

After School Meals : Feeding Kids After the Bell Rings



Preble Street

Maine Hunger Initiative

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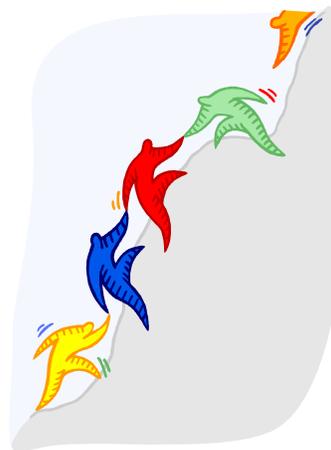
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What's in a Name?

The Afterschool Meals Program is also referred to as the At-Risk Afterschool Meals and Snack Program, or At-Risk CACFP. We use the term After School Meals in this toolkit to reduce stigma and for brevity's sake.

This toolkit is a collaborative effort, and was built with the assistance of a number of community partners. Thanks to:

Kate Sims, Signe Anderson and the resources of the Food Action Resource Center (FRAC)

Ron Adams and the Portland School Nutrition Department

Lyn Ludington, CACFP Coordinator for the State of Maine

Jenna Whitson, Child Nutrition Advocate at Hunger Free Vermont

Maine After School Network

Tiffanie Panagakos of the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Maine

Jay Lyons at the YMCA of Southern Maine

Sonia Noble, the Executive Director of KidsCare

Lynn McGrath at Opportunity Alliance

Introduction



Assessing Need: The Boys and Girls Club of Southern Maine

Tiffany Panagakos is the Unit Director for the Riverton/Sagamore Boys & Girls Club at Riverton Park, in Portland. This after school program provides enriching activities for her students after school.

The Boys & Girls Clubs for the Riverton location is in school districts where more than 50% of the students receive free and reduced lunch. Many students attending the after school program are from food insecure households. "Lots of these kids are getting maybe some rice when they get home, if that."

Busy running both of the Riverton & Sagamore Boys & Girls Club after school programs, Tiffany still has time to provide snacks after school. However, even as part of a national organization like the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine, budgeting for snacks only goes so far. "I usually end up buying things like animal crackers, juice, cookies," says Tiffany. Tiffany provides a meal on Fridays for the children in her programs and with added support from the CACFP program will be able to feed the children a meal plus a snack.

With the Afterschool Meals and Snack program, Tiffany can provide the children she serves with the food that they need to stay energized and focused. When Tiffany asks the kids at the Riverton Boys & Girls Club location: "Who wants healthy meals and snacks after school?" every hand in the room went up, and the kids cheered. The After School Meals and Snack Program provides food for the kids who need nutritious, healthy food the most, and ensures that the after school programs have the resources to meet that need.

Why After School Meals and Snack?

Child nutrition is an important part of anti-hunger work, and programs like Summer Food Service Program, the National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast program have been a priority for the Maine Hunger Initiative and our community partners. With the passage of the Hunger Free Healthy Kids Act in 2010, Maine has access to a new and exciting way to feed children: the Afterschool Meals and Snack Program. 84,496 Maine children qualify for the program, which would increase students' access to educational programming and nutritious food across the state. Also known as at-risk CACFP, or the at-risk Afterschool Meals and Snack Program, this is a federal reimbursement program designed to make healthy meals and snacks available for after school programs in low income areas.

This guide is intended to help those interested in After School Meals and Snacks implement the program in a way that is cost effective, efficient, and reaches as many kids as possible.

What is MHI?

The Maine Hunger Initiative (MHI) is the foremost anti-hunger advocacy organization in Maine. We provide:

- Unity and strength to food pantries across Maine
- Increased access to the Food Supplement Program in Maine
- Implementation support and assistance for nutrition programs such as Afterschool Meals and Snack, Summer Meals, the National School Lunch Program, and the School Breakfast program
- Research on best practices for federal nutrition programs in the state of Maine
- Strong partnerships with statewide advocacy organizations and membership in national, regional, and local anti-hunger coalitions
- Opportunities for empowerment of people in poverty
- Raise awareness and create solutions to problems of hunger

Why Serve Food After School?

Food Insecurity in Maine

Maine has the 3rd highest rate of food insecurity in the nation, with 1 in 4 Maine children without secure access to meals (No Kid Hungry Campaign, 2013). 18.2% of children in Maine live in poverty, with over 46.77% of school age children eligible for free and reduced lunch (Department of Education, 2014). Food insecurity is particularly challenging for Mainers living in rural areas. Overall, Maine children face significant challenges in their ability to access healthy, nutritious food on a regular basis.

