

Welcome!!

We'll get started soon. While we wait for other attendees to join, please answer these questions in the chat box:

1. **What organization are you representing?**
2. **If you could ask program participants in your community anything about their experience with the non-congregate program, what would you ask?**

Designing Participant-Centered Non-Congregate Summer Meals Programs

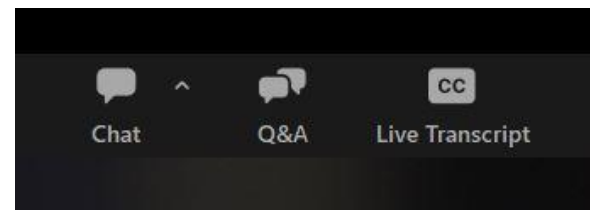
May 22, 2025





Things to Know as We Begin

- The slide deck will be shared via email after the webinar along with the recording and resources shared today.
- To engage with other attendees, please use the chat box.
- If you have questions for the speakers, please enter those into the Q&A box.
- Closed captioning is available.





Agenda

- Welcome
- Findings from interviews and surveys with program participants
- Co-creation with Second Harvest of the Big Bend
- Participant feedback tools
- Q&A

Disclaimer

Our speakers represent their own experience with non-congregate summer meal programs in their states and localities. Certain program models and implementation methods may be restricted in some states. Check with your local state agency before implementing any new meal service models or implementation methods.

Speakers



Lucy Flores

Founder and Principal
Design Strategist,
Studio Magic Hour



Samantha Daniels

Director of Community
Impact, Second Harvest
of the Big Bend



Melissa Hill

Nutrition Education and
Programs Manager,
Second Harvest of the
Big Bend



To what extent do you currently involve program participants in planning or design decisions?

- A) Not at all** – Participants are not involved in planning
- B) Rarely** – We occasionally get participant feedback, but it doesn't shape the program.
- C) Sometimes** – Participants contribute ideas, but we lead most planning decisions.
- D) Often** – Participants are regularly consulted and influence key decisions
- E) Always** – Participants are deeply involved as co-creators or decision-makers.

Interviews and Surveys with Families

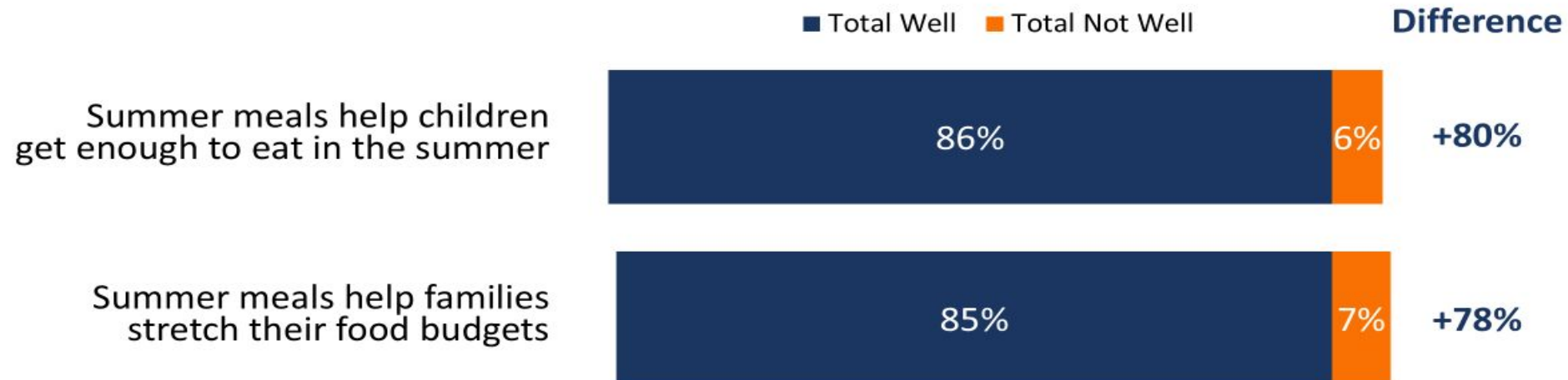
- Interviews with 30 participants at three different sites (grab-and-go, mobile meals, delivery) in summer 2023
- Survey with 832 families in 2024



Families value the program

Parents widely agree that summer meals help children get enough to eat, stretch food budgets, and are convenient.

*Here are some descriptions of the summer meal pickup and delivery program for kids.
Please indicate if this describes the program very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not at all well.*



Families Value the Program

“The food has been helpful. It has been very helpful. Without it...I’m actually getting teary-eyed. Without it, we wouldn’t be able to feed them during the summer. Honestly, it’s a huge help and if they took it away, I don’t know what we would do. I have a husband that is disabled and has been disabled for a year now...And we are raising grandchildren now and we just adopted our youngest grandson...I don’t know how they are doing things, but it sure seems like groceries keep going up, but the food stamps don’t change. And it just seems like it gets harder and harder to provide.”

–Jen, Arizona

“I have been struggling financially recently, so having somebody else be able to help to provide some food for my child was nice. I actually went all last week without having milk, so it was very convenient to be able to go to her and get a little thing of milk for my kiddo. That’s something else that I appreciated. There was no age restriction. My daughter is only three and I know because of her birthday she is not going to be able to go into school for another year or two years.”

