**News Releases**

If you have an event, special activity, or call for volunteers, submit a news release to your newspaper’s local news editor, your TV station’s local news assignment editor or producer, or your radio station’s producer.It’s very rare for the media to find you. Usually you have to make the first contact. Here’s how!

# Outreach to Media

* Contact the media when you have a newsworthy story. Only call a reporter when you have real news such as your kick-off event, the announcement of a large donation or partnership, or a story about your new site opening.
* When working with media, be prepared. When you call a reporter, be prepared to answer questions. When you submit a news release, make sure it is complete and free of grammatical errors. The easier you make their job, the more likely an editor or reporter will cover your story.
* Getting a story covered takes work and follow-up. Just because you send a news release, doesn’t mean the media will cover it—no matter how great your Program is. Pick up the phone and make a follow-up call and offer to help set up a visit.
* Remember to post your events and special activities on community calendars. Most media have them on their websites. Ask permission to post information every day Summer Meals are served. Make sure to include as much detail as possible, such as menus and activities.

# Writing News Releases

* Try to keep your release to one page, double-spaced.
* Always include your contact information in case the editor has questions.
* Put the most important information first in case the editor has limited space.
* Include photos and quotes if you can. Make sure you have each person’s permission—or parent’s permission for children—in writing.

**Summer Meals Toolkit**

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider,

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 **10/31/16**

# Sample News Releases

## 1. Summer Meals Kicks Off on [insert date]

[Your city’s name here in all caps]— With summer right around the corner, it’s time to think about how children who receive free or reduced-priced lunch in school will eat healthy while school is out. [Your organization’s name] provides free meals to children during the summer. You can come for a day of fun with your family to the kickoff event and learn more about Summer Meals.

[Event name] will be at [location] on [day of the week, date] from [start time] to [end time]. There is no cost to attend. More information is available at [phone number or website].

Each year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture partners with local organizations like [Your organization’s name], to provide free meals to children when school is out for the summer. Anyone age 18 or younger may come and eat. #

Federal

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency ere they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, heard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](https://www.ascr.usda.gov/how-file-program-discrimination-complaint) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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State

The Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, religion, ancestry or national origin.

If you wish to file a discrimination complaint electronically, please select[**File a Complaint**](https://www.maine.gov/mhrc/file_a_complaint/general_intake_form.htm)and complete an intake questionnaire. Before completing this process it may be helpful to review relevant links under Guidance. If you are not sure how the Maine Human Rights Act may apply to, you please review the publication "[What It Is! How It Works!](https://www.maine.gov/mhrc/guidance/what_it_is.htm)". Maine is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**2. You Can Help Feed Kids This Summer: Donations and Volunteers Needed!**

[Your city’s name here in all caps]— Summer is coming and you can help feed kids while school is out. [Your organization’s name] provides free meals to children during the summer. Volunteers are needed throughout the summer to help serve meals, supervise children, and do outreach in the community.

This summer, meals will be served at [location] on [days] at [times]. Contact [your organization’s name] at [phone number or website] for more information about volunteering or donating to the Summer Meal Program.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture partners with local organizations like [your organization’s name], to provide free meals to children when school is out for the summer. Anyone age 18 or younger may come and eat.

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## 3. Summer Meals Provides Good Nutrition to Our Kids for Free

[Your city’s name here in all caps]— With summer right around the corner, it’s time to think about keeping children healthy while school is out. [Your organization’s name] provides free meals to children during the summer.

This summer, meals will be served at [location] on [days] at [times]. There are no income requirements or registration. Anyone age 18 or younger may come to eat. For more information, contact [phone number or website].

Each year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture partners with local organizations like [your organization’s name], to provide free meals to children when school is out for the summer.

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# For Additional Information

Review these ideas and adopt the strategies that seem reasonable to you and achievable for your Program. Do you have more questions? Sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for answers. State agencies should contact their FNS Regional Office.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/sfsp-contacts>

*USDA and its recipient institutions share responsibility for compliance and oversight to ensure good stewardship of Federal funds.*

**Summer Meals Toolkit**

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