Filling the Meal Gap

Children in food insecure households may not eat after their school day has ended. As many parents work nonstandard work hours, particularly in low income families (The Urban Institute, 2011. Nonstandard Work Schedules and the Well-being of Low-Income Families), stable after school environments where children receive healthy food are vital to combating food insecurity. According to Children's Health Watch, food insecurity can lead to difficulties concentrating, anxiety, and challenges in knowledge retention ("Even Very Low Levels of Food Insecurity Found to Harm Children's Health," 2009). Children in food insecure households are also at a serious disadvantage in terms of completing their schoolwork. Nutrition is a priority in ensuring Maine students are able to achieve success in the classroom and beyond.

Afterschool Meals and Snack

The Afterschool Meals and Snack provides after school programs in areas where more than 50% of students are enrolled in free and reduced lunch with reimbursement to provide snacks and meals to program participants, in order to ensure a "pleasant, nutritious, and sociable experience" (USDA At-Risk Afterschool Meals Handbook) for the students in afterschool programs.

Program Benefits

The Afterschool Meals and Snack program makes a huge difference in the quality of life for children in your program, and can provide funding that helps your afterschool program run smoother. When children have access to nutritious food at the same time that they participate in educational and enriching activities, they are both drawn to constructive and safe environments while getting the fuel they need to participate fully both after school and back in the classroom the next day. The program is also cost effective: according to the Food Research Action Center, "an afterschool program can receive up to \$568 per child per year for an afterschool meal alone" (Food Research Action Center, Operating the Afterschool Meal Program). Many afterschool programs also find that providing meals and snacks after school can engage students in conversations about nutrition, food preparation, and health in positive and supportive ways.



Afterschool Meals and Snack Complement Other Federal Nutrition Programs

The Afterschool Meals and Snack Program is relatively new to Maine, and it fills a gap in a food insecure child's day. An effective afterschool program or school district may work together with other community organizations and stakeholders to make sure that children in their region have access to free food at every meal and all year round by implementing Afterschool Meals.

Afterschool Meals and Snack FAQ

Why should my program serve food after school?

Serving food at after school programs is beneficial for both the children you serve and for the overall success of your program.

Adequate nutrition is key to students' ability to concentrate and retain information, as well as their physical development. By providing meals and snacks at after school programs, children not only have access to enriching educational activities, but also the nutrition necessary to retain the benefits of such a program.



After school programs that serve meals and snacks also find that their programs benefit greatly: by working with participants to prepare and enjoy new types of nutritious food, after school programs become accessible and interesting to those students who would otherwise not be interested in attending. Serving nutritious food also helps program participants concentrate on the content of the educational activities within the program.

Shouldn't kids be eating dinner at home?

By the time children attend an after school program, it may have been 3 or 4 hours since their last meal, and there is no guarantee they will receive a meal at home. Since many parents work irregular hours and may not have the time or the resources to prepare another meal, after school programs may provide a snack or meal to fill the gap. Many after school programs choose to serve a high energy snack, with all of the nutrition components required by the USDA, but as a supplement to the meals kids will eat at home with their parents. Make sure to inform the parents of your participants that you will be begin serving a nutritious snack and meal at your after school program.

Serving a meal every day sounds stressful.

If your program doesn't have the capacity to serve meals every day your program is operating, you can certainly serve meals only a few times a week in order to maintain cost efficiency.



Afterschool Meals and Snack FAQ

How do I know if my program is eligible for the Afterschool Meals Program?

Any type of nonprofit, for-profit, or school district can receive reimbursement for the afterschool meals program as long as they are located in a school district with 50% or more students enrolled in free and reduced lunch. Tribal centers, churches, nonprofit organizations, for-profit childcare centers, and school programs that run past school hours are all excellent examples of programs eligible for the Afterschool Meals program. Programs contracting with other organizations for their enrichment and educational activities are also eligible for the Afterschool Meals program, as long as they meet all other requirements.



Can my program serve snacks and meals?

Programs are able to receive reimbursement for 1 meal and 1 snack per day that they provide.



What if I don't have a kitchen on site?

As a site interested in the Afterschool Meals program, you have a few options. If you have a kitchen with limited capacity, you may be able to find a way to make preparing food more accessible, such as only serving snacks, or serving cold meals that still meet the USDA nutrition standards for the program. By preparing the meals yourself, you may have more "creative control" over the meals served.

You may also find it financially viable to hire an outside vendor to handle your food preparation: you may use your reimbursements to pay for a caterer or food distributor to prepare and transport food. This is particularly viable if your program partners with one or more other after school programs to cut food purchase and preparation costs.

What is the reimbursement rate per meal and per snack?

