

FEEDING AMERICA

CHILD HUNGER PROGRAMS TOOLKIT



**KIDS
CAFE[®]**
PROGRAM



**BACKPACK
PROGRAM**



**SCHOOL
PANTRY
PROGRAM**



CREATED AUGUST 2019

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Section 1

Feeding America Child Hunger Programs

In this section you will find information on:

- Overview of Child Hunger Programs
- History of Feeding America's Child Hunger Programs
- Federal Programs for Child Hunger
 - The Child and Adult Care Food Program
 - Summer Food Service Program
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Expectations and Objectives
 - Child Hunger Program Standards and Agreement
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Kids Cafe Goals and Objectives
 - School Pantry Program Goals and Objectives
 - Backpack Program Goals and Objectives
 - SNAP Application Assistance Program Elements
 - Child Hunger Program Logos

FEEDING AMERICA'S CHILD HUNGER PROGRAMS

Overview

Feeding America's child hunger strategy focuses on meeting the nutritional needs of children in times when they need it most. Programs are designed to fill gaps in the summer, on weekends and school vacations, after school and at home. Federal and charitable programs are utilized in different ways throughout the country to fit the local needs. Below, each targeted time period and the corresponding programs that operate within them are summarized.

AFTER SCHOOL



The **Kids Cafe Program** provide free, congregate meals and snacks to low-income children through a variety of existing community organizations where children congregate, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, churches or public schools. In addition to providing meals and/or snacks, Feeding America encourages programs to also offer a safe place, where under the supervision of trustworthy staff, a child can often get involved in educational, recreational and social activities that draw on existing community programs and often include family members.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal nutrition program that provides reimbursements for nutritious food served in a wide range of venues, including childcare centers, day care homes, adult day care centers and afterschool programs. CACFP can be a stable, dependable funding source for Kids Cafes. Food banks that operate these afterschool programs at their sites are often also CACFP sponsors, thus receiving reimbursement for the snacks and meals served during this time period. Additionally, food banks can utilize reimbursements from the **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** for these programs during the summer.

AT HOME



The **School Pantry Program's** mission is to help alleviate child hunger in America through the provision of food to children and their families at school. School-based pantries are located on the grounds of schools, or other convenient, familiar, and safe locations for children such as libraries, parks, or youth organization sites, and are intended to provide a more readily accessible source of food assistance to low-income students and their families. Food banks that want to better reach children and families at home can partner with a school to start a School Pantry Program.



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly the Food Stamp Program) helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. SNAP is the nation's largest child nutrition program; more than 70% of SNAP benefits go to households with children. With **the SNAP Application Assistance Program**, food banks assist families in completing and submitting their SNAP application. Food banks either provide this support directly, with food bank staff working with families, or indirectly by training and working with local partners who complete the applications with families. In 2017, 152 Feeding America network

Members conducted SNAP assistance or outreach. Food banks participating in SNAP Application Assistance can also participate in digital SNAP outreach and referral generation through Feeding America's **Google SNAP (GSNAP)** initiative. Google SNAP (GSNAP) is an online SNAP referral program that connects those who are looking for SNAP information online to food banks in their area conducting benefits outreach and application assistance using paid search advertising. On [HungerNet](#) you will find tools, research, best practices, and more information about Google SNAP to help you expand and improve your SNAP Application Assistance program.

WEEKENDS AND VACATIONS



The **BackPack Program's** mission is to help alleviate child hunger in America by providing children in need with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends and school vacations. The program provides backpacks or other carriers filled with food that is child-friendly, non-perishable and easily consumed. Backpacks are discreetly distributed to children on the last day before the weekend or holiday vacation for use by children and their families. Food banks that operate the Backpack Program often partner with schools or other community organizations to distribute packs.

SUMMER

Feeding America does not offer a specific program model for targeting children during summer months. However, we recognize the importance of providing nutritious meals and snacks when other resources are not available to children and their families. We support food banks in leveraging all of the Feeding America program models to target children during the summer. Congregate meal programs that operate during summer months, like Kids Cafes, are typically reimbursed through the USDA's **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**, a federal nutrition program that was instituted to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. SFSP is the single largest federal resource available for local sponsors, such as Feeding America network members, that want to provide nutritious food served to children during the summer. Food banks that want to partake in SFSP can do so in a variety of ways such as becoming a sponsor, vendor or even doing outreach (online and offline).



