

Lunch at the Library: The USDA Summer Food Service Program

Why should libraries get involved in Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)?

1 in 4 children in Texas do not know when they will eat their next meal. During the school year, 2.8 million Texas children receive free and reduced price breakfast and lunch at school. When school lets out, many of those children are at risk of hunger. Hunger is a roadblock for learning and these children may fall behind in reading and experience more summer learning loss. Libraries are in the heart of their communities and are perfectly placed to help alleviate the food insecurity by participating in the SFSP and serving meals and snacks to children as part of summer programming.

How to get started:

- Is there a community need? Meal sites must serve an area where 50% or more of the children are eligible for free and reduced price lunch.
 - Check with your local school district for statistics.
 - Texas Department of Agriculture has a resource with Census data for area eligibility. <http://squaremeals.org/FandNResources/Toolsamp;Links/CensusData.aspx>
- Are there other area sites that already provide summer meals? The library may not be the best choice to host a site, but libraries can partner with sites to assist with programming and activities during meal service.
 - Visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks> to find Summer Meals in your community. (2016 sites will be added as sites register)
 - In Texas, call 211 or text FoodTX to 877-877 to find sites nearby.
 - Range App links youth to the nearest place for a free meal <http://www.rangeapp.org/>
- Who can provide the meals? Many school districts, cities, and food banks sponsor meals for library sites. These resources can help identify a sponsor.
 - Texas Department of Agriculture “Becoming an SFSP Site” <http://squaremeals.org/Programs/SummerFeedingPrograms/HowcanIparticipateinSFSP/BecominganSFSPSite.aspx>
 - Texas Hunger Initiative <http://www.baylor.edu/texashunger/>
 - Feeding Texas (formerly known as Texas Food Bank Network) has connections and data from Texas Food Banks (www.feedingtexas.org)

Staff and Facility Capacity

- Libraries need to have sufficient staff to set up, distribute meals, clean up, and complete all of the daily and weekly forms for the program. Volunteers can assist with the program.
- Each site needs to have space for children to sit and eat. Refrigerator space is required along with a refrigerator thermometer to ensure that food is kept at proper temperatures. A large garbage can and cleaning supplies are also needed. If a library doesn't have room to host summer meals within the building, partnerships with other sites can positively benefit both the library and the summer food site.
- Sites will be inspected throughout the summer by sponsor, city, state, and federal inspectors to ensure that federal and standards are being upheld.

Resources:

- Texas State Library and Archives Commission Summer Food Site: <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/summerreading/summerfood>
- Texas Department of Agriculture Summer Feeding Programs: <http://squaremeals.org/Programs/SummerFeedingPrograms.aspx>
- United States Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp>
- Texas Hunger Initiative: <http://www.baylor.edu/texashunger/>



TEXAS STATE LIBRARY
AND
ARCHIVES COMMISSION