

Montana

Summer Food Service Program

Report

Summer 2015

Summertime is often thought of as a time for children to sleep in, play, and recharge for the upcoming school year. For children who are at risk of food insecurity, however, it can also mean missing out on the meals regularly eaten at school. This gap in meals can mean more than just being hungry. Missing out on needed nutrition negatively impacts children's health outcomes and contributes to higher rates of summer learning loss. During the 2014-2015 school year, nearly 45,000 students received free or reduced price lunch at school, about one third of the entire population of students in the state. While there are other resources to help close the summer food gap, such as SNAP, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is one of the most powerful in addressing hunger for children because it makes sure that nutritious meals are available to all children throughout the summer months.

Montana's SFSP has continued to grow over the past decade, reaching nearly 8500 children per day. In 2015, Montana served over half a million summer meals to children across the state! This represents a growth of 5% from 2014, with a total of over 570,000 meals served mostly between the months of June and July, across 196 sites. In addition, sponsors offered meals an average of four additional serving days in 2015 as compared to 2014. The dedication of SFSP sponsors has helped to make this expansion possible, better ensuring that Montana's children have access to nutritious meals throughout the summer.

Despite the steady increase in SFSP participation, there is still more room for growth. There are 17 counties in the state that have no program, and 13 counties that have only one site. Fewer than one in five of the children who regularly eat free or reduced price school lunch participated in Summer Food. Consider partnering with the religious community, your local schools, libraries, or other civic organizations to help increase access to this important program.

While expanding the amount of programs around the state is an important part in addressing the summer food gap, one of the most effective ways to improve program access is through Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR). Congress sets policy for the Summer Food Service Program and the other child nutrition programs through CNR every five years, and Congress is currently working on bills in both the House and the Senate. Reach out to our members of Congress and urge them to support a strong CNR that strengthens SFSP, and improves access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.mfbn.org/learn/public-policy/legislative-action.



County	Number of Sites	Number of Sponsors	Number of Serving Days	Total Meals served	% Change in Meals Served 2014-2015	ADP 2015	% Eligible that participate	Rank
Beaverhead	1	1	57	9427	N/A	93	35.0%	5
Big Horn	8	4	176	28857	-23%	562	32.2%	12
Blaine	4	3	140	16003	-4%	259	34.9%	6
Broadwater	1	1	39	2241	-36%	57	29.8%	14
Carbon	4	4	101	2520	-1%	73	20.4%	23
Cascade	11	6	168	22229	-5%	374	9.6%	32
Custer	2	1	53	7936	9%	124	32.9%	9
Deer Lodge	5	1	39	7270	29%	107	29.4%	15
Fergus	2	2	127	6389	-26%	86	17.4%	27
Flathead	5	2	98	15634	4%	245	6.7%	35
Gallatin	8	1	79	19493	58%	175	8.4%	34
Glacier	11	2	76	35798	29%	386	21.6%	22
Granite	1	1	55	1514	-53%	19	15.3%	30
Hill	10	5	307	47747	-1%	507	36.9%	4
Jefferson	1	1	24	2152	-24%	54	16.8%	28
Lake	11	7	252	36661	29%	672	32.7%	10
Lewis and Clark	6	3	166	22211	4%	401	19.6%	24
Lincoln	7	4	117	7857	-10%	192	24.0%	17
Madison	1	1	20	612	-55%	20	9.2%	33
Meagher	1	0	55	4820	12%	44	44.7%	3
Mineral	2	1	48	1981	17%	66	22.9%	19
Missoula	21	5	188	49129	32%	716	18.2%	26
Musselshell	1	1	62	5758	16%	62	22.3%	20
Park	2	2	55	8409	15%	118	32.3%	11
Phillips	1	1	22	22	-94%	1	0.3%	39
Pondera	5	2	144	22673	-14%	181	51.4%	2
Powell	1	0	34	1322	47%	39	19.5%	25
Prarie	1	1	45	2527	82%	35	64.4%	1
Ravalli	4	4	138	6606	-8%	163	10.2%	31
Roosevelt	5	2	103	28883	-11%	394	32.1%	13
Rosebud	5	3	128	13032	-17%	272	23.9%	18
Sanders	7	6	118	10163	-2%	240	33.5%	8
Silver Bow	10	3	83	13640	-12%	282	24.1%	16
Stillwater	2	1	40	2676	5%	37	15.8%	29
Teton	1	1	85	1009	62%	7	3.5%	38
Toole	1	1	85	992	-6%	8	4.7%	37
Valley	1	1	54	2645	-28%	32	6.5%	36
Wheatland	3	1	55	5514	-35%	47	34.4%	7
Yellowstone	23	5	274	96735	9%	1348	22.0%	21
Montana	196	91	43	571,087	5%	8,499	19%	-

