

## GET INVOLVED



### ABOUT NO KID HUNGRY

No child should grow up hungry in America, but one in five children struggles with hunger. Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry® campaign is ending childhood hunger in America by ensuring all children get the healthy food they need, every day. The No Kid Hungry campaign connects kids in need to effective nutrition programs like school breakfast and summer meals and teaches low-income families to cook healthy, affordable meals through its Cooking Matters program. The No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices provides the tools and resources needed to help elected officials and their staff, educators and community leaders achieve success in fighting childhood hunger. Join us at NoKidHungry.org

### ABOUT THE GREATER CHICAGO FOOD DEPOSITORY

The Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago's food bank, is a nonprofit food distribution and training center providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community. The Food Depository distributes donated and purchased food through a network of 650 pantries, soup kitchens and shelters to 678,000 adults and children in Cook County every year. Last year, the Food Depository distributed 64 million pounds of nonperishable food and fresh produce, dairy products and meat, the equivalent of 134,800 meals every day. The Food Depository's programs and services for children, older adults and the unemployed and underemployed address the root causes of hunger.

### Elected Officials

- Utilize Free Summer Meals flyers in your office and encourage neighboring businesses, community centers, and other organizations to hang them as well.
- Familiarize yourself with Free Summer Meals sites operating in your ward and promote the availability of these free meal opportunities to your constituencies.
- Identify areas of your ward that do not have a summer meal site in operation and encourage local community organizations (churches, schools, community centers, etc) to explore the possibility of hosting a summer meals site in the future.

### Community Organizations and Churches

- Familiarize yourself with Free Summer Meals sites operating in your area and promote the availability of these free meal opportunities to those visiting your location.
- Partner with local summer meal sites to assist in providing fun activities, transportation, or volunteers to existing sites.

### Individuals

- Let friends and family know about Free Summer Meals opportunities.
- Consider volunteering at a local summer meals site. Offer to help serve meals, supervise activities, or help in transporting families to the site who might not otherwise be able to attend.
- Provide financial support to help sites offer fun, physical activity programs in conjunction with free meals.



## Free Summer Meals for Chicago's Kids

BECAUSE HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE A SUMMER BREAK



For decades, federal nutrition programs funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by the Illinois State Board of Education have provided resources to ensure that low-income children receive the meals and nutrition they need to thrive. In Chicago and across the country, low-income children receive free breakfast and lunch during the school year, reducing food insecurity and ensuring kids receive the nutrition they need to develop and grow. **But what about the summer?**

Free summer meals are part of the Summer Food Service Program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture and administered by the Illinois State Board of Education.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## The Status of Summer Meals in Chicago, 2012

### BACKGROUND

During the school year, many Chicago children receive at least two meals a day at school via the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. The Summer Food Service Program and Summer Seamless Option, together known as “Free Summer Meals”, are designed to ensure that children continue to receive these important meals during the summer months.

### TYPES OF SUMMER MEALS SITES

**OPEN SUMMER MEALS SITES** – Many sites across the city provide families the opportunity to “drop in” and get free meals for children 18 and under. Open sites provide meals to any child who visits the site during specified hours.

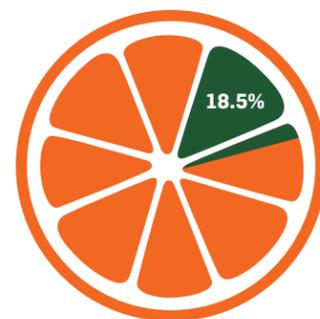
**SUMMER SCHOOL SITES** – Children who attend summer school are provided no-cost meals on-site every day classes are offered. Every CPS summer school site is considered an “open site” meaning children not attending classes can drop in and receive a meal as well.

**ENROLLED/CLOSED SUMMER MEALS SITES** – Other sites, such as Chicago Park District summer camps, make use of the opportunity to provide free meals to children enrolled in their program.

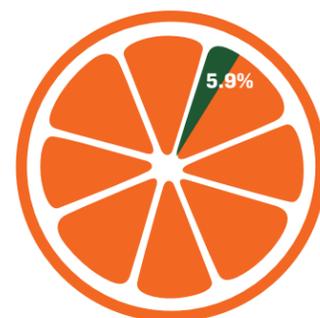


### Chicago's Summer Meals Effort: A 2012 Snapshot

Meals served at **open** sites increased by 73% in 2012 from the previous year. Despite this exceptional growth, Chicago's summer meals programs combined to provide just 18.5% of meals required to replace those received by children living in poverty during the school year.\* Children who receive free breakfast and lunch during the school year receive 10 meals per week. City-wide in 2012, Free Summer Meals sites served less than 2 meals per week per child in poverty.



% of Chicago's Needed Summer Meals\* served, 2012



Estimated % of Need Met in 10 Most Underserved Neighborhoods

#### 2012 TOP 10 MOST UNDERSERVED CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood	# of Needed Meals*	% of Needed Meals
Brighton Park	417,300	2.8%
West Elsdon	110,000	3.0%
Belmont Cragin	699,800	3.7%
Chicago Lawn	709,300	5.7%
Albany Park	395,200	5.7%
Gage Park	410,100	6.3%
Avondale	199,200	6.4%
New City	606,400	6.6%
Hermosa	208,000	8.4%
South Lawndale	879,800	8.6%

\* Needed Summer Meals = Typical # of weeks of CPS summer break (10) X # of free meals a child receives per week during the school year (10) X # of Chicago children living in poverty (198,078)

## Getting the Word Out For 2013

Closing the gap between the number of summer meals needed and the number of meals served will require a city-wide commitment. Steps must be taken to communicate the availability of free meals to those families who may not be aware of sites in their neighborhood. Best practices should be utilized to maximize the impact of Chicago's Free Summer Meals programs.

### Spreading the Word on Summer Meals: The COFI Model

In 2012, in conjunction with the No Kid Hungry Campaign, the organization *Community Organizing and Family Issues*, or COFI, organized a pilot summer meals promotion campaign in three Chicago neighborhoods. Teams of parents spent six weeks going door-to-door and visiting popular community locations spreading the word about local summer meals open sites. During their outreach, COFI workers surveyed more than 1,200 residents regarding their knowledge of the summer meals opportunities:

- 77% indicated that their conversation with COFI was the first they had heard of Free Summer Meals.
- Only 6% indicated that their child had received a free meal the previous year.
- After hearing more about the opportunity to get free summer meals for their children, 90% indicated their intention to visit a site in 2012.



### HOW TO MAKE SUMMER MEALS SITES MOST EFFECTIVE

#### 1 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUN, PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES AT MEAL SITES

Many families participating in summer meals cite the availability of activities “beyond the meal” as a reason for regular attendance. Catholic Charities, for example, offered popular physical fitness programs at their mobile outreach sites for the first time last year, driving a 45% increase in meals served in July 2012 vs. July 2011.

#### 2 PERSONALLY INVITE FAMILIES TO PARTICIPATE

Many families may be unaware that free summer meals for their children are available in their neighborhood. COFI's efforts in 2012 demonstrate the importance of communicating with the community. The three communities in which COFI operated experienced a 90% increase in the number of meals served in 2012.

#### 3 ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY TO ASSIST IN SPREADING THE WORD

Contact local businesses, churches, and other locations regularly visited by community members. Ask them to hang Free Summer Meals flyers in high traffic, highly visible areas in order to help further promote local sites.



To find summer meals sites close to you, call (800) 359-2163, text FOODIL to 877877, or visit [summermealsillinois.org](http://summermealsillinois.org)