Reply to
Attn. of: SFSP-264

Subject: Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Marketing Newsletters

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS (Child Nutrition Programs) - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri DH, Montana OPI, Nebraska ED, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming DHSS,

Attached for your information and use are copies of marketing newsletters for the SFSP that were developed by our Midwest Regional Office. We have also attached a copy of their memo to us which explains this project and their use.

We are pleased that the Midwest Regional Office shared this with us, as we believe you may find this useful in promoting and increasing Program participation.

Ann C. Degroat
ANN C. DEGROAT
Regional Director
Child Nutrition Programs

Attachments
Enclosed are copies of five Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) marketing newsletters entitled "The P's of Summer" which were developed by Midwest Region SFSP staff. Each newsletter describes a different aspect of Program marketing that can be done by SFSP sponsors:

- Press and Other Media
- Partnership Possibilities
- Posters and Flyers
- Presentations
- Potpourri (miscellaneous ideas)

We have forwarded copies of the newsletters to MWRO State agencies for use with their sponsors, and have received positive feedback from our States thus far. We are sending these newsletters to you so that you may share them with states in your region, if you so desire.

The newsletters are intended to be sent to sponsors over a period of time, with one being sent every 2-3 weeks. By this repeated and incremental exposure to these marketing ideas, we hope that sponsors will read more of the information and seriously consider what they can do to increase Program participation.

As in most compilations of "good ideas", it is not easy to trace the source of each idea. Nevertheless, there were three major outside sources for "The P's of Summer" newsletters. The concept, presentation and many of the ideas contained in these newsletters came from an excellent pamphlet entitled "47 Ways...to Promote the Summer Food Program in your Community." We would like to thank the Western Regional Office and the California Food Policy Advocates for this important contribution to SFSP outreach. Additionally, we would like to thank our own Midwest Region, State SFSP coordinators for the many ideas they have presented over the years during our annual region-wide SFSP meetings, as well as other forums. Their contributions are scattered throughout the newsletters. An additional source of
information was the 1994 "Great Ideas" booklet. The ideas contained in that booklet came from sponsors and States nationwide, and was compiled and edited by the Child Nutrition Division.

We hope you find the newsletters useful. Please call Tamara Earley of my staff at (312) 353-6657 if you have any questions.

THERESA E. BOWMAN
Regional Director
Child Nutrition Programs

c: Alberta C. Frost
The P’s of Summer

Summer Food Service Program

Press And Other Media

Welcome to the first in a series of newsletters devoted entirely to ideas for marketing your Summer Food Service Program. In case you’re wondering, our title gets its name from the fact that each marketing topic begins with the letter P.

Our first issue contains techniques and strategies for using Press and other media to let people know about your Program. Working with the media isn’t hard, but it does require a little advance planning. You should allow 4 weeks to get a message in print or on the radio. With that in mind, let’s look at some media strategies you can use to spread the word about your SFSP.

Radio and TV

• Write a Public Service Announcement (PSA). Most stations accept written public PSAs. It’s usually best to keep these short, giving a phone number where people can call for more information. Also include the days of the week the program runs (for instance "weekdays"). Mention the start and end dates. A typical PSA might say:

Did you know that from June 1 - August 15, kids can get a free, nutritious lunch each weekday while they are out of school this summer? For the location and hours of the Summer Food program nearest you, call XXX-XXXX.

• Prepare a pre-recorded PSA on a cassette tape for a radio or a video for television. Your local radio or community television station, local high school or college may even be able to produce the PSA for you to distribute. Contact local stations to see if they will run this for you. PSAs should be sent to the station’s Public Affairs Director.

• Have the local radio stations broadcast daily menus, especially when the meal counts go down. Have the participating children come up with the announcement or record an interview among them that can be used for a public announcement.

Newspapers

• Contact the 'Community Calendar Editor' at your local papers. This section lets readers know of activities they may want to attend. Send them information on the SFSP, especially any planned events. Sometimes the paper will run a slightly larger notice on this page. Ask them to do this with your notice about the SFSP. NOTE: the community calendar editor often wants a four to six week advance notice, so get them the information as soon as possible.

All Media

• Contact reporters who cover education, children’s issues, or community issues. If your television station has a "Kids First" or similar campaign, get in touch with the reporter who does most of those stories or with the Public Service Director.

• Prepare or assemble a press packet. Include a Summer Food fact sheet, a report on the status of the Program in the local
community, a description of your Program's operation, an editorial on why the Program is so good (contrasted with the consequences of hunger and a summer with nothing constructive to do), interviews with the kids and program workers, photos and more.