Average Number of Serving Days: The total number of serving days reported by each sponsor divided by the total number of sponsors.

Total Meals Served: The total number of breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and snacks served through SFSP.

Average Daily Participation: Average number of children served per day (see box to the right for additional information)

% Change from 2013-2014: The change in total meals served through SFSP in 2014 compared to the total meals served in 2015.

% Eligible that Participate: Compares the average number of children who ate at least one meal though the SFSP each day to the average number of children who ate Free or Reduced Price lunch during the school year though the National School Lunch Program.

Rank: Based on % Eligible that Participate.

Average Daily Participation (ADP): There is no set methodology for determining ADP, and calculations often vary between reports. For this report, ADP is calculated by dividing the total number of meals served at the meal with the highest meal count (typically lunch) by the number of operation days reported for that sponsor. County level ADP is calculated by finding the sum of all sponsor ADPs, and state level ADP is the sum of all county level values. MFBN uses only one meal to calculate ADP to avoid counting children who eat multiple meals at each site as two different individuals.

Brown Bags and Books

For many families, the public library is a popular destination during the summer months. Libraries are safe, welcoming environments and often provide activities and programming for children, making them ideal Summer Food Service Program sites. Combining free, nutritious lunches with reading and other literacy-based activities, helps reduce summer learning loss and ensure that all kids are prepared for the upcoming year.

Last summer, Missoula Food Bank (MFB) partnered with the Missoula Public Library to host an open SFSP feeding site. Missoula Food Bank staff and volunteers prepared sandwiches, trail mix, fresh fruit, and other lunch items at their nearby location, then transported the food to the library's large conference room. MFB set up mini picnic tables and offered a variety of library friendly activities for the children while they ate. They served an average of 26 children per day in their first year and hope to grow their numbers next summer.

After the first year in this partnership, MFB learned a lot. For those sponsors who may be interested in partnering with the community library to open a site, MFB stresses the importance of being a child friendly location. Take into consideration if the site is one that can be easily accessed by children- are they able to walk there by themselves? Jessie Lee, MFB's Program Services Coordinator, adds, "One of the reasons that this site made sense to us was that children can, and do, visit alone. It is also a destination where any family can bring their kids." In addition the library is located in an eligible, high need area, allowing Missoula Food Bank to operate an open site, simplifying program administration and participation.



MFB also stresses the importance of getting buy in from the entire library staff. Library staff can promote the lunch program and help ensure that families know that their kids can grab a healthy, free meal while they are there. MFB asked staff to announce the availability of lunch over the library loudspeaker at the start of mealtime, and library staff made sure to highlight the availability of lunch during popular library activities such as story time. MFB also promoted the free summer lunch site with their clients and through signage hung throughout the library.

Finally, understanding how resources such as staffing and books will fit into the equation will help to ensure the site runs smoothly. Is the library willing to provide staff, or will the sponsor provide appropriate volunteers. Also, set up expectations for books or other supplies. A couple of questions to answer during the initial conversation are: Is it ok for the books and other supplies to be around food? Are the children responsible for checking out any books before going to lunch? Will the library prepare a collection of books for the site, maybe with a focus on nutrition? Understanding these boundaries and being creative will not only help the site run as smoothly as possible, but they can improve participation as well.

MFB saw success in reaching kids who may otherwise be going without a healthy lunch in its first year of partnership with the library. The model of pairing SFSP and libraries maximizes community resources limits summer learning loss, and reduces summer hunger for some of our most vulnerable children. Currently, the Missoula site is the only library SFSP site in the state. Consider changing that trend and reach out to your library today, and see if a partnership is a good fit!

