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Summer Bulletin

SFSP SPONSOR NEWSLETTER

Food That's In When School is Out



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What Time is Lunch Really Served?

By Marcia Yurczyk, SFSP Coordinator

So many times throughout the summer the State Agency has sent emails to our SFSP sponsors reminding them to make sure all site operation information in the CNPweb is correct. Not only is having all the requested information dictated by USDA regulations, if the information is not correct it can affect the outcome of site reviews.

Perhaps as you read this you are sitting with your feet up and a fan blowing on your face after successfully serving 125 hungry children a delicious SFSP meal! Your apron may be lovingly smeared with a conglomeration of baked beans, peaches, and other unidentified morsels of the lunch just provided to those who, without your SFSP program, might be skipping lunch or eating something less nutritious. You are giving yourself well deserved kudos for sacrificing your summer to spend it thinking about the needs of others as you make sure that your Daily Meal Count form is completed correctly and signed for the day. At the State Agency we would also like to express

our thanks to you and your staff and let you know that we understand how hard your job is...planning and



preparing meals for an unknown number of children and hoping they show up at the serving time, as well as completing all of the required paperwork. We recognize that your staff may have to hold the children at bay as they impatiently wait in line until the countdown to serving time turns to "Chow Time". You may have to referee dissatisfied customers or even disgruntled staff who want you to feed them NOW instead of waiting until the CNPweb approved time. Silently you may be wondering if it is really THAT important that you wait, after all, your approved time is only 10 minutes away. Suddenly you look up and through the

door walks your IDOE Field Specialist to conduct a site review. A sense of relief that you didn't give into the pressure of starting meal service early overcomes you and you greet your reviewer by name.

Simultaneously, your field specialist is also breathing a sigh of relief. One of the critical parts of each site review, serving only during the approved meal times, is already being demonstrated. You may think that the State Agency reviewers are picky, overreacting, unyielding, and almost always, untimely. But the bottom line is, they are charged with the day to day regulatory compliance of all of USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. We don't make the rules but we must enforce the rules. Our spring trainings over-emphasized the importance



Inside this issue:

<i>What Time is Lunch Really Served?</i>	1-2
<i>2012 in Numbers</i>	1
<i>It is Lunch Time at Hobart</i>	2-3
<i>SFSP Timeline</i>	3-4



2012 in Numbers

While a lot of the data about the SFSP meals served is still not available, we can share the following:

- Indiana had a total of 245 SFSP sponsors serving and filing reimbursement claims this summer.
- A total of 26 new sponsors joined the program (18 school corporations, 7 private non-profit agencies and 1 residential camp).
- More than 1200 SFSP sites served meals across the state.
- Two sponsors successfully operated mobile feeding sites: School City of Hobart and Fayette County School Corporation

Continued... of putting correct info in CNPweb and double checking it for accuracy on a regular basis. The reason is quite clear: Only meals served during approved meal times may be claimed for reimbursement. If meal service occurs outside of the approved times, the field specialist knows those meals must be disallowed and sponsors should know that too.

We have tried to notify sponsors of this and other important regulations through trainings, emails, webinars, newsletters, and even phone calls. The 2012 SFSP Handbook for Sponsors as well as the Site Supervisor Manual both have the regulations clearly outlined with details related to compliance and noncompliance. And yet, even daily, Tina or my phone rings or we get an email from a field specialist who is out at a site where the meal service has already taken place and it is not even time for the approved meal service to start.

You may be asking why this is such a big deal, why it cannot be overlooked, after all, "Aren't you feeding hungry children?" The bottom line is that federal regulations are just that: regula-

tions. If you want to receive reimbursement for the meals you are serving as a sponsor of the Summer Food Service Program, then you must follow the rules. We have nearly 250 sponsors



with over 1200 sites this year and we are charged with the task of reviewing a certain percentage of them. If the meal service has already taken place or will not be taking place due to an unreported field trip or day off, the field specialist cannot count this visit as a review and must schedule an additional review to take the place of the one in error. In addition, she has used taxpayer dollars to purchase gas to get to the site and that money has now been wasted.

Not to mention, we have very busy field specialists who often book their calendars weeks in advance and rescheduling throws off their calendar and even their family's calendars.

Next year we will be adding some information within CNPweb that will require greater attention to your site serving days and times. We hope this will help the communication between the State Agency and the sponsor and will yield the desired results: Fewer errors in meal times, site addresses, and changes in schedules the State Agency staff and fewer meals disallowed for sponsors. Help us be good stewards of taxpayer dollars by entering correct information in CNPweb, complying with all USDA regulations, and operating your program each day as if it were a "Review Day."

If you have suggestions, comments, or concerns about the information entered into the CNPweb, we would love to get your feedback. Please limit your comments to those that would be allowable under SFSP regulations. Send your comments to myurczyk@doe.in.gov.

It is Lunch Time at Hobart

It was early spring when Nancy Smith, the Food Service Director at the School City of Hobart, first heard about the possibility of mobile summer feeding sites. The Hobart school corporation has participated in the Summer Food Service Program since 2009 when it first started offering free summer meals at two of its elementary schools and the local YMCA. Since that time the program has steadily increased but the option to take free meals to eligible areas where the needy children reside seemed like a great opportunity.