History of Feeding America's Child Hunger Programs

KID'S CAFE

The Kids Cafe program traces its origins to Savannah, Georgia in 1989, when two young brothers were discovered late one night in the kitchen of their housing project's community center. In response to this glaring example of child hunger, the Second Harvest Food Bank of Coastal Georgia started the first Kids Cafe. In 1993, Feeding America launched the national Kids Cafe Program.

SCHOOL PANTRY PROGRAM

In 2003, the San Francisco Food Bank established the Healthy Children Pantry Program to provide critical nourishment to children of low-income families. In 2010, the School Pantry Program became a national program of Feeding America.

BACKPACK PROGRAM

Feeding America's National Council approved the BackPack Program as an official national program of the Network in July 2006. To date, the national office has supported program expansion through national donor solicitation, training and program resources, and the addition of dedicated staff to the national office. Currently over 130 Members and Partner Distribution Organizations were operating BackPack Programs in 41 states and Washington, D.C.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Keep in mind the various time periods Feeding America's programs aim to cover and remember to look at the bigger picture of hunger in your community beyond your food bank. Just because your community operates programs that feed children during one time period does not mean that there are not gaps in another. As you move forward, remember the various time periods during which children in need may not have access to food and consider how developing or expanding programs during these times could help fill the gap.

Federal Programs for Child Hunger

The Child and Adult Care Food Program

INTRODUCTION

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal nutrition program that provides reimbursements for nutritious food served in a wide range of venues, including childcare centers, day care homes, adult day care centers and afterschool programs. Although CACFP provides reimbursements for many age groups in many settings, here we will focus solely on how CACFP provides federal reimbursements for foods served to children in afterschool programs.

Feeding America is strongly committed to improving access to nutritious food during after school hours and developing new resources to help network members feed more children during this time period. Feeding America continues to increase its outreach efforts and provide support to network members working to feed children.

This section will provide you with an introduction and overview of the core federal rules for CACFP, but States vary in their program guidelines. Thus, it is important to consult with your State agency and/or regional USDA office early in your planning to find out more about your own State's policies. All sponsors receive training from their State agency before starting the program to learn how to plan, operate, and monitor a successful food service program. It is strongly recommended that food banks interested in sponsoring consult with their [State agency](#).

HIGHLIGHTS OF CACFP FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Reimbursements support the **financial sustainability** of afterschool programs.
- The nutritious food served can **attract more children** to afterschool programs.
- The food provided gives children the energy they need to **fully benefit from the educational and enrichment activities** offered at afterschool programs.
- The nutritious food served **helps children learn** to eat a wide variety of foods as part of a balanced diet.
- CACFP serves as an opportunity for sponsors to **engage with the community** and leverage already current activities that are taking place instead of reinventing the wheel.
- Leverages **relationship building and trust** between sponsors and community

HISTORY

Over the past four decades, the CACFP has expanded its reach and evolved into the program that it is today.

- Created in 1975, the program was originally called the Child Care Food Program with the intention of serving food to young children in childcare settings.
- In 1987, the program was amended by Older Americans Act to also serve food to certain functionally impaired adults.
- Two years later the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 1989 officially changed to the programs' name the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- In 1998, the CACFP was expanded again through the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act to provide federal reimbursement for snacks provided to children through age 18 years in "At-Risk" afterschool programs.
 - NOTE: An afterschool program is deemed "At-Risk" if at least 50 percent of children enrolled at the school are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Meals and snacks are also available to persons with disabilities, over age 18, who participate in school programs for people who are mentally or physically disabled
- The Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 created a pilot that allowed six states to receive federal reimbursement for suppers in addition to snacks served to children through the age of 18 in at-risk afterschool programs.
- Throughout the next ten years, through different pieces of legislation, the Agriculture Risk Protection pilot expanded to eight additional States for a total of 14 States (CT, DE, IL, MD, MI, MO, NV, NY, OR, PA, VT, WV, WI, DC).
- On December 13, 2010 President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (S. 3307) into law. This law expanded the pilot nationwide making all states qualified to serve suppers in addition to snacks to children in eligible afterschool programs. This change provides food banks with a stable and dependable federal funding source to serve meals to children in afterschool programs.

