County Schools works with parks, libraries, day care centers, YMCAs, camps, Vacation Bible Schools, and churches to provide meals for children during the summer months.
- The school began promoting their Summer Food Program in March through advertising in local newspapers, radio, and the schools' web page.
- The school also involved community leaders in the process of feeding children during the summer.
- Since Pulaski is a rural farming community, it is difficult for many children to travel to a summer food site.
- The school worked with the local library, which has a summer reading program, to bring the meals to the children.
- The library operates a bookmobile that travels throughout the community, and at its designated stops neighborhood children pick up a book as well as receive a sack lunch.
- The program has been very well received.

#### Process for Meal Service

- The program uses a central kitchen located at a local high school to prepare all the meals.
- The staff arrives at the central kitchen by 7:00 a.m. to begin preparing meals, and throughout the day volunteers pick up the meals to deliver to the various sites.
- Breakfast pick-ups begin at 7:45 a.m., and lunch and supper are picked up between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

#### Creative Practices

- One problem the program has encountered at the housing projects is that the summer food sites were within walking distance for all the children in the community, and the children often want to return home after picking up their lunches instead of eating at the site. (Under summer food rules, meals must be consumed at the site.)
- To encourage children to eat at the site, and to educate children about healthy eating habits, the County Extension Office provides nutrition classes for the children.

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## Model Programs

### Local Hospital Makes Great Summer Food Sponsor **Mercy Hospital Summer Food Service Program, KS**

#### Overview

- Thanks to its mission to serve the community, partnerships with local organizations, and generous volunteers, Mercy Hospital has filled the need for the Summer Food Service Program in Independence, Kansas, for the past five years.
- Before the hospital stepped up to provide summer food, there was no Summer Food Program operating in Independence.

#### Process for Meal Service

- Feeding children fits in with Mercy Hospital's mission to serve the community, especially children.
- The need for summer meals is very high in the area.
- Approximately 1,000 Independence children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, including 300 elementary school-aged children.
- The program relies on teamwork from diverse community groups and volunteers.
- Mercy Hospital sponsors the program and prepares the food in its kitchen, while a public elementary school provides its cafeteria as the feeding site and the services of its custodian.
- Hospital auxiliary volunteers and local church youth groups help with food preparation at the hospital and site supervision at the school.
- The Summer Food Program provides the youth volunteers with a great opportunity to gain summer experience in the hospital kitchen and working with the children.

#### Creative Practices

- Despite the elimination of summer school this summer, Mercy Hospital hopes to increase summer food participation to 150 elementary school-aged children per day.
- As a result of a new partnership with the school bus company, this summer a bus will pick up children at three different sites in town to transport them to Mercy Hospital's summer program.
- In past years, the local Cooperative Extension Office provided enrichment activities every day at the SFSP site.
- Lessons included nutrition education, science and technology sessions, 4H Club activities, musical programs, speakers, and visits from the local fire truck.
- The Cooperative Extension Office also brought in college students to supervise and interact with the children.
- This year, the public school will provide these activities for the children.

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## Model Programs

### Parks and Rec. Dept. Finds Creative Uses for Commodity Food City of Caruthersville Parks and Recreation Department, MO

#### Overview

- The Caruthersville Parks and Recreation Department enhances the meals it serves through the Summer Food Service Program with a wide variety of USDA commodity foods.
- This year, the program will serve about 1,100 lunches and 500 breakfasts per day at eleven SFSP sites, all located in low-income neighborhoods and open to any child who comes to eat a meal.

#### Process for Meal Service

- Caruthersville makes use of the skills of many regular school year employees during the summer.
- For example, the summer program employs school cooks who are already familiar with child nutrition program regulations and meal patterns.
- Teachers are hired to supervise the children at the sites.
- In addition, the SFSP provides summer job opportunities for some youth.
- All the SFSP meals are prepared in a central kitchen and the site supervisors transport the meals in their personal vehicles.
- To make meal service easier for the site supervisors, as many meal components as possible are put together in paper bags in the central kitchen.
- And since many of the meals contain hot components, the program has figured out inexpensive and effective methods to keep food hot during transport.

#### Creative Practices

- To supplement the meals that are reimbursed with SFSP funds, the Parks and Rec. program gets as many USDA commodity foods as they can and uses every penny of them.
- Caruthersville finds creative ways to enhance its SFSP meals with commodity foods.
- For example, USDA dried fruits and trail mix are baked into muffins and cookies.
- The program also makes its own trail mix by combining commodity dried blueberries, raisins and walnuts.
- USDA cheese is used in tacos and on top of salads, and commodity pork is used for barbeque sandwiches.
- The children especially like the USDA canned and frozen peaches served as part of breakfast.

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## Model Programs

### Fresno Commission Reaches Thousands of Children with SPSP Fresno County Economic Opportunity Commission, CA

#### Program Demographics

- The Fresno County Economic Opportunity Commission runs six afterschool programs in Fresno serving 30-90 children at each site.
- The students range in age from 5 to 14 years old.
- All of the programs are located in urban areas.

#### Meal Program

- The commission uses the Summer Food Service Program to serve afterschool snacks and summer meals.
- From June to August, the commission serves lunch to 67 sites throughout the county, serving approximately 95,000 to 100,000 children each day.
- The program also serves breakfast and lunch to around 3,000 children at Head Start Programs through the Child and Adult Care Food Program and 800 seniors through the senior nutrition programs each day.