–Nora, Arizona

Preference for Multiple Meals

- Three-quarters of families prefer multiple days' worth of meals for either pickup or delivery and especially prefer 5-7 days of meals
- In interviews, families explained that multiple meals freed them from making multiple trips, and also allowed for greater choice which led to greater food consumption



Families prefer delivery

74%

**Of families not participating would be motivated to join if
home delivery were an option**

Families value home delivery

“I am battling cancer, enduring pain throughout my body, and my daughter has Down Syndrome, so having the lunches delivered to us is an absolute godsend.”

“Delivery would be helpful....that would be immensely helpful. Saving money on gas driving out here. I live on the far side...so it's about a twenty-five minute drive each way.”

Kind and welcoming staff

- 91% of participants very or somewhat satisfied with interactions with staff

“They are very nice.
Instead of somebody
looking down at me for
coming to get the
meals.”
–Nancy, Georgia

“No one is looking
at you the wrong
way.”
–Ms. Smith,
Georgia

Clarity about rules

- Privacy and dignity are important as 51% of families say they would feel **less comfortable** participating if there were more strict, burdensome, or stigmatizing integrity rules in future summers.
- Families feel shame when they inadvertently break rules that they didn't know about



Promote abundance

- Participants express concern about taking food from others who might need it more
- When possible, it can be important to highlight the program's broader benefits to the community and dispel the misconception that participation might limit access for others



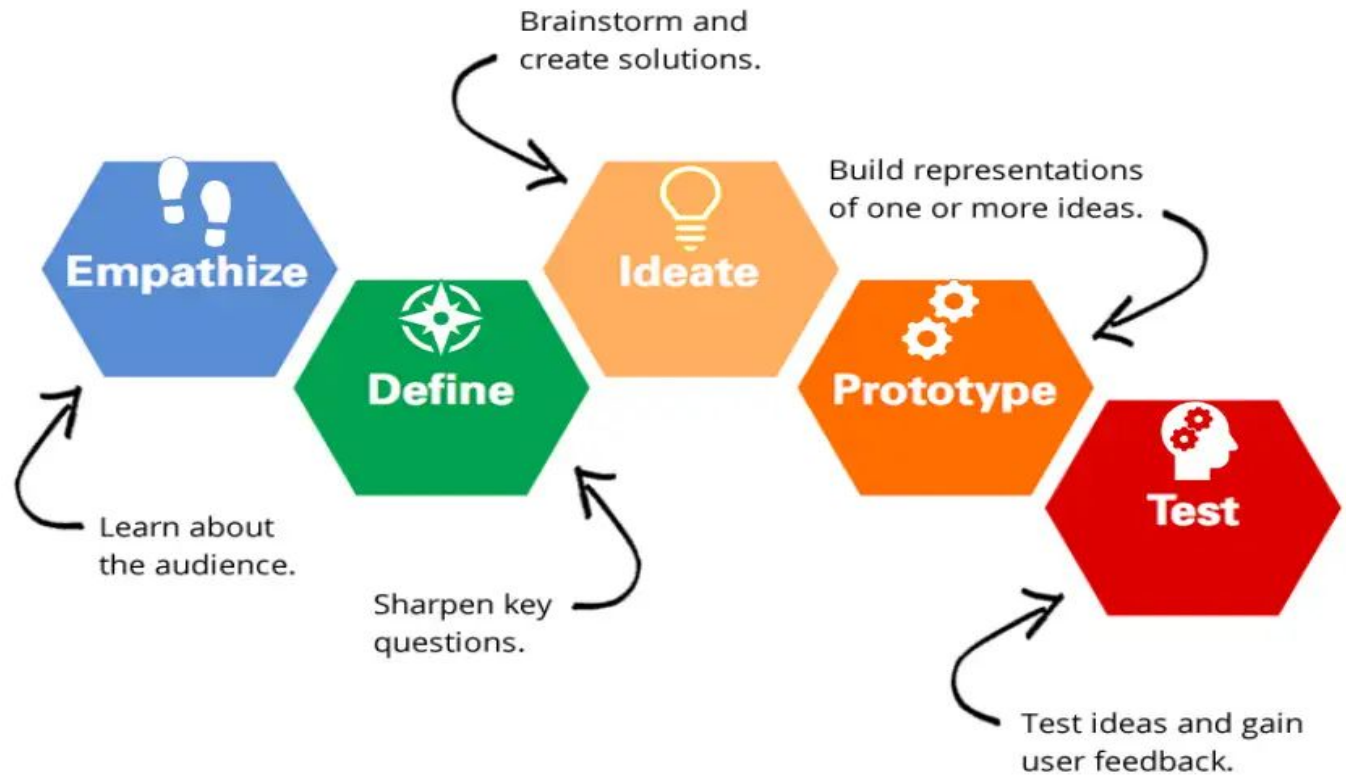


Is there something from these research findings that you could apply to your program? Or already have?