The reimbursement rate for the After School Meals program until July 2014 is \$2.93 per meal and \$.80 per snack. The reimbursement rate is raised yearly for inflation every July.



How do I get my application started?

Once you have determined that your program is located in an eligible school district, you should contact the Maine CACFP state agency in order to assess your next step. Coordinating with the state agency as early as possible is important in order to save you time and stress!

My after school program charges a fee for students enrolled. Are we still eligible for After School Meals?

Yes, as long as the fee is not related to the food provided.

Afterschool Meals and Snack FAQ

What kind of after school activities must my program provide to qualify for After School Meals?

Eligible programs provide educational or enrichment activities to all program participants. Enrichment or education is broadly defined: the key is that your program is organized, structured, scheduled, and supervised.

Activities can be educational, artistic, or wellness oriented. Some examples include:

- Tutoring
- Art Classes
- Dance Classes
- Cooking
- Mentoring



What kind of licensing does the state of Maine require to run the Afterschool Meals program?

Any state/local licensing that is mandated for running an after school program qualifies for the program.

Can I serve food at my after school program on the weekends or during holidays?

Yes, your program can serve food on holidays, weekends, and (non-summer vacation) breaks from the school year, though you must get approval for your determined meal times on these days from the state CACFP coordinator.

Do I need to serve meals hot?

No! In order to meet the nutritional requirements of the Afterschool Meals program, you do not have to serve hot meals or snacks.



What times can I serve food for the After School Program?

The times in which you may serve food are flexible, as long as your serving times are after the school day has ended. For example, you do not have to serve a snack and then a meal. Many programs find that serving the meal closer to the end of the school day, and giving participants snacks closer to the end of the program to be a more effective model for serving.

Can I operate both Summer Meals and the After School Meals program?

Yes, though not at the same time. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Afterschool Meals program can be run together: if you are a sponsor for SFSP and are interested in Afterschool Meals, you are an excellent candidate for the afterschool meals program. For more information, contact your Summer Meals coordinator, Gail Lombardi.

Afterschool Meals and Snack FAQ

What kind of paper work will I need to fill out to receive my After School Meals reimbursement?

There are a number of record keeping requirements for After School Meals reimbursement, but they are all part of making sure that your program is running efficiently and cost-effectively! Daily/weekly meal count forms and menus back up the reimbursement claim form that is sent in monthly. Parents and guardians of program participants do not have any paperwork to be filled out, differentiating After School Meals and Snack from CACFP.

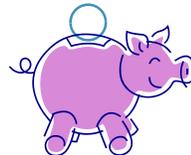


How will I receive my reimbursement?

Your program must submit the number of children and meals served within 60 days of the last day of the month covered by the program claim. Sites submit their claims to their sponsors, which then review the claim and submit them to the state agency. Independent sites (those without a sponsor) submit their claims directly to the state CACFP coordinator. Claims must be submitted by the 15th of each month.

Does my after school program need to enroll the students that attend?

No, programs may be either based on enrollment or a drop-in program.



Does it matter the age range of the children my program serves?

For the After School Meals program the age range of the children served does not matter, as long as all participants receiving food are under the age of 18.

Does my after school program need to enroll the students that attend?

No, programs may be either based on enrollment, or operate on a drop-in basis.

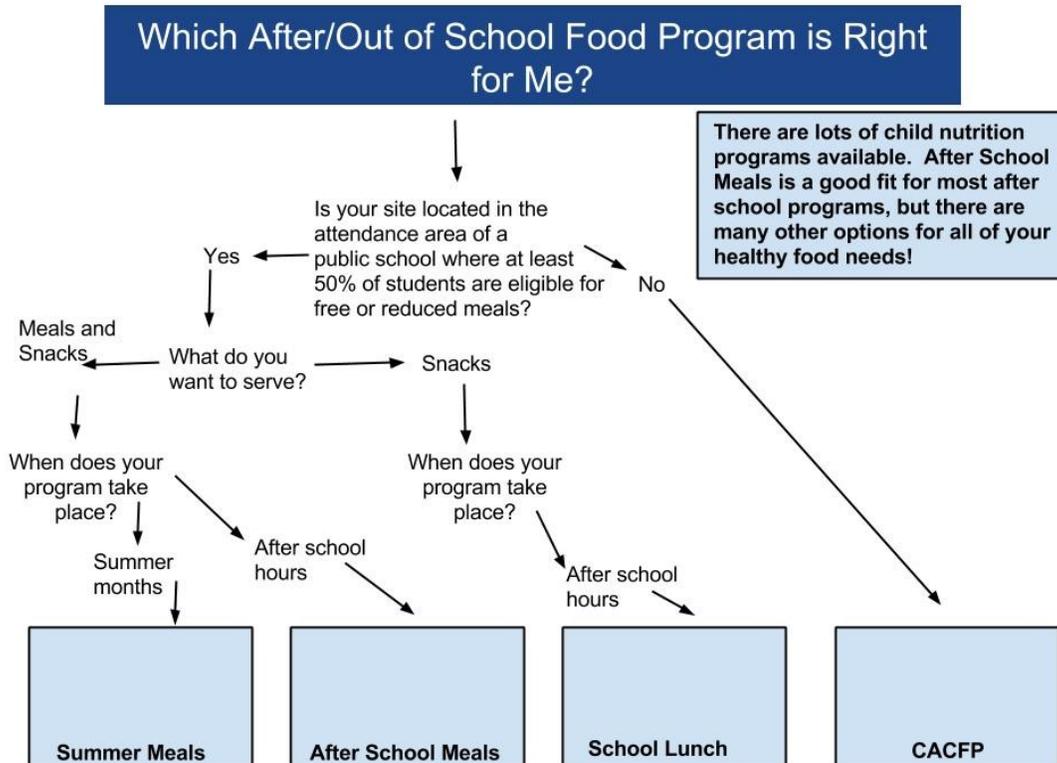
What will my staff need to do on a daily basis?