#### Menus

- Some of the children's favorite snacks include fresh peaches, nectarines and apples.
- Popular meals include pizza pockets, hamburgers, enchilada casserole and spaghetti.
- During the summer months, the commission serves cold sack lunches and recently introduced turkey and cheese wraps (made with whole grain tortillas) as a new item on the menu, which has been very well received by the students.

#### Process for Meal Service

- Staff at each afterschool and summer program serve the snacks and meals and have been trained to follow all of the health and safety requirements and keep accurate meal count records.
- The commission runs the area's Meals on the Wheels program so they have included delivery of the afterschool snacks and summer meals to their preexisting delivery routes, which allows both programs to share the cost of transportation.

#### Funding and Costs

- The commission is able to run all of the nutrition programs without going over the federal reimbursement they receive.
- The staff puts together a budget each year for program expenses and uses historical data to estimate labor, food, transportation and overhead costs.
- Staff members have noticed that it is easier to operate the nutrition programs when they are serving a large volume of snacks and meals because it allows them to run the program more cost effectively.



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## Model Programs

### Challenges and Solutions

- One challenge the commission has found in running the summer food program is that it is hard to get children to attend the summer meal sites. They often do not know that the program is available to them.
- To help increase participation in the summer meals program, the commission, sends flyers out to each summer food site to distribute, encourages children to invite their friends and family members to the meal program, uses local media to get the word out, hosts "grand openings" for their sites each year to raise awareness and asks other organizations in the community including churches, Parks and Rec programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and schools to tell their participants about the meal programs.

### Response to the Program

- Food service staff really appreciate the summer meals program as a source of summer employment opportunities. Typically, the food service department is forced to lay off people when school is out but because of the summer nutrition programs they are able to not only retain their regular staff but often need to hire additional summer employees.
- The superintendent appreciates the fact that the commission is able to serve children throughout the district with the nutrition programs and is impressed that it does not cost the school district any money and does not require students to fill out an application or request extensive paperwork from parents.
- The children are excited to be together when school is out. Eating with their peers in a school setting is very familiar to them and provides them with a place to eat healthy food, play, socialize and gives them a sense of routine during the summer months.
- Parents often bring all of their children to summer food sites and tell staff members how grateful they are to have a place where their children can receive meals when school is out.

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## Model Programs

### School District Purchases Local Produce for Summer Food Program Litchfield Elementary School District, AZ

#### District Demographics

- The Litchfield Elementary School District has 9,000 students enrolled in 10 area schools.
- Thirty percent of the students in the school district qualify for free or reduced price meals.
- The district is located in a rapidly growing area west of Phoenix that is both rural and urban.

#### Meal Program

- The school district serves breakfast and lunch to students during the summer months through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).
- The main summer food site operates at the elementary school with the highest free and reduced price rate in the school district.
- A small number of meals are transported to other sites around the community.
- The school district serves an average of 900 children per day, with 25,000 breakfasts and 35,000 lunches throughout the summer.
- To advertise the summer meals program, the district hands out flyers to all Litchfield Elementary School District students plus students of surrounding school districts, and puts notices in local newspapers, food banks, churches and local city recreation departments.

#### Purchasing

- The district purchases a variety of local produce from local farmers, such as watermelon, honeydew, peaches, cucumbers, tomatoes, cantaloupes, squash, citrus and onions, and incorporates it into the summer meals.
- Farmers notify the district about what produce they have available and the school district stays flexible with its menus so it can incorporate produce that is in season.
- The Food Connection, a local non-profit Food Security organization, works with the school district to tell it what local products are available throughout the year.
- The district staff feels that the local produce is much fresher and of a higher quality than the produce they received from non-local vendors.

#### Delivery

- The majority of the produce comes from four area farmers that are all located within a 10 mile radius of the summer food program, and more than 50 percent of the produce served during the summer is grown in Arizona.
- Half of the farmers deliver the produce right to the school, and the others require school district staff to drive out to the farm to pick it up.

#### Menus

- Fresh produce is incorporated into both the breakfasts and lunches during the summer.
- The main summer food site offers two salad bars, which makes it easy to incorporate different fruits and vegetables when they become available.



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## Model Programs

### Funding and Costs

- The district is able to serve fresh produce in all of its meals while staying well within the federal meal reimbursement.
- Serving local produce actually has helped the school save money on food costs because local fruits and vegetables tend to be cheaper than non-local produce.

### Creative Practices

- The school district also receives donated produce (that is not necessarily local) from the area food bank, which is given out to parents and children who attend the summer food program.
- This has helped create enthusiasm and support for the summer meals program, increase participation rates and help parents stretch their food dollars during the summer months.
- This also has created a passion in the younger children to consume more fresh fruits and vegetables. This passion is carried over to the regular school year, and produce consumption by students continues to increase each year.

### Challenges and Solutions

- The local fruits and vegetables typically require more washing once delivered than does produce from other vendors.
- The school district trained the food service staff to include extra washing in their preparation process before the produce is cooked or served.
- According to the school food service director, the quality, freshness and variety of local product outweigh the extra preparation time.

### Response to Program

- The children love the fresh fruits and vegetables that are incorporated into the meals and district staff believe the fresh produce and high quality meals help them keep summer participation rates high.

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