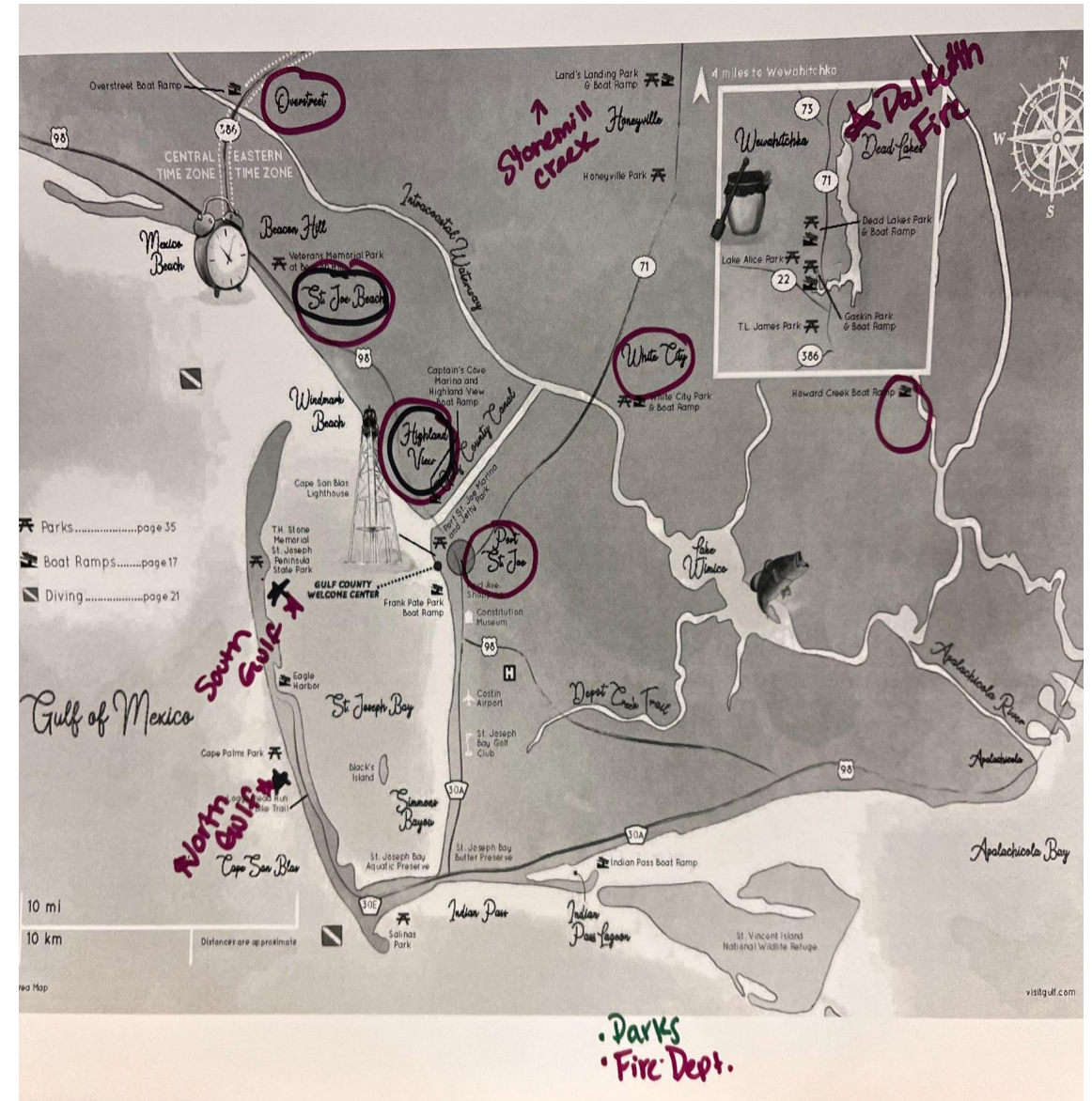
Share your thoughts in the chat!

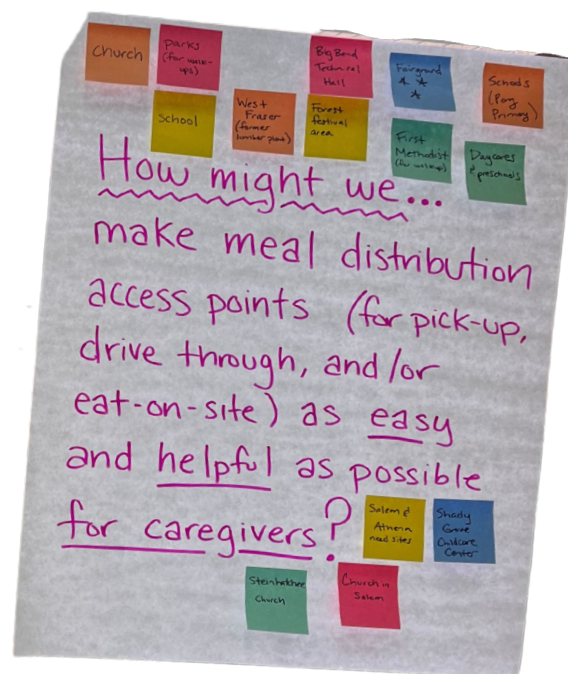
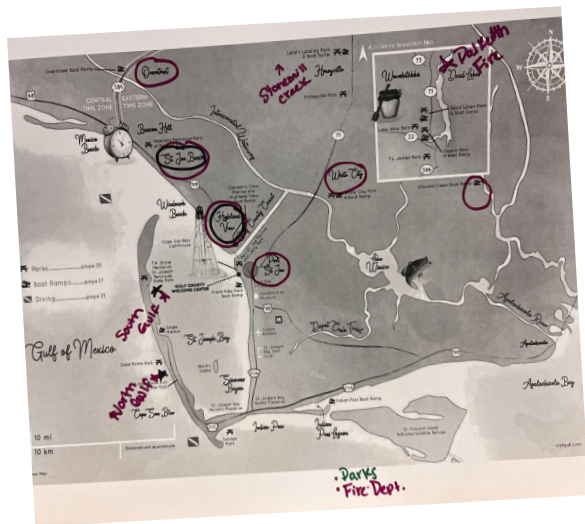
Co-Creation with Second Harvest of the Big Bend