Staff must keep track of participant attendance on a daily basis, and document the number of meals prepared or delivered, as well as the number of meals served.

Test Yourself:

Would the After School Meals and Snack program be effective for my afterschool program?

Snacks and Meals for Every Program



CACFP - The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides reimbursement per child enrolled who qualifies for free and reduced meals. Programs running CACFP must fill out paperwork for each child that qualifies from the program. These programs may be operated in any area. Programs may claim up to 1 snack and 1 meal per day.

After School Meals - After School Meals provides reimbursement for educational or enrichment activities to provide their participants with healthy food. Programs may claim up to 1 snack and 1 meal per day. Families do not have to fill out paperwork proving their child's eligibility, as eligibility for the program is dependant on geographic area.

National School Lunch Program - The National School Lunch Program has a snack component that provides school districts with reimbursement for healthy snacks during enriching after school activities. If the school district is located in an area with more than 50% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, snacks are reimbursed at the free rate. If fewer than 50% of the students in the school district qualify for free and reduced lunch, then the program provides snacks reimbursable at the "free" "reduced" or "paid" level depending upon the student. The program provides reimbursement only for snacks.

Summer Food Service Program (Summer Meals) - The Summer Food Service Program operates at sites (including school districts) in any location where more than 50% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch rates. Programs may receive reimbursement for any combination of 2 meals except lunch and dinner. Programs may use both Summer Meals and After School Meals in conjunction.

Application



Getting Your Program Off the Ground: Portland School Nutrition Department, Portland ME

Ron Adams is the head of the school nutrition department for the Portland School District. In 2013, the Portland School district renovated and equipped a former shellfish processing plant that provides meals for all of the schools in Portland. This Central Kitchen is a cost effective measure for the school district, as it would cost millions of dollars to install, staff, and monitor individual school kitchens. It also allows for flexibility in contracting: Portland Schools also provide food for the Summer Meals (SFSP) sites run through the Parks and Recreation department and the YMCA. By serving as a vendor and a sponsor for as many sites as possible, Ron Adams is able to cover his costs effectively, serve more fruits, vegetables, and local Maine food, and ultimately, feed more children.

Ron is working now on feeding eligible kids all year round, by applying for the Afterschool Meals and Snack program as a sponsor for four sites. Programs already familiar with other child nutrition programs such as the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and Summer Meals (SFSP) are perfect candidates for the Afterschool Meals and Snack Program, since they are already familiar with covering their costs, developing best practices for food preparation and distribution, and of course, the paperwork. Sponsors providing vendor and administrative support can make the program more accessible to afterschool programs that would otherwise be unable to participate in the after school meals and snack program due to the challenge of food distribution and administration costs. Through his application to be an effective sponsor, Ron will establish a program that will cover expenses and provide great food, helping to close the meal gap for children in Portland.

Application Process

If you're interested in the Afterschool Meals program, you can start working on your application right away with these simple steps.

Determine Your Eligibility

Any type of nonprofit, for-profit, or school district can receive reimbursement for the after school meals program as long as they are located in a school district with 50% or more students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

In order to qualify for the Afterschool Meals program, programs must also be in a district where 50% or more of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. The best way to determine if your program is located in such a school district is to use the Maine Department of Education's website, located here:

(https://portal.maine.gov/sfsr/sfsrdev.ed534.ed534_parameters)

To figure out which school district your program is located in, the Maine state coordinator advises, "ask yourself: if you were to have a child living at your program location, where would they attend middle school"? If that school is within a school district listed as having more than 50% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch on the

Make a Plan

Once you have determined your eligibility, it's time to make sure that the logistics of the program will be viable for your site.