AT-RISK VERSUS OUTSIDE-SCHOOL-HOURS CARE

Under CACFP there are two different tracks for serving food at afterschool programs—the **Outside-School-Hours Care Program Track** and the **At-Risk Afterschool Program Track**. This toolkit is designed to support food banks in operating the At-Risk Afterschool Program track, but it will briefly touch upon the requirements for the Outside-School-Hours Care Program Track.

In general, there are basic requirements that any afterschool program must meet to participate in either CACFP program track. However, if you choose to operate the **Outside-School-Hours Care Program Track** please note that there are some program requirements that differ from the **At-Risk Afterschool Program Track** that are not included in this resource

Area Eligibility

An afterschool program located within the attendance boundary of a school where 50% or more of the students are enrolled to receive free or reduced-price school meals is eligible to participate

in CACFP. The program will receive the highest reimbursement rate for all children who eat at their program. If a program qualifies using this method, they are referred to as an **At-Risk** site and can use the **At-Risk Program Track** under CACFP. An At-Risk program does not need to individually verify each participant's family income.

Individual Household Eligibility

An afterschool program that is located in an area that does not meet the threshold for area eligibility can qualify for the CACFP by establishing eligibility of the individual participants. An afterschool program must collect household income information for each participant and will receive a varied reimbursement rate based on each participant's family income. If a program qualifies using this method, they can use the **Outside-School-Hours Care Program Track** under CACFP.

Program Track	Meal Type Served	State	Age limit of children served	Basis of income eligibility
At-Risk	Supper and Snack	All States	age 18 or under	Area Eligibility
Outside-School-Hours Care	Breakfast, Snack and Supper <i>(Lunch may be served on non-school days)</i>	All States	age 12 or under	Individual Household Eligibility

Different Ways You Can Be Involved in CACFP

There are many ways that a food bank can be involved in and support CACFP in their communities. The responsibilities for the different roles that a food bank could play in supporting CACFP are outlined below.

Administrative Sponsor

Most food banks are involved with CACFP by being an administrative sponsor of the At-Risk Program Track.

Administrative Sponsor Responsibilities

- Administrative and financial responsibility for program operations
- Acting as "fiscal intermediary" between the state agency and program sites
- Selecting eligible sites
- Attending your State agency's training
- Submitting the necessary application and renewal forms
- Providing adequate staff to manage and monitor the program
- Planning of meals and arranging for them to be prepared or delivered

- Monitoring the program sites and assessing compliance at least three times per year
- Establishing and maintaining procedures for recordkeeping
- Preparing reimbursement claims
- Training and technical assistance for sites
- Conducting site visits based on CACFP regulations
- Recruiting program volunteers for meal sites
- Working with program volunteers to develop a program activity plan
- Possibly working with vendors to order food items for program sites.

Site - At Risk Afterschool Programs

A site is a physical location that provides an afterschool program or activities to low income children. Eligible sites are afterschool programs serving low-income children or located in a low-income area that offer regular education or enrichment activities. Such sites may be located, but are not limited to, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, churches, community centers, and low-income housing complexes.