- **Focus particularly on local, community-based papers.** These papers often allow more space and greater detail regarding the program. They are also likely to be read more by people involved in community activities who can further publicize the program.

- **Send Program information to foreign language papers** that serve people in your community. Some commonly read foreign language newspapers include: Spanish, Armenian, Lao, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Russian, Polish and French.

- **Appear on a radio or television Public Affairs Program** about summer options for kids. This is best done in late May and June.

- **Insert notices in community bulletins and newsletters.** Include information on the Summer Program in the regular school newsletters.

- **Advertise on billboards** in the areas where there are sites. Ask children attending the sites to design the billboard.

Using the media can be a very effective means of marketing your Program. Even if you’ve never worked with media before, we encourage you to try at least one of these suggestions. You’ll probably be pleased with the results.

Our Next Issue: Forming **Partnerships for a successful SFSP**

We want to hear from you!

Do you have some ideas that you’ve used to successfully market your program and increase participation at your sites? Don’t keep them to yourself. Send your ideas to us so that we can share them with other sponsors.

Please send your ideas to:
The P’s of Summer

Summer Food Service Program

Partnership Possibilities

This is the second in our series of newsletters about marketing your Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This issue presents ideas and strategies for working with other organizations to strengthen your SFSP. We call it forming Partnership for a successful SFSP. We’ve divided the strategies into two categories: Enhancing the Site and Spreading the Word.

Forming Partnerships to Enhance a Site: Getting outside help to enhance your site, helps you create a fun, enjoyable atmosphere that keeps kids coming back!

- Recognize that children without activities during the summer can get into trouble. Organize a community task force including representatives from the school district, recreation department, local churches, housing authorities and youth organizations. Ask them to sponsor activities, such as a reading program or math tutorial, that coincide with your SFSP. Serve breakfast, have activities, and end with lunch. An SFSP is always more successful when combined with other activities.

- Invite the local fire and police department to give pep talks on safety, crime and drug prevention and then let the kids cool off from water pumped from the fire truck hose.

- Ask the university drama department to stage a theatrical presentation or have a theater arts student direct the children in a drama of their own.

- Organize an inter-site softball league or midday basketball games with sites playing each other. Ask businesses to sponsor teams.

- Invite volunteers from the local university extension service to talk to the children about nutrition.

- Employ college students who are studying education or sociology and who would like the opportunity to work with disadvantaged children. Start by contacting the sociology or education departments of the local university. Explain the SFSP to the director and coordinate such a hiring program.

- Make arrangements with a recycling company to get the children involved in recycling their plastic goods. Have someone explain how recycling works. If some money can be made with the recycling, reinvest it in healthy SFSP desserts.

- Talk merchants into donating free food such as fruit, bread, bakery products, and canned goods. Give these extra items away for children to take home. (Remember: because these items will be eaten off-site, they must be packaged separately and given away after lunch. They cannot be given as part of the lunch.)
The P's of Summer

- Have favorite teachers at the site the first day. This will help to ease the transition, particularly for younger kids.

- Give away promotional, items such as free T-shirts (with SFSP logo and a colorful design), buttons or prizes. These encourage kids to show up and to tell their friends. See if you can get a local business to underwrite the expense.

- Establish a mentoring program that brings younger children together with older children or adults who can teach arts and crafts.

- Ask individuals at local churches, temples and senior citizens homes to donate baked goods and other treats to the Program.

- Contact the school district or the public library to see if they would be willing to sponsor a book giveaway at the sites. Advertise the event in advance.

- Work with the health department to conduct an immunization drive at your sites. Children can get their shots before or after the meal.

- Hold a story hour for young children before, during or after the meal.

- Contact the nearby State or National Park Service and request that they provide a guide for a field trip to the park.

- Contact the Chamber of Commerce or individual local businesses to ask for their assistance. Financial contributions can be used to help purchase special treats or defray the costs of special events and field trips. Employees of local businesses can volunteer their time to plan and conduct special events. In return, you can display a sign that names the businesses that support your site.

- Contact local industries to request that they take the children on a tour of their factory.

- Operate the SFSP together with other Federal Programs such as the JTPA and a Community Development Block Grant. In one case, JTPA workers helped supervise the meals, while a Community Development Block Grant paid for arts and crafts classes, field trips and the building rental.

- Team up with a sister site in a different region of the country, or in a foreign country. Incorporate recipes from that city's cuisine in your summer menu. Exchange posters, menus, activity ideas and other good-time news. Have the children at your site initiate correspondence with children at their sister site.