Questions to Ask:

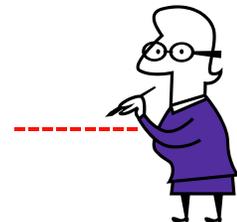
Will I vend or prepare my meals on site?

If I will vend my meals: do I know those in the area that I could contract with? Have they worked with the After School Meals Program before?

If I will prepare my meals on site: does my kitchen meet all required health codes for the state of Maine? Can my kitchen provide enough food for all the participants? Does my kitchen meet licensing standards?

Do I have enough staff (or volunteers) or strategies for acquiring staff and volunteers to handle the administrative facets of the program?

Will the After School Meals Reimbursement cover all of my costs for operating the program and providing food for my program participants? If not, how will I supplement any additional costs? Are there any hidden costs (transportation, extra staffing) I have not yet considered?



Start Your Application

Contact the Statewide CACFP Coordinator

After you have developed a plan for the implementation of After School Meals in your program, contact the Maine CACFP Coordinator. They can provide you with a copy of the paper application. They will also ask you many of the questions listed above in order to determine your eligibility, and schedule a pre-approval visit to your site in order to make sure that your program meets all of the requirements.

Begin Your Application

Once you've discussed your eligibility with the CACFP Coordinator, it's time to get down to the paperwork. If you are working with a sponsor, you have less paperwork to fill out, but still must make sure you are vigilant about record keeping. If you are going it alone, your program will have a great deal of materials to share with the CACFP Coordinator. However, all paperwork is ultimately an assessment of your ability to operate the program effectively and with minimal stress on your end. Before beginning the program, you will also need to complete a training around the Afterschool Meal program administered by the state sponsor.

Mail your completed application to:

Office of Child and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services
2 Anthony Avenue
11 State House Station



Once You Start

Record Keeping is a vital part of the Afterschool Meals program. In order to ensure that your program is running smoothly and meets state guidelines, you must maintain meticulous records. This not only includes invoices and receipts for the food and the administrative facets of your program, but also weekly menus, daily attendance, the number of meals and snacks prepared and served each day. *For more a comprehensive overview of the paperwork needed to run a successful Afterschool Meals program, please see the documentation timeline in the Maintenance section.*

Sponsor, Site, Independent Center

Which Role Works for My Program?

There are a number of different ways that you can run the After School Meals and Snack program. Depending upon number of participants in your program, your staff capacity, and the amount of space you have at your program, you may choose to prepare meals or snacks at your program, or vend your meals elsewhere. This is separate from your decision to either run the program yourself or with a sponsor.

Sponsor: A sponsor for an Afterschool Meals program is in charge of the paperwork and administrative duties for a number of sites. The sponsor is responsible for the success of all of the programs it oversees, and is subsequently in charge of holding trainings for staff on running Afterschool Meals, maintaining effective costs, and general oversight for the program.

Site: Afterschool programs that are run with the assistance of a sponsor are called sites. Becoming a site to a larger nonprofit's sponsor is an effective option for smaller after school programs that do not have enough staff to maintain administrative records.



Independent Center: Independent centers are Afterschool Meals programs that have decided to run their program without a nonprofit sponsor. Independent centers are responsible for all of their own considerations with the Afterschool Meals program, from getting meals to making sure all the paperwork is in order. Though independent centers may still choose to contract their meal preparation with an outside vendor, they are in control of all of their meals, paperwork timelines, and reimbursement funds. Many sites choose to be independent centers regardless of their program's size due to the autonomy in spending funds and preparing meals that comes with being an independent center.

Did you know? National afterschool programs like the Boys and Girls Club or the YMCA often have protocol or policy on the implementation of the After School Meals and Snack program. If you are affiliated with a larger national organization, contact a representative from your organization, as they may be able to assist you with assessing your program readiness and application process.

Application Readiness

The After School Meals and Snack application is lengthy, but all of the information that is required is information that is important to know in order to maintain a well run program. They are divided into three categories : *Administrative Capacity, Financial Viability and Financial Management, and Program Accountability.*

What you need to fill out the application: if you are a sponsor, you must provide this for each site you will be sponsoring. If you are an independent center, you must provide this information exclusively for your program. If you are a site, you do not have to fill out this paperwork, but you must make sure you have this information as up to date as possible to assist your sponsor in completing this paperwork:

Proof of Eligibility

Management Plan

Nondiscrimination Statement

Documented Licensing

Documentation of Nonprofit Status

Questions to Determine After School Snack and Meals Readiness for Sponsors, Sites, and Independent Centers

For Sponsors:

Do I have an adequate training prepared for my staff that I can perform yearly? This training must include a discussion of meal patterns, meal counts, claim submission, review procedures, record keeping, reimbursement systems and civil rights requirement as applicable to their position.