Site Responsibilities

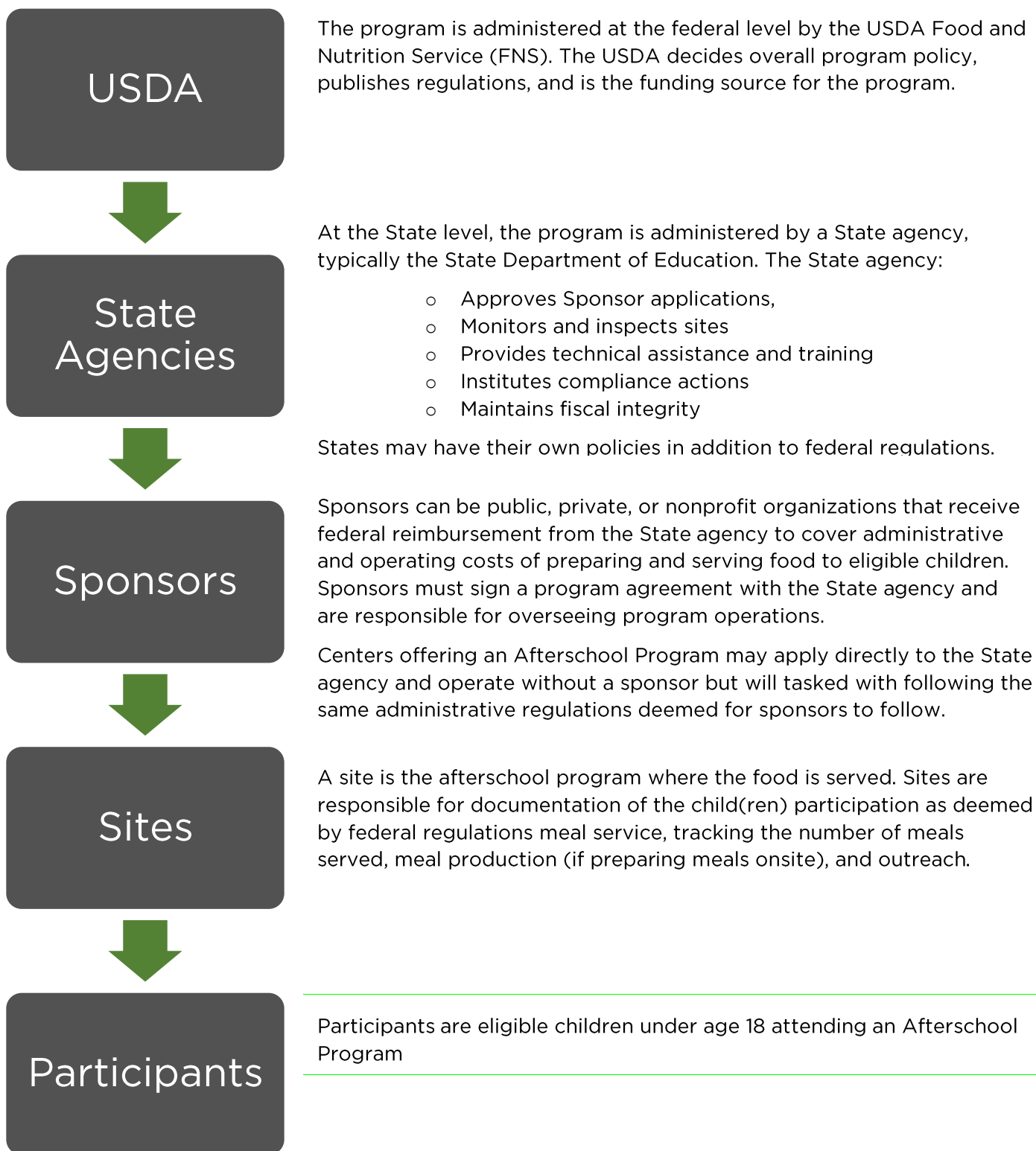
- Serving the food that meets CACFP meal pattern requirements
- Proper sanitation in storage, preparation and serving of food according to State and local health standards
- Maintaining adequate facilities available to store and hold food
- Recording and filing daily menus by date, daily meals served and attendance sheets
- Holding valid licenses as applicable by State, and posting on wall e.g. fire inspection and health inspection
- Posting of the USDA “Justice for All” poster on the wall at all times of CACFP meal service
- Collecting and submitting monthly reimbursement information to Sponsor within deadlines
- Working with volunteer coordinators to inform families of enrolled children of their Program rights and responsibilities

Vendor

If you have a community kitchen or a production kitchen at your food bank you can fulfill both administrative and operational (meal service) roles. Alternatively, you may work with another organization that is serving as the administrative Sponsor and bid to become the meal vendor.

Vendors are paid by the CACFP Sponsor to provide meals to program sites. Food banks that take on this role only need to invoice the Sponsor for food costs and are not required to fill out additional reimbursement paperwork required by the State Agency.

