



Challenges in Serving Rural Ohio Children through the Summer Food Service Program

- Limited concentration of children in rural areas discourage sponsors from starting Summer Feeding programs because it is more difficult to break even on the costs of the program.
- Restricted access to transportation and long distances to Summer Food Service Program sites are the largest reported barriers to rural program implementation and participation.
- Children's lack of interest in leaving home to attend a program and parents' desire or need for children to stay home also hinder participation.

How Legislation Can Break These Barriers

- Summer Food Service Support Grants (Amendment to Healthy, Hungry Free Kids bill sponsored by Sen. Brown): After the second year of sponsorships, many are too overwhelmed. This amendment would provide grants to ease the burden felt by sponsor organizations. Studies have found that if a sponsor reaches its third year 3 of participation, odds of continuing to participate in the program year after year increase substantially.
- Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill: Provides funding for innovative programs.
- The 2009 Agriculture Appropriations bill included \$85 million for summer demonstration projects. This money is still available and Ohio may have access to it.

How Ohioans Can Help

- Become a Sponsor: Being a sponsor means acting as the organizer for the Summer Food Service Program sites. Public or private non-profit schools, local, municipal, county, private non-profits, public or private non-profit camps, and private or non-profit universities or colleges are organizations that often serve as Summer Food Service Program sponsors. Sponsors must be able to provide a capable staff, managerial skills, and food service capabilities.
- Open a Feeding Site: The Summer Food Service Program reaches only a fraction of the children in need. The primary reason for the limited access to the program is that there are not enough feeding sites. A community building or place of faith could become a feeding site. Sites are the physical locations where food is served. Each site location must work with a Summer Food Service Program sponsor that is financially and administratively responsible for the meal service at the site.
- Volunteer: While feeding children is the top priority of the Summer Food Service Program, programming is what keeps children coming back. This takes volunteers especially in June, July and August. Volunteers can help with basics like transporting food, setting up or cleaning up a site—they also plan and do educational or recreational activities with the children.