



SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

OBJECTIVES:

- To raise awareness among the general public about the nutrition needs of low-income children in the summer through the media.
- Increase participation among children who are at-risk of hunger in the Summer Food Service Program.
- Reinforce the importance of policy improvements in the upcoming Child Nutrition Reauthorization among Members of Congress, USDA regional office representatives.

TACTICS:

- **Identify a date, time and location for the event**

Select a day to host your event. The event should take place at a member agency or meal service facility where the Summer Food Service Program is currently being utilized and where you can easily show children and families interacting with local dignitaries/elected officials.

Planning for a late morning/early lunch event is recommended. Avoid afternoon events and your guests and media will often find themselves tied up with other opportunities.

- **Invite your supporters**

Congressional representatives, local mayor, councilmen/women, governor, dignitaries, etc. make great guests at these events. Send them a letter and follow up with a phone call. Offer them a speaking opportunity as well.

- **Develop a media strategy**

Two weeks prior to the event, send out a news media alert (a template will be provided by the national office in early June) to all local news outlets including photographers (print, television, radio, internet) inviting them to attend and cover the event. Send out the media alert again two days before the event. Please contact Julia Morse (jmorse@feedingamerica.org or 312.641.5610) if you have PR or media related questions.

- **Talking points and scripts**

The national office can provide you with key talking points about the summer food service program and child hunger to be read by a spokesperson at the event. You should also be sure to have your local statistics re about your local service delivery and needs.

- **Decorate your event**

Feeding America may provide banners that can be displayed at your event. Think about other ways to liven up the environment where your event will be happening to highlight how summer meals bring hope to children in need.