Forming Partnerships to Spread the Word: Working with other organizations to distribute information about your SFSP allows you to reach larger numbers of potential participants through a variety of sources. And, since someone else is doing the advertising for you, you have more time to devote to other aspects of your SFSP.

- Meet with the directors of the local social service offices (WIC, Food Stamps, AFDC, etc.) to discuss the SFSP and the need to promote it. Leave them with a listing of SFSP sites in the community. Arrange for a flyer or notice regarding the program to be included with monthly benefits.

- Ask WIC clinics and other public assistance offices to play a prerecorded message. When people call and are put on hold, they hear information about the SFSP.
• Discuss the program with church officials. Ask them to post notices and mention the Summer Food Program during services, emphasizing that it has a positive influence and keeps kids off the street.

• Talk to doctors and medical clinic staff about the SFSP. Ask them to talk to parents and children about the Program and its contribution to good health and nutrition.

• Schools often have a school-community liaison. Contact this person to help promote the SFSP.

• Contact elected officials in your area and provide them with basic SFSP information. Ask them to work with you to arrange a press event where the official can visit a site and voice support for the program. Also ask for help in landing a story about the SFSP with the right reporters, papers and stations in your community.

• Contact local government and community action agencies. These offices, receive daily requests for assistance from families whose children can benefit from the program. Give them SFSP fact sheets, flyers and posters.

As you can see, the partnership possibilities are endless. Choose one or two that can work for you!

Our Next Issue: Posters and Flyers

We Want To Hear From You!

Do you have some partnership ideas that you've used to successfully market your program and increase participation at your sites? Don't keep them to yourself. Send your ideas to us so that we can share them with other sponsors. Please send your ideas to:
The P's of Summer

Summer Food Service Program

Posters and Flyers

In this newsletter on marketing your Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), we offer innovative strategies for the development and placement of Posters and flyers. When we began compiling this list, we thought that the number of ways of creating and distributing SFSP posters and flyers was pretty limited. We couldn't have been more wrong.

- Persuade a teacher to have his or her students make eye-catching, colorful flyers and/or posters about the program. The posters/flyers should include the dates, times and place(s) of the program you are sponsoring. Make them appealing to both parents and children. Make it into an SFSP art contest.

- Give children flyers to take home from school just before classes end.

- Put up a large sign or banner to identify your location as a Summer Food site to people passing by. Vinyl banners are particularly good since they can withstand all types of weather.

- Hand out flyers announcing the Program at shopping centers or WIC clinics. Place them under car windshield wipers in parking lots.

- Ask your local schools to mail flyers directly to eligible families. (Schools have a list of their needy families, but they can’t release the names.)

- When the children participating at a site are bussed from a distant area, distribute flyers announcing the Program to the parents in that area.

- Ask utility companies to mail Program notices to customers along with their monthly bills. Ask social service agencies (AFDC, food stamp, WIC and unemployment offices) to include a Program flyer when mailing out monthly benefits.

Display posters and distribute flyers at:

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<tr>
<th>schools</th>
<th>apartment/housing complexes</th>
<th>unemployment offices</th>
<th>women's shelters</th>
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<tr>
<td>recreation centers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>homeless shelters</td>
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<tr>
<td>libraries</td>
<td>laundromats</td>
<td>food stamp offices</td>
<td>food banks/pantries/</td>
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<td>swimming pools</td>
<td>markets in low-income areas</td>
<td>WIC clinics</td>
<td>soup kitchens</td>
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<td>welfare offices</td>
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<td>day care centers</td>
<td>churches</td>
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Our list is by no means complete. Use your imagination! Tell us what you come up with.
Our Next Issue: Presentations

We Want To Hear From You!

Do you have some ideas that you’ve used to successfully market your program and increase participation at your sites? Don’t keep them to yourself. Send your ideas to us so that we can share them with other sponsors. Please send your ideas to:

Below is a sample flyer that you can fill in and use.

Summer Meals for Kids

Free meals are available to all children age 18 and younger

Place:

Time:

Months:

Days of the Week:

For more information call:

The Summer Food Service Program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, color, race, handicap or national origin. If you feel you have been discriminated against in any USDA related activity, contact the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.
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Summer Food Service Program

Presentations

This serving of P’s introduces the idea of talking to others as a means of marketing the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). While the idea of talking to people to spread the word about your SFSP might seem a bit obvious at first, we think we’ll be able to provide you with new ideas on just who you might talk to. We’ve divided it into two sections: talking to large groups (Presentations to Groups) and, talking one on one, (Person to Person).