CACFP Administration Structure



Resources

[USDA CACFP Website](#)

[State Agency Contact List](#)

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Children age 18 and younger may receive free meals and snacks through SFSP. Meals and snacks are also available to persons with disabilities, over age 18, who participate in school programs for people who are mentally or physically disabled. Free meals must meet federal nutrition guidelines.

SFSP operates at non-profit organizations, like YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs, that receive State agency approval to operate the program from May through September. SFSP may also provide meals during vacation breaks for schools that operate year-round. Similarly to CACFP, the USDA administers SFSP federally, while State agencies are responsible for state-level administration.

WHO CAN RECEIVE FREE MEALS?

- A participant from a family which meets the income standards for free school meals, or
- A foster child
- A child who is automatically eligible for free meals by virtue of SNAP, FDPIR, or TANF benefits
- A child who is a Head Start participant
- A child who is receiving temporary housing and meal services from an approved emergency shelter
- A child participating in an approved at-risk afterschool care program
- An adult participant who is automatically eligible for free meals by virtue of SNAP or FDPIR benefits
- An adult who is an SSI or Medicaid participant
- A chronically impaired disabled persons 18 years of age or older

SFSP Site Eligibility		
Open Sites	Restricted Open Sites	Closed Enrolled Sites
<p>Location where 50 % or more of resident children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and meals are available first-come, first-serve.</p> <p>All children must be permitted access to meal service and information about the site must be publicized</p>	<p>An open site that must restrict attendance for reasons of space, security, safety or control</p> <p>The sponsors must publicize the site as serving on a first-come, first-serve basis with the necessary limitations</p>	<p>These sites serve needy children living in a “pocket of poverty” who are enrolled and transported to a congregate meal site in an open site area.</p> <p>Eligibility for enrollment must be established by individual income eligibility household application or area eligibility.</p>

Resources

- [USDA-FNS Summer Food Service Program Website](#)
- [USDA-FNS Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) Fact Sheets](#)
- [USDA-FNS Summer Meals Toolkit](#)
- [FRAC: 2019 Summer Nutrition Status Report](#)
- [State Agency Contact List](#)
- [Feeding America Summer Feeding HungerNet Page](#)
- [Summer Feeding Learning Yammer Community](#)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly the Food Stamp Program) is the cornerstone of the federal food safety net, which provides supplemental food benefits to millions of people, half of whom are children. SNAP helps low-income families buy the food they need for good health. It also can greatly benefit the local economy. Each dollar of SNAP benefits can be spent at local grocers. These SNAP dollars act the same as real dollars and allow the grocer to pay for staff, utilities, logistics and more. It is estimated that every \$5 of SNAP benefits spent generates \$9 in economic activity as dollars make their way up through the food chain all the way to growers and food processors.

SNAP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Gross Monthly Income is at or below 130% of the federal poverty line
 - E.g. for a family of three in 2019, the poverty line is \$1,732/month or \$27,000/year
- Net income is at or below the federal poverty line
- Assets must fall below \$2,250 for a family without a member who is elderly or has a disability and \$3,500 with such a member

While SNAP benefits are applied for at the individual level, food banks can support their clients by providing SNAP outreach and application assistance. Nearly half of all SNAP recipients are children and 1 in 4 US children benefit from SNAP. SNAP application assistance can greatly support child hunger programs in ensuring children have access to healthy foods. Additionally, children who participate in SNAP are automatically enrolled into free & reduced-priced meals at school.

Feeding America strongly encourages participation in and incorporation of this federal reimbursement program in all child hunger program models. Feeding America will continue to provide technical assistance and support to Participants around these federal nutrition assistance programs.

**adapted from [CBPP.org](https://www.cbpp.org)*



DIGITAL OUTREACH: GOOGLE SNAP

Google SNAP (GSNAP) is an online SNAP referral program that directly connects those who are looking for SNAP information online to food banks in their area conducting benefits outreach and application assistance.

GSNAP started in 2013 with two food banks. Today over 50 food banks participate, and the outreach has expanded beyond Google to other online platforms!

