

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is a site?

A: A site is the physical location, approved by the Illinois State Board of Education, where SFSP meals are served during a supervised time period. Meal service sites may be located in a variety of settings, including schools, playgrounds, parks, camps, or housing projects.

Q2: How is a site approved?

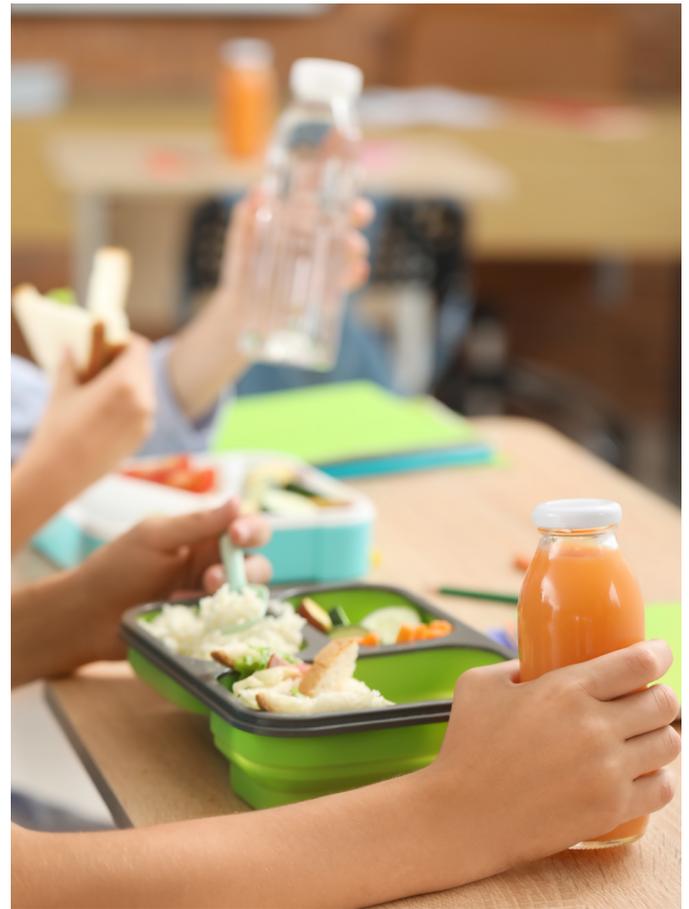
A: A site can be approved by meeting site eligibility through school data (free and reduced-price meal eligibility listing), Census block group data, or, in some cases, through individual income applications.

Q3: How are SFSP meals prepared?

A: A sponsor may prepare its own meals, purchase meals through an agreement with an area school, or contract for meals with a food service management company (vendor).

Q4: How does SFSP work?

A: SFSP is a federally funded program that reimburses approved sponsors for nutritious meals served at a site to low-income children during the summer months or vacation breaks while school is not in session.



Q5: How many meals can be reimbursed?

A: A sponsor can be reimbursed for up to two meals, or one meal and one snack, daily to children ages 18 and under.

Q6: Who can be a sponsor?

A: Sponsors must be organizations that are fully capable of managing a nonprofit food service program. Eligible organizations include school food authorities; units of local, municipal, county, or state government; camps; colleges; or any other private nonprofit organizations with a 501(c)3 status.

For additional information, please contact the Illinois State Board of Education:

Call: 800-545-7892

Email: SummerMeals@isbe.net

Visit the [Summer Food Service Program](https://www.isbe.net/sfsp) website



Sponsor Responsibilities

A sponsor's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- Complete ISBE's training
- Decide how the meals will be prepared (self-prep or vended)
- Confirm that menus meet federal guidelines for components and portion size
- Create a record-keeping system for meal count sheets and for maintaining expense records
- Send a letter to the local health department notifying them of the Summer Food Service Program
- Complete a policy statement/announcement and send to local media for publication
- Hire and train staff
- Document each site's eligibility
- Perform monitoring duties at sites (pre-operational visit, initial site visit, and a four-week full review of food service operations)
- Complete online applications by June 1 (sponsor application, site application(s), and budget)
- Enter field trip dates through the online system
- Display the "And Justice For All" poster in a prominent place in the feeding area and in the administrative offices
- Continue to check the SFSP website for announcements and resources
- File monthly claims online (site claims and a sponsor claim)

Tips for Running a Successful SFSP

The following are some suggestions for implementing an efficient and successful SFSP program:

- Conduct a survey to make certain there is enough interest among families in the community
- Market the program by displaying posters and/or distributing flyers in a school or at a public business
- Insert notices into community bulletins and newsletters
- Work with the media to include a story/announcement in the local paper or on the community TV station
- Partner with community organizations for resources, volunteers, donations, and publicity
- Take time to train your staff thoroughly
- Include plenty of activities to encourage attendance
- Hold a summer food “kick-off” event and invite the press
- Utilize as many volunteers as possible to help at each site
- Consider obtaining a small portion of the food items through a local food bank
- Offer incentives for a child’s attendance – drawings for a donated item such as a bicycle or tickets to a ballgame, etc.
- Explore opportunities through other grants to help fund the program’s activities

Visit the [Summer Food Service Program](#) website for more information and resources, including a handbooks, brochures, flyers, and videos to share with your community.