Contact Jessie Lee at Missoula Food Bank at 406.549.0543 ext. 110 or jessy@missoulafoodbank.org if you have any questions or would like to visit their library SFSP site.

If you are interested in sponsoring a site at a library, or would like more information about the Summer Food Service Program please contact Tirza Asbell at 406.215.1771 or at tasbell@mfbn.org.

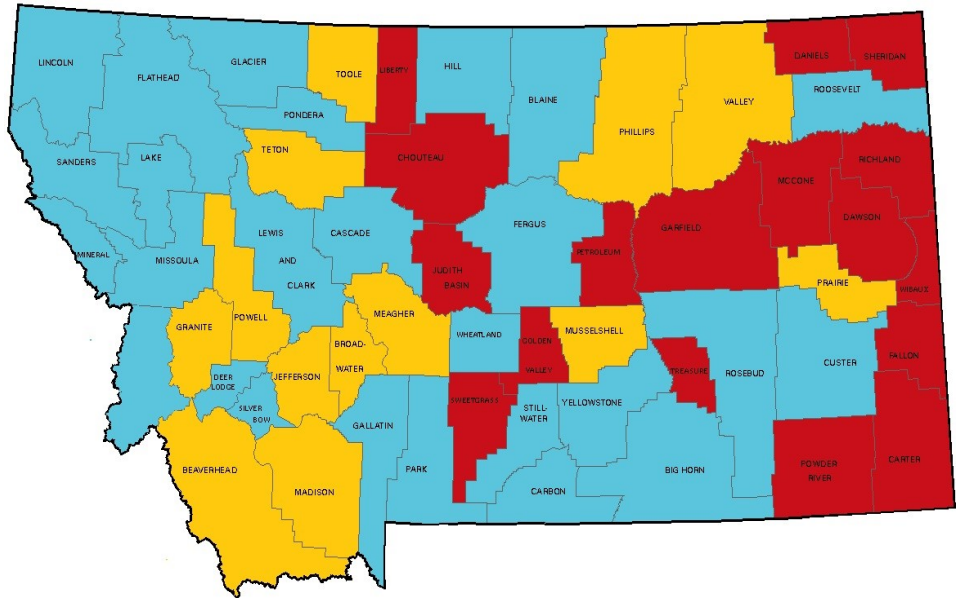


Summer Food Service Program Meal Gap

One of the biggest barriers to participating in the Summer Food Service Program is overcoming the distance to the nearest meal site. Many families, especially those from rural areas, either have to travel a long way to reach a feeding site, or have no program available. As of summer 2015, there are still 17 counties in Montana with no feeding site, and 13 with only one site in the entire county.

According to Feeding America's study, *Map the Meal Gap*, "Counties with the highest rates of food insecurity are more likely to be found in rural areas than in metropolitan regions." This means that some of the most vulnerable families in Montana are likely to be found in the rural counties that currently have no SFSP program.

Want to see this change? Consider starting a SFSP in your community, or join with an existing site to help increase the number of kids participating in the program. No child should have to go hungry during the summer months.



Counties with SFSP sites

Counties with 1 SFSP Site

Counties with no SFSP Site

SFSP Resources

Looking for resources to help start a Summer Food site or expand your current program? Check out these resources created by Montana Food Bank Network and Montana No Kid Hungry. You can find these documents at: www.mfbn.org/summerfood



Guide to Starting a Summer Food Service Program: The ultimate guide to starting a SFSP. All the facts needed to know in order to get a SFSP off the ground.

Summer Food Service Program Best Practice Guide: A collection of Q and A's with some of the top programs around the state. Pick the brains of sponsors who run these programs to get ideas on how to increase participation at your site.



Montana Summer Food Service Program Activity Book: List of activities that sponsors can use to create more interest and engage kids at their SFSP sites.

Cultivate Awareness Community Outreach Calendar: Month by month calendar with helpful strategies and suggestions on how to spread the word and increase awareness of your Summer Food site.