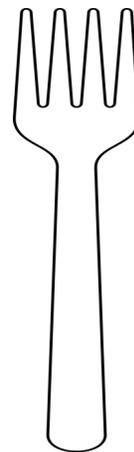
What systems should be put in place to communicate with the sites I am sponsoring? How will I maintain their fiscal accountability and my own?

For Sites With a Sponsor:

How will I serve meals at my site? How will I ensure that? Do I have the space in my program's facility to accommodate all of these positions?

How will I communicate with my sponsor about the information they need from me?

Who on my staff will be responsible for each administrative task?



Application



For All:

If I am going to prepare meals on site, do I have:

A kitchen that meets local licensing requirements?

A stove, refrigeration capacities, and a clean, safe place to prep and ready food for serving?

Adequate clean up supplies (a sink, a way to wash dishes or dispose of trash) for after the meal has been served?

Which staff/volunteers will be in charge of each task (attendance records, getting the kids through the line), etc?

What will be the actual layout of the way that I will serve kids? Will they line up?

How will snack and meal time fit into the scheduled programming?

If I am going to get food from a vendor, do I know:

Who am I going to vend with? (potential vendors: school nutrition departments, hospitals, even airlines, are all effective potential sponsors once briefed on the nutritional standards of the USDA).



Test Yourself:

What information do you need to complete the application that you do not already have accessible?

Maintenance



Building Community with Afterschool Meals and Snack: KidsCare of Lincoln, ME

Lincoln, Maine is a small community, but it is a place where people look out for each other. Kids Care, an afterschool mentoring program serving 10-15 kids of all ages, is no exception to this rule. Students at Kids Care receive long term adult mentorship, tutoring, and the opportunity to build leadership skills- as well as healthy food through the At-Risk Afterschool Meals and Snack program.

Kids Care not only provides healthy snacks that fuel students' learning, but also makes nutrition a major part of program's education. Kids are encouraged to try different types of fruits and vegetables, and staff, by eating snacks with the kids, model enthusiasm for the healthy food that is served.

“Snack time is the one time where our students don't face any pressure,” said Executive Director Sonia Noble. This stress free time is facilitated by the Americorps VISTAs, ASPIRE volunteers, and community members that keep the program running. KidsCare employs different members of the community in Lincoln to handle the administrative and paperwork facets of running the Afterschool Meals program, from filling out budget forms to helping prepare the food. This frees up staff time for one on one time with students. Volunteers are invested in the community of Lincoln, Maine, and are given the chance to build professional skills.

The KidsCare Afterschool Meals and Snack program is a great example of using all resources available to feed the participants in your after school program, and how to build a strong, successful community in the process.

Managing Paperwork

The most important part of maintaining your records is making sure you stay ahead of deadlines and keep track of your costs.



In order to make these tasks easy, consider:

- Only 15% of your reimbursement can go towards administrative costs.
- Maintain a binder, drawer, or shared folder on your organization's hard drive that includes all documents regarding the After School Meals and Snack Program.

Daily:

Attendance rosters which record which program participants received a meal or snack

Number of meals prepared or delivered to the program

Number of meals served to program participants

Record of staff that have received a meal or snack

Weekly:

Menus for each snack or meal prepared and served.



Monthly:

Submit reimbursement claims (by the 15th of each month), including meal records, attendance records for each meal, and menus.

Yearly:

Attend training for CACFP held by the state of Maine

(For sponsors) Documentation of all trainings held, with staff that attended training, including dates, times, and material covered

Renewal of application (returned by July 15th)

All claims should be retained for 3 years.

Note: The more you keep track of documentation, claims, reimbursement, vendor receipts, and attendance records, the easier the Afterschool Meals program will be to navigate.

Volunteers

Sometimes running the After School Meals and Snack program may require additional hands on deck beyond the current staff. In these situations, having steady and committed volunteers that you can rely is crucial to the success of the program, and keeping your costs down. But how do you go about acquiring volunteers?

What do you need? The first step is to assess what tasks need to be done that cannot currently be handled by staff capacity. Do you need more people to work with participants? Someone who can keep track of all the paperwork? A person or two who can plan meals that meet nutritional standards and stay within your budget? Determining your needs will help you find volunteers.