- 12 participant interviews
- 2 co-design workshops
- 3 concepts to pilot



- Parks
- Fire departments
- Community centers





Route to Reach

Community-Identified Mobile Meal Distribution Sites

Route to Reach

Community-Identified Mobile Meal Distribution Sites

Introduction

As noted in USDA Memos SP 02-2014 and SFSP 02-2014, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sites are typically located at schools, playgrounds, parks, churches, community buildings, or other similar places. In rural areas, where children may live in isolated locations, access to meal service sites operated by schools, parks and recreation departments, and private nonprofit organizations is often limited. In urban areas, violence and traffic safety concerns are examples of issues that may limit viable options for site locations. In these cases, mobile feeding may provide the flexibility sponsors need to reach children who do not have access to more traditional sites.

With mobile meal distribution, the SFSP sponsor may deliver meals to an area using a route with a series of stops at approved sites in the community. This meal service must take place on approved days and the sponsor must serve reimbursable meals during approved service times. They must also adhere to the following guidelines:

- Each location where a bus or other vehicle stops to serve meals must meet the site eligibility criteria and other requirements set forth in program regulations (e.g., the site must be area eligible, meal service must be supervised, meals must be consumed at the site [on the bus or near the drop-off location], times of meal service must be established, the sponsor must have the ability to adjust meal deliveries based on fluctuations in attendance, etc.).
- Sponsors of mobile sites must take extra precautions to ensure that food is safe for children to eat. State and local health and safety standards must be met at all times. At a minimum, food must be maintained at proper temperatures along the entire delivery route, and temperatures must be monitored with a food thermometer. Program staff serving meals must follow appropriate hand-washing procedures, as required.
- A site supervisor must be present at each meal service. Mobile sites may operate as a full-service route, where the site supervisor travels with the vehicle along the route and supervises the site at each stop or where meals are delivered to each stop with

Activities for Kids

“Make it about the experience not about the food.”

“More recreational things for the kids in Taylor County along with the food. We don’t have a lot of things for the young kids to do. So maybe more of a fun station-type thing with food.”

“Kids love things that might not be a big deal for you or me. For example, the dentist over here provides stickers and tattoos and coloring books or coloring pages or balloons or pencils and the kids love them.”



Kids' Treasure Tracker

Weekly Youth Giveaways to Fuel a Summer of Nourishment and Joy

Introduction

Summer meals provide an invaluable opportunity to bring joy and fun to kids and youth in your community. Creating an environment of joy and fun is essential for fostering a positive and engaging experience for kids and youth. Summer meal programs aren't just about providing meals—it's about offering a safe space where children can build memories, connect with their peers, and enjoy enriching activities. By incorporating fun elements, such as games, crafts, or themed events, we help combat the "summer slide," ensuring kids stay engaged, active, and excited about learning and being part of the community. Providing joy also encourages regular participation, which ensures children continue receiving nutritious meals throughout the summer.

In this resource, you'll find an Idea Bank filled with ideas bucketed by category. You can also find a sample planning template along with a fillable template.

Considerations

- **Giveaways require a budget for items and/or sponsor donations.** Many sites find success soliciting donations from local businesses, companies with a demonstrated commitment to child/youth programming, and educational organizations dedicated to providing students with school supplies.
- **Consider the age-appropriateness of giveaways.** What a toddler will be excited about will differ from what a middle school student will find desirable. You may choose to focus giveaways on certain age groups or offer a variety of giveaways for a wide spectrum of developmental ages.
- **Keep notes on which giveaways spark excitement and increase participation, even if that learning is anecdotal.** It's a great way to learn about what resonates and what you might want to invest in moving forward.

1

Idea Bank

Outdoor & Physical Activity

- "Fun day" with a bounce house
- Fun at parks
- Water activities (water balloons, water gun fights)
- Sports stuff (frisbee, soccer ball)
- Outdoor movies and games
- Neighborhood gath
- End of year summer

Educational & Learning

- Science experiments
- Educational packets
- Food pyramid game
- Nutrition education
- Local nature/park
- Animal encounters
- Educational toys
- 20 questions card
- Crosswords/word

Social & Emotional Support

- Socialization time
- Affirmations —
- Words of affirm

Arts & Creative Expression

- Coloring set
- Coloring book
- Colorable bag
- Puzzles and
- Playdough
- Return color
- Cartoons/co

