

## Summer Food Service Program Overview

Almost half of Maine's children qualify for free and reduced-price meals. However, in the summer they lose access to those nutritious school meals. That is where the Summer Meals program comes in, bridging the gap between school years, giving children the fuel they need to play and grow throughout the summer months and return to school ready to learn.

In summer 2016 there were over 400 sites across the state, from Madawaska down to Kittery, Jackman over to Lubec and everywhere in between. Maine served over 750,000 meals.

The SFSP is federally-funded by the USDA and is state-administered by the Maine Department of Education Child Nutrition. The program consists of sponsors, who are managerially and financially responsible for the program, and sites, that are the physical location where meals are served and consumed. Sponsors can be school districts, local government agencies, camps, or private, non-profit organizations.

### Sites

Examples of sites include schools, parks, playgrounds, churches, housing locations, recreation centers, libraries, and more. The most effective sites are those that provide fun enrichment activities in addition to the meals. We encourage the operation of "open" sites, where any child, 18 and under, can come get a free meal, no questions asked. There are a few different ways to qualify an open site:

1. If it is in, or within 1 mile of, a school with 50% or more of its children eligible for free or reduced-price meals
2. Through census tract data
3. Establish a "pocket of poverty" through use of local data

### Reimbursement

Reimbursement is based on the number of eligible meals served times a set rate.

### An Act to Further Reduce Student Hunger

A new Maine state law went into effect beginning Summer 2015, requiring any district with at least one school with 50% or more children eligible for free and reduced meals that provides any kind of summer programming to participate in the Summer Meals program. If the district chooses to not participate this decision must be made at a well-advertised public hearing, such as a school board meeting.

### For More Information:

Please reach out to Adriane Ackroyd at 624-6726 / [adriane.ackroyd@maine.gov](mailto:adriane.ackroyd@maine.gov) or Kate Fayle at 624-6666 / [kaitlin.fayle@maine.gov](mailto:kaitlin.fayle@maine.gov) with any questions and to begin planning! Planning ahead of time makes the process easier. Mandatory sponsor trainings are offered starting in February. The deadline to apply and to receive USDA Foods in the summer is April 30<sup>th</sup>.



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