



Summer Meals PLANNING GUIDE



OFFICE OF
SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

evaluate



envision



plan



mobilize



promote



engage



The summer months can be a time of increased food insecurity for students who rely on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) during the school year. It is important that these students maintain a healthy diet during the summer months to prevent a loss in learning achievement gained during the previous school year. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) are designed to ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session.

The purpose of this guide is to assist school divisions and community sponsors with planning a successful summer meal service program.

With adequate assessment, planning, preparation, and collaboration, your summer meal service program can better serve the children in your community. This guide separates the most important planning tasks into six different objectives: evaluate, envision, plan, mobilize, promote, and engage. By using this outline, you will be able to accomplish your planning and preparation one action step at a time.

Thank you for all the work you do to feed children throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. You make a difference each and every day! We hope these resources will help you in your work.

Evaluate

SEPT

OCT

Evaluation is key to understanding how your program succeeded and how it can be improved.

ACTION STEPS

- ☐ Collect feedback surveys from your site supervisors, staff, and volunteers.
- ☐ Discuss lessons learned with summer staff and volunteers.
- ☐ Analyze projected vs. actual average daily participation (ADP) at each site.
- ☐ Compare projected vs. actual costs.
- ☐ Using the meal gap analysis spreadsheet, conduct meal gap analysis.
- ☐ Send Thank You cards to partners, stakeholders, volunteers, employees, etc.
- ☐ Submit a press release with the results of your analysis.

RESOURCES

Feedback Surveys

Meal Gap Analysis Spreadsheet

Thank You Cards

Visit www.doe.virginia.gov/summer-food to access all resources.

Envision

NOV

DEC

JAN

Developing a vision for the summer defines the direction for the rest of your preparations.

ACTION STEPS

- ☐ Set quantitative goals, including:
 - i. ADP,
 - ii. number of sites, and
 - iii. budget.
- ☐ Set qualitative goals, including:
 - i. new community partnerships,
 - ii. employee retention and satisfaction,
 - iii. nutrition standards,
 - iv. branding and promotion, and
 - v. farm to school participation.
- ☐ Identify potential new sites.
- ☐ Collect feedback from stakeholders on quantitative and qualitative goals.

RESOURCES

Goals Setting Worksheet

Group Facilitation Guide

Visit www.doe.virginia.gov/summer-food to access all resources.

Plan

JAN

FEB

A written plan with specific action steps serves as a blueprint for your upcoming summer operations.

ACTION STEPS

- ☐ Meet with returning sites to collect summer schedules, anticipated counts, etc.
- ☐ Prepare a request for proposals or invitation for bids (IFB), if applicable.
- ☐ Begin planning summer menus and communicate with vendors.
- ☐ Identify and apply for grant opportunities.
- ☐ Plan outreach campaign and timeline.
- ☐ Coordinate with other social service providers in the area.
- ☐ Advertise volunteer opportunities at schools, libraries, churches, etc.

RESOURCES

Fillable 5-Day SFSP Menu

Fillable 7-Day SFSP Menu

Visit www.doe.virginia.gov/summer-food to access all resources.

Mobilize

MAR

APR

Mobilizing your plans guarantees that site supervisors, staff, and volunteers are prepared and organized.

ACTION STEPS

- ☐ Attend mandatory VDOE-SNP training.
- ☐ Begin application in SNPWeb.
- ☐ Plan site activity schedule.
- ☐ Create monitoring schedule.
- ☐ Create training schedule and training materials.
- ☐ Finalize procurement contract with vendors and/or distributors.
- ☐ Order outreach materials.
- ☐ Make a list of news outlets for outreach campaign.
- ☐ Brainstorm kickoff event with staff, volunteers, and community stakeholders.
- ☐ Collect volunteer applications.

RESOURCES

Fillable 5- and 7-Day SFSP Menus

SNPWeb Application Instructions

Visit www.doe.virginia.gov/summer-food to access all resources.

Promote

MAY

JUN

Through effective promotion and outreach, your target audience will know the what, when, and where of your program.

ACTION STEPS

- ☐ Complete and submit the SFSP/SSO application in SNPWeb.
- ☐ Train and implement the mobile meal counter.
- ☐ Finalize and advertise calendar of site activities.
- ☐ Conduct pre-operational site visits where applicable.
- ☐ Distribute outreach materials.
- ☐ Create social media posts and share across multiple platforms.
- ☐ Send media release to local news outlets.
- ☐ Finalize plans for kickoff event.
- ☐ Collect volunteer applications.

RESOURCES

No Kid Hungry Outreach Toolkit

SNPWeb Application Instructions

Visit www.doe.virginia.gov/summer-food to access all resources.

Engage

JUL

AUG

By engaging staff, participating children, and the community, you can maintain momentum and adjust operations as needed.

ACTION STEPS

- ☐ Update SNPWeb application as needed.
- ☐ Conduct mandatory monitoring site visits and reviews.
- ☐ Invite community leaders to SFSP/SSO sites and events.
- ☐ Share photos and videos on social media. Please remember your friends at VDOE-SNP! Tag @VDOESNP in your post so VDOE-SNP staff can repost your work.
- ☐ Arrange on-site interviews and visits with local media outlets.
- ☐ Collect pulse surveys from site supervisors, staff, volunteers, and students.

RESOURCES

Student Pulse Survey

Staff and Volunteer Pulse Survey

Visit www.doe.virginia.gov/summer-food to access all resources.



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