Food & Cooking

Sample Template

Week	Theme	Possible Giveaways
EVERY WEEK	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List of local community activities• Words of affirmation
June 3–7	Summer Kick-Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer gear<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Stainless steel water bottle◦ Sunscreen◦ Bubble wands
June 10–14	World Oceans Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choice of ocean books<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Nick's In The Ocean</i>◦ <i>Inside Ocean Life Guide</i>◦ <i>Ocean and Under the Waves</i>◦ <i>Ocean Animals for Kids</i>
June 17–21	Creative Minds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts & crafts play/activities<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Coloring books + crayons or colored pencils◦ Playdough (for littles)
June 24–28	Science Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Science play/activities<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bug viewers• Butterfly kit (for youth)
July 1–5	America's Birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independence Day gear<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ American flag sunglasses◦ American flag beach balls
July 8–12	Picnic & Games Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Picnic play/activities<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Picnic basket• Book options for littles (<i>I Can Eat a Rainbow</i> or <i>Eat Your Superpowers</i>)• Puzzle option for youth (orange puzzle)• Uno option for youth
July 15–19	Water Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choice of water play/activities<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Foam water blasters◦ Beach sand set (for littles)
July 22–26	Smiles Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dental health resources<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Toothbrushes

5



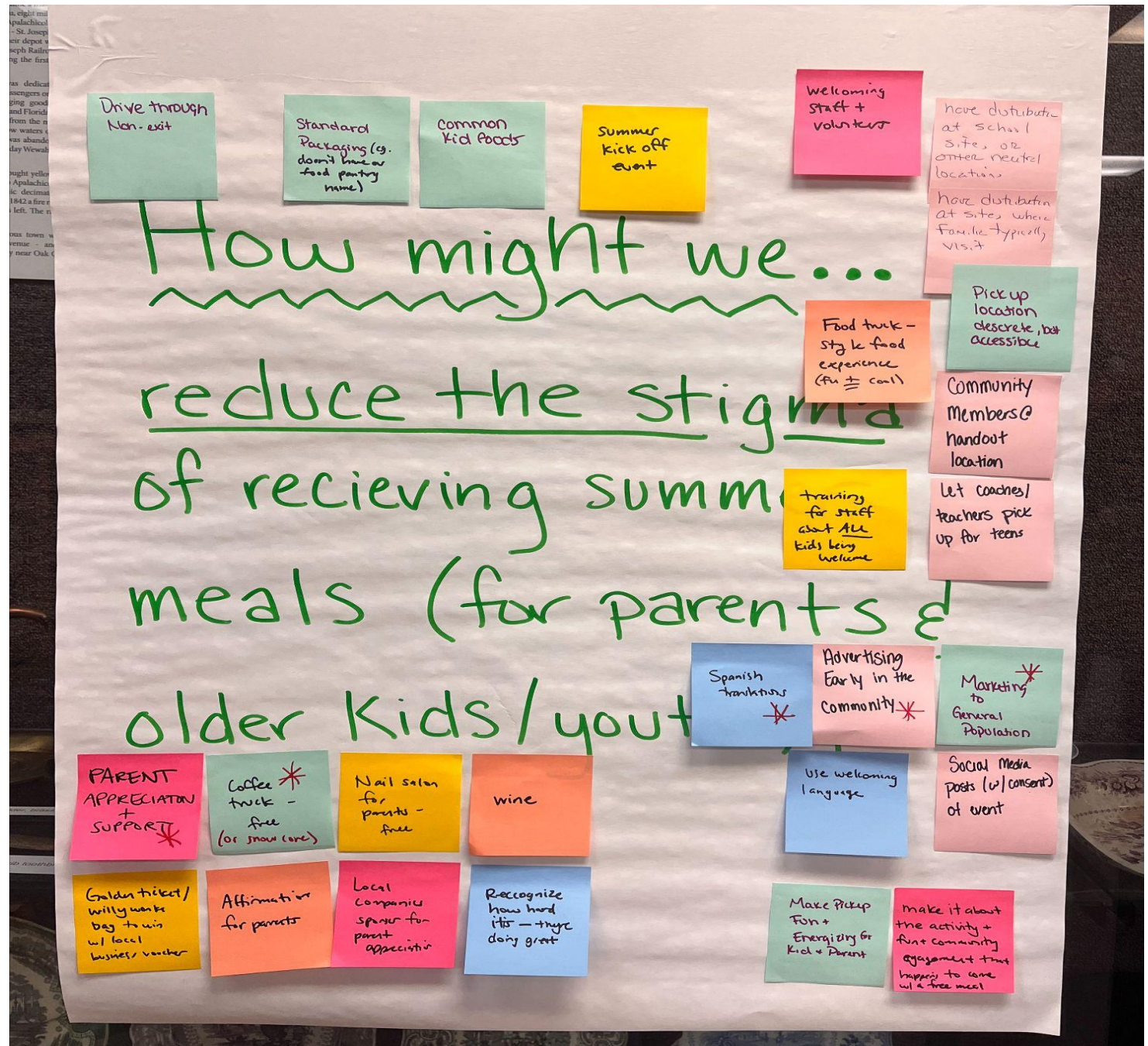
Kids' Treasure Tracker

Weekly Youth Giveaways to Fuel a Summer of Nourishment and Joy

Caregiver Appreciation

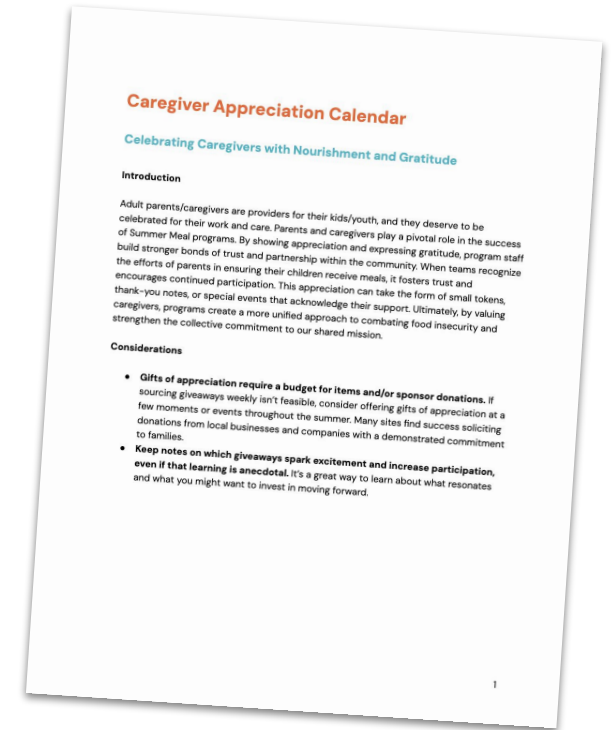
“Some people get embarrassed about their food insecurity and anything you can do to waver from that will be beneficial.”

- Words of affirmation
- Gift card or coupon
- On-site massage therapist
- Coffee
- Make it a social time for parents



“We used the gift card it to get school supplies. I appreciated that. It takes a little off the parents.”

— Parent (kids ages 12, 12, 11, and 8)



Caregiver Appreciation Calendar

Celebrating Caregivers with Nourishment and Gratitude



How confident do you feel engaging participants in planning or design decisions?

- A) Not at all confident** – I don't know where to start or how to do this effectively
- B) A little confident** – I've tried it before, but I'm still a little uncertain
- C) Somewhat confident** – I'm comfortable in some situations but not all
- D) Mostly confident** – I have tools and experience, though I still have room to grow
- E) Always** – Participants are deeply involved as co-creators or decision-makers.



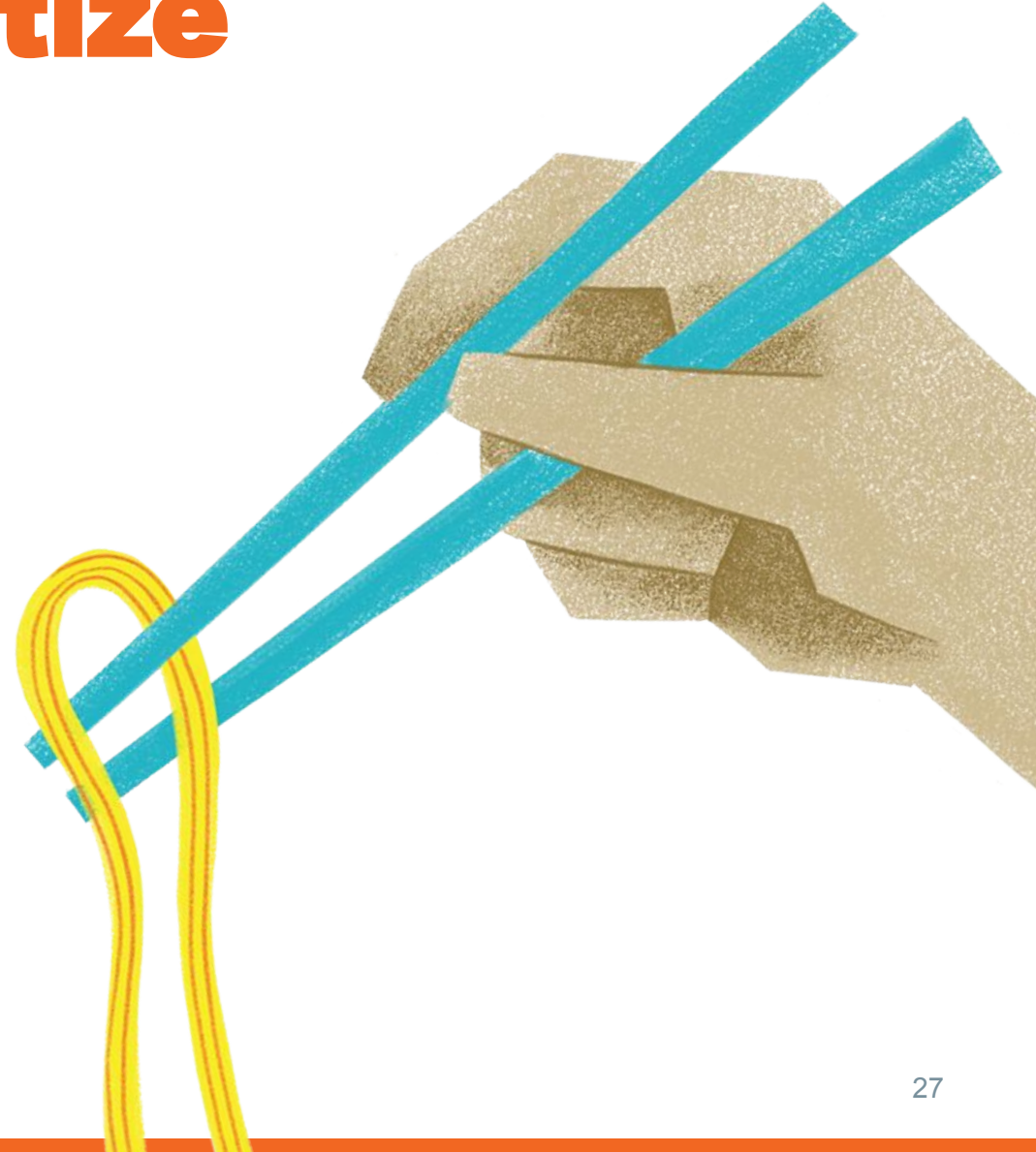
What barriers have you faced—or do you anticipate facing—when it comes to engaging participants in planning or design?