"We loved the idea of mobile sites because there is no draw to get the kids to show up at the school once summer school is over," stated Smith. The concern about the amount of underserved children kicked off the process of turning a great idea into everyday reality. The first step was to find the proper



Children and caregivers can recognize from afar the specially adapted summer feeding trailer where free meals are offered in the approved feeding locations across the city.

means to transport the meals to the potential feeding locations. The solution came quicker than anybody envisioned. A few years ago the school corporation purchased a 24 foot trailer to meet the

transportation needs of the high school football team and to haul the band equipment. The trailer was underutilized and was not used at all during the SFSP season making it a perfect tool for the summer feeding program. It took creativity and support by enthusiastic people to transform the trailer into a one-of-a-kind mobile feeding unit but it was completed quickly and cost effectively. Smith credits the school's maintenance crew who installed the trailer-length counter tops donated by the local Menards store and the flooring. A few additional items like two generators were purchased to improve the air circulation in the trailer that seats about 20 kids.

The next phase of preparation included working with the corporation's transportation department to map out

two routes to serve a total of nine mobile sites. The thorough mapping plan helped to determine the exact distances between the potential sites and the most appropriate program eligible feeding locations.

The timing for each site operation was critical and carefully fine tuned in order to serve all meals within the approved meal service time. The mobile feeding is scheduled during the weekdays between 11:00 am -2:15 pm, including a 30 minute window for the actual meal service at each site plus the necessary travel time to reach the next feeding stop/site. In order to keep the costs down, the food truck simultaneously dropped off meals at several stationary sites while en route to the next mobile location.



Cold but nutritious meals are well received by participants during hot summer days. The overwhelming menu favorite this year is the turkey wrap served with milk and fresh fruit or veggies.

Since every new endeavor comes with its challenges, Smith is quick to point out that the most difficult battle has been

one impossible to win: the relentless summer heat. Although the constant high temperatures have affected the turnout, Smith remains optimistic about the overall success of the program. "We are on our way to the goal of doubling the number of SFSP meals served this summer and we will continue to work hard in 2013." In addition to the promotional flyers distributed to needy households and the use of the school corporation's automated phone service, Smith continues to see the need to educate the public about the program. "It takes time to establish the program in a way for people to be familiar and comfortable with it but we will stay the course because our community and the kids need it."

SFSP Timeline

Benjamin Franklin once said "By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail". It is essential for every sponsor returning to the SFSP to begin preparing early for the next program year. This will eliminate any last minute issues and allow you to approach a new season with confidence and peace of mind.

The following timeline will help you keep track of what to focus on as time goes by.

November/December:

- Start talking to your staff about your participation in the SFSP for 2013.
- Make the internal commitment necessary and decide who will be responsible for the program.
- Determine if there is a need to increase the number of sites and secure funds to be ready for increased fiscal burden.



January:

- Check the Indiana SFSP webpage for any program updates. Expect the release of 2013 SFSP Reimbursement Rates and Administrative Guidance Manual.
- Find out how the SFSP has worked in your area and consider contacting other community agencies where any potential new sites may be located; verify with the state office that there were no existing sites nearby in the previous year.
- If you are planning to vend the meals, follow the proper procurement procedures and start publicizing for bids or competitively negotiated prices from vendors. Start making decisions on all potentially costly issues before you commit to any contracts or hiring any additional staff.

February:

- Call or email state office to register for the training session in the IDOE and/or a webinar.
- If you self prepared meals last year and plan to do the same, look for the letter and/or email from our office regarding the availability of the USDA commodities. Submit the Commodity Request Form in a timely manner or call John Moreland, Commodity Specialist, if you have any questions jmorelan@doe.in.gov.
- Continue to solicit potential new sites with letters, emails or phone calls. Set strict success criteria with each site chosen before you enter into a partnership with them.



Continued... If a sponsor is operating residential or day camp, send out the required Meal Benefit Forms with the promotional camp information or contact the area schools' food service to obtain verification regarding the participants' eligibility.

March:

- Work on your staff training materials early, set numerous training dates for April and May. Make plans that each person at each site learns the complete SFSP protocol. Decide if Offer versus Serve option will be utilized.
- Start filling out the Site Info Sheets for returning sites. Familiarize yourself with correct application forms. If you do not know who will be the site supervisor at each site, make a note to enter or revise this information at a later date.
- Set a deadline as to the last day you will accept new sites. The state agency may not be able to approve your sites before summer if they are not chosen early. Additional sites may be added in the CNP web system after the sponsor approval.
- Contact the local Health Department concerning each site's participation in the SFSP.



April:

- Finish the required hard copy application forms and submit the applicable online forms in the CNP web
- Complete the mandatory USDA Civil Rights training online (one person within the agency must finish the training) and keep the supporting documentation on file.
- If Offer versus Serve Option is utilized at any of the sites, train the staff appropriately and complete the Offer versus Serve Quiz online, keep the training documentation on file.
- Start staff trainings.
- Prepare and submit the menus to the state agency for a review. Contact the field consultant or the office if you have questions concerning the proper menu planning or the Offer versus Serve method.

May:

- Continue the training and hiring of the program staff. Verify that all trainings have been recorded properly and the sign-in sheets are kept on file.
- Get organized by preparing the files for the program paperwork.
- Become familiar with all the forms required for the daily administration of the SFSP.
- Advertise the SFSP sites via local media; utilize internet and contact the local schools and/or community agencies before the kids leave for the summer.
- The sponsors eligible for the commodities will receive the products.
- Depending on the start date of the program, make the necessary food purchases.
- Visit each new and returning problem site from the previous year; complete the appropriate form. Conduct the site visits at all new sites.

June, July and August:



Start your SFSP with a bang!

After all the training sessions are completed and pre-approval site visits finished, take a deep breath because you have made the necessary preparations to operate a successful SFSP. Remember to contact our office if you have questions.

We are here to help you succeed!

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