Have more questions about child nutrition federal program such as CACFP and SFSP? For a list of food bank operators, don't hesitate to reach out to Feeding America's Children and Families Team at ProgramsTeam@feedingamerica.org

Resources

[CBPP.org: SNAP basics](#)

[CBPP.org: A Quick Guide to SNAP Eligibility and Benefits](#)

[CBPP.org: SNAP Helps Millions of Children](#)

[HungerNet SNAP Application Assistance Toolkit](#)

[Feeding America SNAP Resource Center](#)

[USDA SNAP Outreach Materials](#)

Expectations and Objectives

Child Hunger Program Standards and Agreement

Feeding America supports network members and approved Partner Distribution Organizations (PDOs) in executing delivery models that meet the needs of specialized populations, such as children and seniors. Members or approved PDOs who wish to receive national office support must sign a program agreement and ensure that all standards are complied with.

The agreement covers all program models targeted toward specialized populations that are currently being supported through the national office.

Below is a summary of this agreement. The complete [Program Agreement and National Programs Standards](#) document is posted on HungerNet.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FEEDING AMERICA:

Feeding America shall offer the following services to all network members and approved Partner Distribution Organizations (“PDOs”), hereafter referred to as “Participant”, operating supported Programs:

Branding and Marketing

Feeding America developed and maintains logos (“The Marks”) for Participants to use in their local branding efforts. These Marks are provided as an optional resource for Participants in identifying the connection between local and national efforts. Feeding America will provide appropriate national marketing materials to Participants in electronic form at no cost.

Training

Feeding America will provide ongoing training to program staff through workshops at conferences, training manuals, webinars, new Program development resources, peer learning opportunities, and travel support as available through scholarships.

Technical Assistance

Feeding America will provide technical assistance to new and existing Programs through the consulting expertise of Feeding America staff.

Compliance and Monitoring

Feeding America will provide Participants with expectations and examples to remain compliant with Program Standards.

Data Collection, Best Practices and Benchmarks

Feeding America will publish annual internal reports on each of the Program models highlighting data collected from the Network Activity Report (NAR).

Funding

Feeding America will pursue funding opportunities and relationships with other funding organizations to develop Programs through Participant grants. Feeding America requires Members to have a program agreement on file ([Agreements filed Sep 2017 and before](#), [Agreements filed Oct 2017 and after](#)) when applying for grant opportunities associated with Program models.

Strategic Planning

Feeding America staff and the National Council (NAC) will continue to assess the needs of new and existing Programs and make recommendations for ways that Feeding America can strategically support on-the-ground Programs.

National Partnerships

Feeding America will pursue new and maintain existing partnerships to offer free and reduced-prices on applicable goods and services.

Communication

Feeding America will communicate directly with Participant staff in a timely manner. Information, curriculum and program experience is shared with the network as appropriate or when requested.

MEMBER FOOD BANKS AND APPROVED PDOS:

Participating member food banks and approved PDOs shall offer the following services to Feeding America and their program sites:

Branding and Marketing

Participant has the option to use marketing materials developed for the Programs by Feeding America. Other materials developed by the Participant or Participant's partners for their Program sites may be used as well.

Program Design

Participant will adhere to all Program standards identified within this document. By signing this Agreement, the Participant certifies that they are in compliance, and will remain in compliance with these standards. The Participant is responsible for ensuring compliance at the agency or site level.

Program Relations

Participant will have formal written documentation defining Program responsibilities between partners or agencies that operate aspects of the Programs. [Sample Program and Partner Agreements](#) are available on HungerNet.

Compliance and Monitoring

Participant will monitor programs in accordance with the standards within this Agreement as well as standards within the Member Contract and will maintain records to demonstrate compliance. Expectations are detailed in Section 6.

Data Collection, Best Practices and Benchmarks

Participant will provide Program data to Feeding America through the NAR and Quarterly Poundage Report (QPR), as appropriate. PDOs will provide child and senior program activity information through the PDO-specific section of their member's NAR and SNAP application assistance information directly to their member quarterly for their member's QPR.

Contact Information Maintenance

If the Participant begins a new Program model or discontinues the operation of the Program, the Participant shall provide notice within 30 days by submitting Participant Signature Section 12, also [available as a single page PDF](#), to Feeding America, and shall report accordingly through NAR and QPR data collection tools.

