

SUMMER MEALS AND FOODCORPS

an introduction for state agencies



What is FoodCorps?

FoodCorps connects kids to healthy food in school. This team of AmeriCorps leaders serves in high-need schools to make sure students learn what healthy food is, fall in love with it, and eat it every day. Their service is focused on delivering hands-on lessons in growing, cooking and tasting healthy food; improving school meals; and encouraging a schoolwide culture of health. FoodCorps service members are critical elements of overall farm to school programming in the states in which they are placed.

With a focus on creating healthy school food environments, FoodCorps service members are a natural fit for supporting Summer Meals efforts by assisting with promotion and outreach, offering nutrition or gardening programming at Summer Meals sites, or supporting program operators with local procurement strategies.

Get Connected

State agencies can identify placement of FoodCorps service members by reaching out to their state's FoodCorps fellow, and FoodCorps fellows can find Summer Meals sites using USDA's Summer Meal Site Finder (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks>). Together, state agencies and FoodCorps fellows can find where FoodCorps service sites and Summer Meals sites align.

Connect with FoodCorps Members About Programs and Opportunities

FoodCorps members are embedded in communities and can be great advocates for the program—if they understand how it works and what they can be doing to help. Reach out and share information about Summer Meals with FoodCorps service members working in local communities. Service members have the potential to bolster farm to school and other child nutrition programming, if given the right information and tools needed to plug in.



How can FoodCorps Support Summer Meals in Your State?

While developing statewide plans for summer and aligning partnering organizations, state agencies should take stock of the many ways that FoodCorps service members could support Summer Meals Programs. Suggestions include:

Bringing Local Foods to Summer Meal Sites

FoodCorps members can help program operators to bring local foods into Summer Meals by connecting summer sponsors with local farmers.

Providing Activities at Summer Meals Sites

Activities at Summer Meals sites are a tried and true tactic to increase attendance of kids and teens. FoodCorps members can act as a draw for kids by providing demonstrations, tastings, gardening and nutrition education activities at Summer Meals sites.

Expanding Access through Summer Meals Site Additions and Outreach

FoodCorps members are typically well connected in their schools and communities as a result of their everyday ground-level work. They may be able to use these partnerships and their unique perspective to find programs that could make great sites and to help get the word out to families about Summer Meals.



Invite FoodCorps Leaders to the Table

At the state level, FoodCorps state partners and fellows have a unique perspective and connections within the communities and schools. Summer Meals can be a vehicle for both groups to collaborate to feed kids nutritious foods during a time of year when family budgets can be tight. State agencies and partnering organizations can consider hosting a meeting, or inviting FoodCorps fellows to their statewide summer planning and/or debrief meetings to discuss.

Learn More

For more information about bringing local foods and complementary activities to Summer Meals Sites in your state, visit USDA's Farm to Summer website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-summer>).