Recruitment: Deciding where you recruit volunteers is contingent upon the work you would like the volunteer to do. For tasks that require some knowledge of budgeting, or the reimbursement paperwork, a specialized skill set from an Americorps volunteer, college intern, high school volunteer, or ASPIRE worker might be helpful. For additional assistance supervising program participants, potentially a parent or member of a local PTA would be helpful. If you know there are those in the community who have particular skills (a retired nutritionist, a former nonprofit manager or accountant), ask them if they could provide specialized assistance. As with all volunteers, remember to think: how could the task I am asking them to perform be useful for them? How could the knowledge or experience that comes from doing this work be useful for my volunteer later?

Building the Program: By assigning your volunteers job titles, writing out job descriptions, and writing out blurbs describing their work, you create a culture that values your volunteer's work, and provides context for the jobs you ask them to do.



Volunteer Appreciation: With all staff and volunteers, it is important to make sure that their contribution is acknowledged and appreciated. This appreciation can happen either on a personal level, for example, writing a card to a volunteer explaining how their contribution has assisted the program, or on a much broader scale, such as holding a "thank you" dinner or party for all volunteers. This is not only to make sure volunteers continue to be interested in helping your program, but also because the work your volunteers do is vital to ending childhood hunger in Maine!

Staff and Volunteer Training: At least one staff member must attend the state training. Use this information to create an on-site training, which is required for all staff and volunteers of your afterschool program.

Nutrition

Programs running the After School Meals and Snack program must use the USDA nutrition standards for their meals. These guidelines are useful in creating an effective meal that provides adequate nutrition for your participants.

Meals must be:

one serving of milk
two servings of fruits and/or vegetables
one serving of grains
one serving of protein



Snacks must include two of the four components:

milk
fruits and/or vegetables
whole grains



Check the USDA website (or the resources at the back of this toolkit) for more information on serving sizes. Sometimes programs are deterred by the idea of providing hot meals that meet the above nutrition standards, concerned about cost, staff time, and preparation standards. However, most of these standards are easily met with minimal prep time or staff effort. In some Vermont school districts, for example, meals are served as “AMPed Up” snacks: rather than serving hot food, they are able to meet the nutrition requirements by providing a turkey sandwich on whole grain bread, carrots or a piece of fruit, similar to a sack lunch. Even without access to a vendor or well equipped kitchen, you may have the capacity to serve a nutritious meal that meets national guidelines!

Test Yourself: which of the following meals could be served as part of After School Meals?

- A. An apple, peanut butter on white bread sandwich, 2% milk
- B. Animal crackers, 1% milk, carrots
- C. A turkey sandwich on whole grain bread, carrots, an apple, and 1% milk
- D. Whole grain tortilla, peanut butter.

Answer: (The answer is C, the only meal that contains all four components and milk. D would be acceptable for a snack, but does not have all of the required components needed for a meal. 2% milk, as provided in A. does not meet the nutritional requirements for the After School

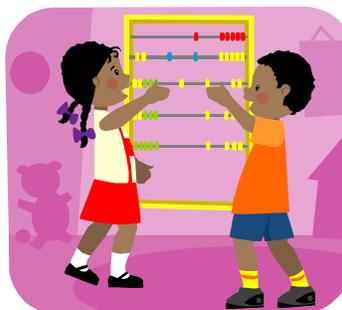
Outreach and Strategy



Going the Extra Mile: YMCA of Southern Maine

Jay Lyons runs the YMCA after school programs for Portland and South Portland, and the programs receive either CACFP or at-risk CACFP, depending upon their eligibility. The YMCA afterschool programs have also expanded the services they provide. The after school programs have received a Wal-Mart grant, and that resource, coupled with the CACFP at-risk funding, has allowed Jay to hire a nutritionist. As a result, the program has been able to serve more fruits and vegetables, and replace fruit juice on their menu (which is less nutritious but less expensive than serving a whole fruit or serving of vegetables).

“It gives the whole program more opportunities and the children more healthy options. With the nutritionist, the program is able to take advantage of their knowledge and expertise.”



Building Community Partnerships An important way to let others know about your program is through working with others in your community who have vested interest in child nutrition. The more people are aware of your program, the more children can receive meals. You may also find that community partners may be crucial resources for keeping your program sustainable: by working with school nutrition departments, faith organizations, local grocery stores, and food pantries, you can serve your community more effectively and also build potential collaborative relationships.

Outreach

In order to reach as many children as possible for your after school program, it is important to spread the word about what you can provide. Programs receiving USDA funds must alert the public about their programs, but it is also best practice to make sure as many people are aware of your program as possible. Creating a plan for your outreach strategy is a vital part of making sure you can serve as many kids as possible.

Since after school programs tend to have a program limit, it is best to do this sort of outreach before the deadline for participants to apply.