Share your thoughts in the chat!

Mindsets for Engaging Participants



**Center and prioritize
interest-holders
closest to
your work.**



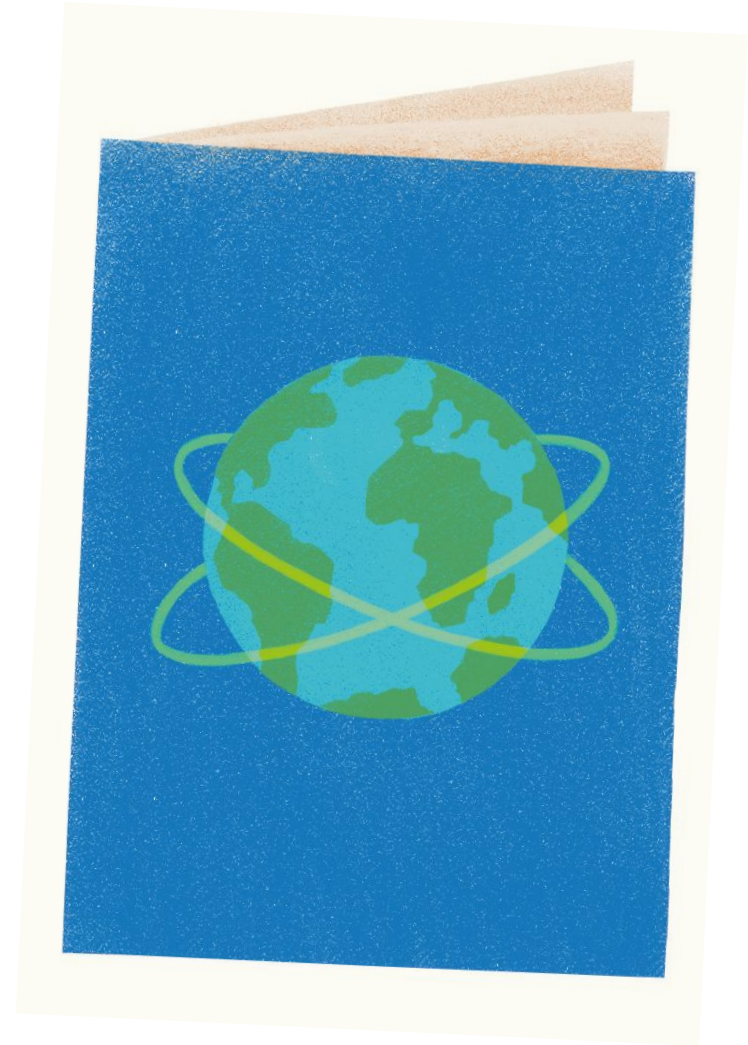
Mindsets

1

Center and prioritize stakeholders closest to your work.

- ***This means*** ... developing programs in partnership with community members most impacted by the topic area—in particular those who have historically been excluded or underrepresented in the work. And when possible, include stakeholders as core team members
- ***Which will*** ... help mitigate bias and increase the possibility of meaningful learning, program design, and trust-building

**Consider history
and context.**



2

Consider history and context.

- ***This means*** ... learning history and context from multiple perspectives — in particular, from marginalized and underrepresented communities impacted by the topic.
- ***Which will*** ... help you to gain a deeper understanding of the work, produce more effective solutions, and and better position you to facilitate an equity-driven design process.

**Take time for
self-reflection.**



3

Take time for self-reflection.

- ***This means*** ... Taking time to reflect on who you are, the experiences that have shaped you, and how your positionality impacts the ways you engage with and make sense of the world.
- ***Which will*** ... help you build self-awareness, which allows you to better understand why you believe what you believe and why you do what you do. That self-awareness enables you to leverage personal strengths and mitigate bias in your work.

