

November/December: Setting Goals for Next Summer

As a sponsor...

After reviewing and discussing your evaluation of last summer, begin looking ahead to next summer and what you might do differently to further build your program. Especially consider your capacity to manage more sites next summer, to serve a greater number of children, and how you can improve the quality of each of your sites.

Sponsoring Additional Sites – There likely are additional summer programs or locations where children congregate over the summer months that would only be able to participate as a site through a sponsor. Current sponsors can easily add on additional sites.

- Am I willing to take on additional sites next summer? Connecting with your local schools, community organizations, governmental agencies such as recreation and park departments, libraries and public housing developments, and advocacy groups can help you assess if any summer programs will be operating in your area that require a sponsor or where new sites could be located. By offering to sponsor additional sites, you are enabling many more children in your communities to have access to summer meals. Reaching out to these sites early can help you in your logistical planning of how you will manage these sites.

Strategic Site Locations – Assessing where sites should be located in a community is imperative to effectively administer the Summer Nutrition Programs. Site locations should be easily accessed by and visible to its surrounding community and should not compete with another site or sponsor. Site locations also should be welcoming and safe for children to attend. This can mean something different for each site. Perhaps a site is located on a certain street parents do not want their children spending time on, or perhaps site advertisement is inadequate (poorly designed, or uses inaccessible language for non-native English speakers). Keep these issues in mind when assessing site locations and setup.

- Do I want the site locations to be different or the same as last summer? Determine early on in your planning which site locations were not successful last summer and whether you will be able to use those locations again and increase participation. Also, look for new locations that will be effective in reaching children over the summer months. Consider pools, parks, libraries and recreation centers where children may naturally go to play and be with their friends over the summer months.

Keeping Your Vendor – Consider the service you received from your vendor last summer in terms of meal preparation, quality, and delivery to your sites. Evaluate your vendor's flexibility in your requests for new menus, changes in delivery times, or changes to number of meals needed. Talk to your vendor about the possibility of incorporating taste tests with some of the children.

- Do I want to use the same vendor? Did you have a positive experience with your vendor this past summer? Are there things that you would like to change this summer? If so, what changes should you make to your bid next summer to improve meal quality, variety, and appeal, to strengthen the transportation of the meals, and to the process of changing the number of meals that you need each day?

Participation Goals – Setting participation goals can help guide your outreach plans, determine the number of sites you need to sponsor, and set the stage for your financial planning. Your participation

goals can be based on participation data from previous summers or you can consider what impact any new outreach or operational strategies you will be implementing next summer might have.

- How many children do I hope to reach? Set specific participation goals for your overall sponsorship and for each of your individual sites. Consider how any new sites you add to your sponsorship will impact your overall participation rate. Calculate your ideal participation rate for the financial health of your program and determine what contributing factors could make that rate a reality.
- How can I increase participation per site? Review the sites you categorized as underutilized in your evaluation of last summer. What specifically about these sites caused them to be underutilized and how can these factors be addressed? For example, would targeted outreach in the area surrounding the site, adding activities and programming, or making the sites more accessible and visible increase participation?
- What partners can I work with to conduct outreach? Assess who in your community is also working on the Summer Nutrition Programs and determine what outreach strategies you can help one another with (i.e. community canvassing, flier distribution, etc.) Also consider what groups are not already involved but may have a vested interest in children participating in the programs. Plan on engaging with these groups and bringing awareness to them about the need for and importance of the programs for your communities.
- How can I get schools and PTAs to do outreach? The last child nutrition reauthorization required schools to help with summer meal outreach. Contact the school to discuss how they communicate with children's parents, such as email lists, robocalls, and backpack mail, and ask them to include information about summer meals in all of their communications to parents.
- Which meal service should I offer to attract the greatest number of children to my sites? If in previous summers, you only offered a lunch, consider offering a breakfast or a snack in addition to the lunch. For sites where you think the lunch has not been successful, decide whether serving a supper instead would attract a greater number of children to an evening program.

As a supporter...

Begin planning what role you can play in the Summer Nutrition Programs next summer. Can you help intervene with sponsors who are considering not returning to the program? Will you focus on helping expand the sponsorship of current sponsors? Will you be working on recruiting new sponsors? Will you be working with schools to help them connect to community-based partners and sites? There are many roles for you to play next summer in the pursuit of making next summer the most effective summer for the Summer Nutrition Programs in the communities you serve.

Sponsor or Site Recruitment – In many communities, there are not enough sponsors to serve the sites and children who would benefit from summer meals. In other communities, there is a sponsor or multiple sponsors that are willing to serve additional sites. Determine whether your community would benefit from additional sponsors or additional sites. List all relevant groups and organizations operating in the communities you serve that will be most helpful in achieving your goals of sponsor or site recruitment. Prioritize who may be interested in participating in the Summer Nutrition Programs as either a new sponsor or site. Consider especially the capacity of these organizations and whether they already play a role in summer programming or serving children in some way. Consider also schools and summer learning programs, which are able to have a streamlined application process to sponsoring summer meals if they already participate in the National School Lunch Program. Smaller school districts can work together to provide summer meals to their communities by purchasing meals together and providing meals to an extended area to ensure there is no gap in service throughout the local region. Schools can

bring their community partner organizations to the table to facilitate partnership development among all groups involved.

- How many sponsors are needed to serve each community? Set a goal for the number of sponsors you would like to see serving your communities. Consider the number of sites each sponsor would need to manage and allow for a variety of types of sponsors, such that some may sponsor only a few sites and some may sponsor several depending on the administrative capacity. Also consider setting an appropriate and realistic ratio of sites to sponsor that you would like to see each sponsor aim for, e.g. one sponsor for every five sites.
- What types of sponsors need to be recruited? Review the types of sponsors from previous years and which types seemed most effective at reaching the children of your communities with the Summer Nutrition Programs. Were they schools, faith-based organizations, or local government agencies? Prioritize your recruitment to sponsors who you believe will have the greatest impact on the programs.
- Will they be small or large (umbrella) sponsors? Both small and large (umbrella) sponsors have a critical role to play in the Summer Nutrition Programs. Smaller sponsors can offer more hands-on assistance to their sites, as well as a greater focus on quality and service to the children participating. Larger (umbrella) sponsors should focus on site staff training and reporting methods to ensure that each site is in compliance with program requirements. Both small and large sponsors together can help bring the Summer Nutrition Programs to eligible communities and their children. And often small sponsors can become larger sponsors in subsequent summers.

Participation Goals – Supporters of the Summer Nutrition Programs can set overall community participation goals to increase participation from previous summers. In developing your goals, consider local participation rates in school meals and how you can help drive the participation rates of children receiving summer meals throughout next summer.

- How many children will be served? Set a goal for the number of children to be served by the Summer Nutrition Programs. Calculate this number and consider how many additional sponsors and sites are required to meet this number.