The following are some effective methods of letting families in the area know about your program and its benefits:

PSAs (Public Service Announcements)

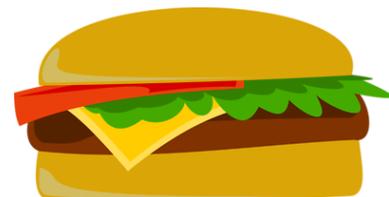
Flyering in community centers, schools, and local businesses

Newspapers

Community events

Culturally Appropriate Snacks and Meals

The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Program (ILAP) estimates there to be around 55,000 immigrant Maine residents. For children in this population, many of the foods that may be served at your after school program may be unfamiliar. After school providers in Maine who listen to their participants and build menus and nutrition education based on feedback from parents and students have found this “cultural competence” allows for a more successful and enriching after school program.



Fundraising

Maintaining adequate funding for your program is one of the most important parts of the After School Meals program, whether you run your program with a sponsor or independently.

Start Up Costs: Consider that in your first year or two, you may need to budget some extra funds for one time costs such as extra refrigeration, transportation methods, or wages for staff setting up a comprehensive recordkeeping plan.

Grants: While there is no grant fund in Maine dedicated exclusively to the After School Meals and Snack program, there also are a variety of options in terms of nutritious food for children and after school programs in general. You may even find when you build relationships with government in your community, there are further opportunities for funding and support than you would have otherwise imagined.

Whenever you are putting together a grant, make sure that you understand the outcomes you wish to see from your program and articulate them as clearly as possible in your proposal.



Partner with other organizations: Money is not the only thing that your after school program might need to run your program effectively, and you might be surprised by who has what you need. For example, local restaurants may be willing to donate prep tools, transportation organizations may help you with transit costs, and churches or schools could provide your program with volunteer kitchen support. Coupled with a thoughtful outreach plan, you may find that support from a number of different groups, businesses, and organizations are able to supplement your reimbursement rate to meet your program's needs.

Test Yourself:

How will you build awareness of your meal or snack program among parents and students?

Rural Programs

Maine is primarily a rural state, with the lowest population density in New England, and the 38th lowest population density in the nation. There are many ways to keep costs down are less accessible for After School Programs in rural Maine (partnering with other after school programs to buy food or contract with a vendor, working with a sponsor providing assistance to multiple sites. However, rural areas are often the places where the Afterschool Meals and Snack program are most needed: Maine's individual poverty rate was 12.6 percent in 2008, but higher in Washington County (20.1 percent), Somerset County (18.7 percent) and Franklin County (17.5 percent) (Bangor Daily News, 2010 "Poverty hits rural Maine the hardest,"). In Maine's "rural rim" counties, the poverty rate is much higher. Considering the need for programs like Afterschool Meals and Snack, rural after school programs interested in implementation should take advantages of all their resources.

Transportation: Many programs struggle to fund the transportation of their food, whether they contract with a vendor or buy the food themselves at an affordable grocery store. Consider working with other community organizations, schools, or businesses to see if they may be able to assist you in finding effective transit.



Assess Your Resources: School Nutrition Programs are some of the best centers for providing meals and snacks after school in rural communities, as they already have relationships with students and students' families in the area and are familiar with the resources in the community for food preparation.

Build Relationships Locally and Statewide: Talk with after school meals providers in other counties and other after school programs or educational programs in your area in order to identify shared challenges, potential solutions, and opportunities to collaborate.

Many of the ways to run an effective After School Meals and Snack program in a rural area are very similar to methods of running the After School Meals and Snack program well anywhere in Maine.

Resources

Information about Food Insecurity:

No Kid Hungry, Share Our Strength. <http://www.nokidhungry.org/>, a national campaign fighting childhood hunger.

Children's Health Watch, <http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/>, a national research organization that monitors the health and well being of children.

Guides:

FRAC's Afterschool Meals Guide: a comprehensive guide to the After School Meals and Snack program for providers, advocates, and state coordinators across the country. <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/afterschool-programs/fracs-afterschool-meals-guide/>

At-Risk Afterschool Meals Guide: the official guide to After School Meals and Snack Program published by the USDA. It also includes memos regarding changes to the program and recommendations for best practices in terms of creating stronger statewide programs.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/atriskhandbook.pdf>

Meal Preparation:

FRAC Menus: Sample menus provided by the Food Research Action Center (FRAC) http://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/lunch_or_meal_sample_menu.pdf

USDA Food Buying Guide <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/foodbuying-guide-child-nutrition-programs>

Maine Specific Resources:

CACFP Website, Maine.gov, <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/foodpgm.htm>

Maine Afterschool Network (MASN), <http://www.maineafterschool.net/>