**Embrace new
information and
change.**



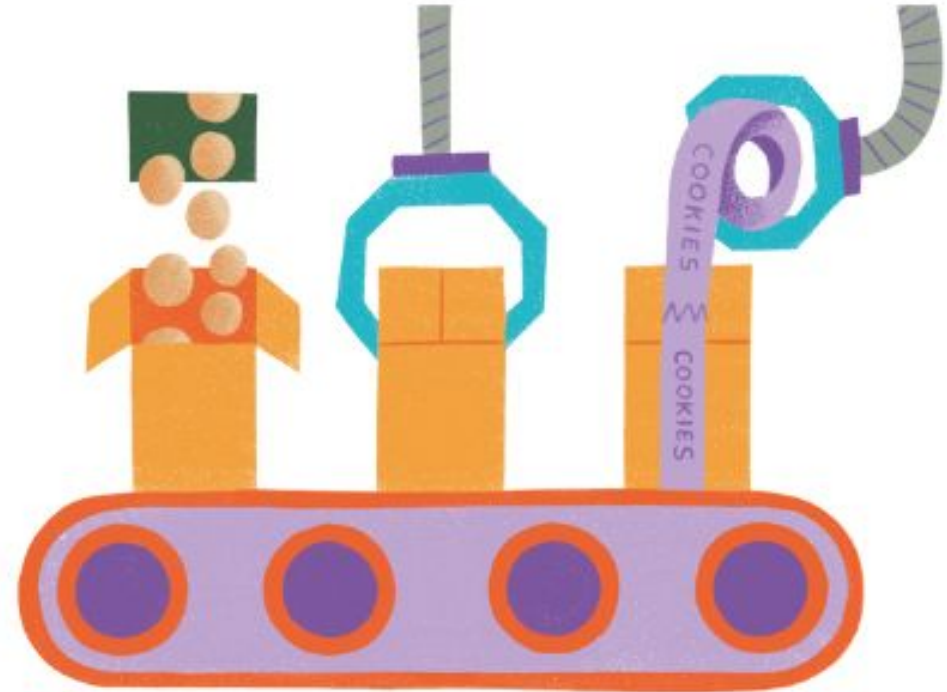
Mindsets

4

Embrace new information and change.

- ***This means*** ... as you learn from stakeholders, incorporating that learning into the work. (You may need to make tweaks to what you originally expected, and that's okay!)
- ***Which will*** ... inform more responsive and effective work outcomes. (It's far better to shift plans in response to what you are learning than to stay on the less effective—or potentially even harmful—course.)

Be mindful of power imbalances.



5

Be mindful of power imbalances.

- ***This means*** ... considering how power imbalances can influence people and the work, what you can do to mitigate those risks, and how to share the power you do have.
- ***Which will*** ... reduce the potentially harmful impact of power asymmetries.



Mindsets for Engaging Participants

1. Center and prioritize interest-holders closest to your work.
2. Consider history and context.
3. Take time for self-reflection.
4. Embrace new information and change.
5. Be mindful of power imbalances.

Participant Feedback Tools





Participant Feedback Tools

- Co-design
- Pre-summer caregiver interviews
- Post-summer caregiver interviews
- Mid-summer participant check-ins



Snack-Sized Feedback

Gathering Participant Feedback Throughout the Summer

Level of Effort <i>Small/Med/High</i>	Financial Cost <i>Free/\$/\$\$/\$\$\$</i>	Best For
Reflects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff/volunteer time needed• Prep/setup required• Ongoing management required	Reflects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials needed• Technology needed• Incentives	Reflects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Different site landscapes (e.g., high-traffic sites with volunteers, mobile delivery)• Kid/youth age served



Snack-Sized Feedback

Gathering Participant Feedback Throughout the Summer

Ideas for Adult Caregivers



Text message survey – Use mobile technology to conduct text message surveys with participants.



Story booth for caregivers – Invite caregivers to share short feedback stories at site-based “story booths”, offering incentives for contributing.



Feedback for raffle tickets (adult edition) – Ask for feedback on targeted questions in exchange for raffle tickets (with an awesome prize, of course).



Postcards inside meal packs – Send home a pre-paid “feedback postcard” with a request for parents to share their input.



Adult suggestion box – Build a “suggestion box” for caregivers to drop their ideas into at your sites.



Postcards Inside Meal Packs

Slip a pre-stamped postcard into meal kits, inviting families to share their feedback or ideas on a specific prompt. This

Level of Effort <i>Small/Med/High</i>	Financial Cost <i>Free/\$/\$\$/\$\$\$</i>	Best For
Medium	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sites where meals are picked up or delivered (non-congregate)• Anonymous feedback• Sites with limited capacity



Snack-Sized Feedback

Gathering Participant Feedback Throughout the Summer

Ideas for Kids/Youth



Draw-your-idea – Invite kids/youth to get creative and draw ideas based on specific opportunities for feedback.



Story booth for kids – Invite kids/youth to share short feedback stories at site-based “story booths,” offering incentives for contributing.



Feedback for raffle tickets (kid/youth edition) – Ask for feedback on targeted questions in exchange for raffle tickets (with an awesome prize, of course).



Sticker voting station – If seeking feedback on choices/options, set up a voting station for kids/youth to “vote” on ideas using stickers.



Kid/youth suggestion box – Build a colorful “suggestion box” for kids/youth to drop their ideas into at your sites.



Draw-Your-Idea

Ask kids/youth to draw their ideas in response to a prompt, giving voice to their thoughts in a playful, age-appropriate way. This is a great method for younger kids and mixed literacy levels.

Level of Effort <i>Small/Med/High</i>	Financial Cost <i>Free/\$/\$\$/\$\$\$</i>	Best For
Small	Free-\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sites where participants physically come to pick up (versus drive-through or delivery)• Programs that have physical space for kids/youth to draw and do artwork





Q&A





Resources & More!

Visit our Center for Best Practices:

www.bestpractices.nokidhungry.org

Participant Feedback Tools:

[Route to Reach](#)

[Kids' Treasure Tracker](#)

[Caregiver Appreciation Calendar](#)

[Voices Before Summer: Pre-Summer Caregiver Survey](#)

[Reflections After Summer: Post-Summer Caregiver Survey](#)

[Making Meals Welcoming for All](#)

[Snack-Sized Feedback](#)



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Thank You for Attending!