Presentations to Groups

When addressing a group, you must tailor your message to meet the needs of the audience. Don’t worry that some of the people may have heard something about the SFSP before. Approaching your audience through a variety of strategies helps reinforce your message.

- Speak at PTA and other meetings which involve parents. Explain the importance of the SFSP. Encourage them to include the local Program in their children’s summer. This would also be a good time to ask PTA members if they would be willing to serve as volunteers at the site.

- Go to schools to speak to children about the SFSP and about any recreational and academic programs with which it may be combined.

- Set up a booth at events such as county or community fairs, public or parochial school carnivals, etc. Distribute brochures, Program fact sheets, and other Program materials. Be sure to include site and sponsor addresses on materials you distribute.

- Present to block groups, community councils, civic associations, church organizations and public housing councils. Let them know the SFSP is available!

- Speak and distribute materials describing the SFSP, at community events such as special library programs, health fairs, neighborhood watch meetings and police and fire community relations meetings.

Person-to-Person

Without question, one of the most successful ways of marketing your SFSP is by word of mouth. Think about it. How many times have you found out about a great deal from a friend who heard it from another friend? Put that same strategy to work to let people know about your SFSP.

- During training, stress to site supervisors that it is their job to encourage children to come to the site. Ask site supervisors to visit their neighborhoods, introduce themselves to the business people in the community and to the local police department, explain the Program and distribute flyers. Do this right before the site opens and again every couple of weeks to spread the word.
- Encourage kids to tell friends and teammates about the SFSP at camp, school, church, pools, in the neighborhood and in recreation centers.

- Ask parents to spread word of the program by talking with other parents at work, in their community organizations, churches, neighborhoods and at their children’s games.

- Arrange for members of the community or site staff to go door-to-door in densely populated areas (apartment buildings and housing projects, for example) to tell parents directly about the benefits of the SFSP.

- Talk one-on-one with teachers, urging them to speak directly to students and parents about the Summer Food Program.

- Reward kids who bring a friend. Give them a free dessert, prize or other incentive to encourage them bring more friends along.

Our Next Issue: Potpourri

We Want to Hear From You!

Do you have some ideas about successful presentations? Have you made some person to person contacts that helped you market your program and increase participation at your sites? Don’t keep it to yourself. Send your ideas to us so that we can share them with other sponsors. Please send your ideas to:
The P’s of Summer

Summer Food Service Program

Potpourri

In this issue of our newsletter about marketing the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), you’ll find a mixture, or, Potpourri of ideas for improving awareness of your SFSP. The ideas range from doing something as simple as giving Personal attention to each child, to serving an apPEAling menu item like Pizza. We hope at least one of these ideas works for you.

Food/Creative menus

- Schedule a pizza party, barbecue, etc., every Friday to promote awareness of the program and to keep children excited about coming back.

- Make the menu more interesting by serving chef salads and taco salads.

- Try serving traditional hot meals, such as soft shell tacos, pizza and chicken nuggets, as cold meals.

Activities

- Identify different cultural neighborhoods near the summer site and organize special luncheons to celebrate each culture. Incorporate traditional foods from the culture being celebrated. Decorate the cafeteria to match the theme. Offer a vocabulary lesson in the language of that culture. Recruit volunteers from that neighborhood to ensure that ethnic meals are authentic and translators are available. Have the children make posters of their favorite foods.

- Sponsor a mural-coloring contest between children at different sites.

- Have an anti-drug, or good nutrition, poster-drawing contest in which children illustrate anti-drug or good nutrition messages.

- Assign a special theme to each week of Program operation. Have a “Nutrition Week,” an “Hawaiin shirt Week,” an “Anti-Drug Week,” an “Activities” or “Reading” week, etc. Organize activities appropriate for each theme.

General

- Give children as much personal attention as possible. Make them feel comfortable coming to the site.

- If you are a school sponsor, save the left over marketing materials from the regular school year, such as pencils, stickers, hats, visors, sunglasses, tee shirts. Give them away to children who attend the site.

- Give away baseball cards to children attending the Program.

- Inject an element of fun into the meal program by arranging site visits by a clown, Barney the dinosaur or a Disney character.
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- Play music that the children like.
- Create an Outreach Procedures Manual with your most successful outreach procedures. Include a timeline for getting them done. Update the manual yearly.

We’ve told you about our ideas and suggestions for marketing the SFSP. Now it’s time we heard from you. Our final issue will contain ideas submitted by you, describing how you successfully market your program and increase participation at your sites.

Even if you don’t have marketing ideas to share, we can still use your help. We need ideas for a clever title for our final issue! It’s not too late for you to contribute. Please send your ideas to: