



Ending Child Hunger at your library with the USDA Summer Food Service Program

What Librarians Are Saying

“Our Sandy Valley location hosted the SFSP and had great success. In partnership with the school district, they gave out lunches and food totes in addition to planning fun programming around the program like special guest speakers, animal programs, ball pits, and art activities. Three of our locations also hosted a community food program where they gave out backpacks of donated food.”

Julia Shaheen, Literacy Manager, Stark County District Library

“Every day, we serve lunch to at least one new child, and many regulars that we see daily. It is a very meaningful experience for every staff member, volunteer and lunch lady.”

Kate McCartney, Assistant Director, Marysville Public Library

“It is the perfect venue to connect low income families and literacy programs in the library.”

Adele Infante, Director, Grafton-Midview Public Library

“For us, it has been very rewarding to bring our summer reading program to kids who otherwise may not have access to our services.”

Becky Schaade, Director, Fairfield County District Library

The USDA works with states and community sponsors to provide summer meals for children in communities with high rates of poverty. As many as 90% of **kids who depend on free or reduced price school meals go hungry** during the long weeks of summer. By participating in the SFSP, public libraries can play an important role in combatting child hunger in Ohio.

Why Libraries?



Children are going hungry in your community. In Ohio, one in five children struggles with hunger, and **only 10% of students who receive free or reduced price school meals also participate in SFSP** or other Summer Nutrition Programs. Transportation, awareness, and unavailability of local sites are all significant barriers to participation in the SFSP. (See <https://frac.org/research/resource-library/hunger-doesnt-take-a-vacation-summer-nutrition-status-report-2019> and <https://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/ohio>).



There is funding available to feed them. Participating sponsors are reimbursed the cost of providing this valuable service. In some of the counties suffering the greatest economic hardship, no one is utilizing these funds to **fight food insecurity and feed hungry children during the summer.**



It really is simple. Libraries don't need to prepare food, design or adapt new or unwieldy programs. SFSP is a longstanding program administered by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Initial involvement is as simple as contacting a local sponsor or the ODE.



It aligns with the mission of the public library to connect community members with the information and resources they need. Summer reading programs have long been a pillar of libraries' literacy support for young patrons. But **hungry kids don't read.** They can become trapped in a cycle of poor school performance and ill health that can have lifelong literacy and learning consequences.

Get Started! library.ohio.gov/summer-food

Visit the State Library website to learn more about the SFSP, how your library can become a sponsor or site, and other ways to support SFSP discover ways to bring enrichment activities to existing sites.

Want to know more?

Libraries are collaborating with food banks and other community partners to address food insecurity through referrals, direct distribution of groceries, pantry shelves, and other initiatives to improve the well-being of children and families. For more information about SFSP or about the role of libraries in fighting food insecurity, contact Janet Ingraham Dwyer, Library Consultant at 614-644-6910 or jdwyer@library.ohio.gov.



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