Funding

Participant will seek adequate funding to operate the Program according to the guidelines set forth in this document.

Communication

Participant's Program staff will communicate Program changes directly with Feeding America in a timely manner. Additionally, the Participant will share information, curriculum and Program experience with the network as appropriate or when requested.



Goals and Objectives

KID'S CAFE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mission

The mission of the Kids Cafe Program is to help solve child hunger in America by serving nutritious meals and snacks to children in safe, accessible sites, often in the afterschool setting and/or over the summer.

Objectives

1. Serve nutritious meals and snacks to children at-risk of hunger
2. Provide programs within easily accessible safe sites
3. Supplement the meal service with enrichment activities, when possible



Standards and Guidelines

A Kids Cafe must meet the following standards:

- An approved agency, host site or project must be in good standing with the Participant and comply with all applicable federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
- All meals and snacks must be offered free of charge to children. A Kids Cafe site may offer meals and/or snacks. Meals and snacks may be hot or cold.
- Food must be served to children a minimum of 15 separate times a year.
- A “meal” consists of 4 of the 5 food groups of the recommended USDA MyPlate (fruit, vegetable, grain, protein and dairy). A “snack” consists of at least 2 of the 5 food groups of the recommended USDA MyPlate.
- Staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children must pass a national background check.
- The adult to child ratio must meet state or county childcare licensing or CACFP standards at all times that the Kids Cafe program is in operation. If no applicable standards exist, the Kids Cafe must meet at minimum the ratio of 2 adults per 25 children.

SCHOOL PANTRY PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mission

The mission of the School Pantry Program is to help solve child hunger in America by providing nutritious food to children and their families in convenient, familiar and safe locations. School Pantries are typically located at a school but may also operate in locations such as a library, park or youth organization site. Sites may have a permanent set up or may operate through a mobile distribution rotation where food is brought to the site. Sites are consistently in the same location, have set distribution schedules, and offer ongoing food assistance services.

Program Objectives

1. Provide nutritious, healthy food to children at-risk of hunger for preparation and consumption at their place of residence.
2. Distribute food discreetly in easily accessible and safe environments.

Standards and Guidelines

A School Pantry program must meet the following standards:

- An approved agency, host site or project must be in good standing with the Participant and comply with all applicable federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
 - Note: If the Participant is operating the program at a host site, the host site may not be assessed any fees associated with the reception or distribution of donated product (e.g. handling fees, delivery or value-added processing).
- Food must be distributed free of charge.
- Food must be provided a minimum of once a month while the program is in operation.
- Distribution of Foods to Encourage should be emphasized. Participant is strongly recommended to follow the [Detailed Foods to Encourage](#) criteria when purchasing food for this Program.
- Staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children must pass a national background check.



BACKPACK PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mission

The mission of the BackPack Program is to help solve child hunger in America by providing nutritious and easy-to-prepare food to children to take home on weekends and school vacations when other resources are not available.

Objectives

1. Provide nutritious, healthy food to children at-risk of hunger for preparation and consumption at their place of residence.
2. Distribute food discreetly in easily accessible and safe environments.

Standards and Guidelines

A BackPack Program must meet the following standards:

- An approved agency, host site or project must be in good standing with the Participant and comply with all applicable federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
 - Note: If the Participant is operating the program at a host site, the host site may not be assessed any fees associated with the reception or distribution of donated product (e.g. handling fees, delivery or value-added processing).
- Food must be distributed free of charge.
- Packs of food must be provided a minimum of once a month while the program is in operation.
- Distribution of Foods to Encourage should be emphasized. Participant is strongly recommended to follow the [Detailed Foods to Encourage](#) criteria when purchasing food for this Program.
- Staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children must pass a national background check.

SNAP APPLICATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Mission

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the federal government's first line of defense against food insecurity in the United States, provides benefits to enable low-income households to purchase the food they need to feed their families. The mission of the Feeding America SNAP Application Assistance program is to help solve hunger in America by expanding and maintaining SNAP access for eligible individuals and families.

Objectives

1. Increase access to meals by assisting eligible individuals and families in completing and recertifying SNAP benefit applications.
2. Increase SNAP participation among eligible client households, with emphasis on seniors, families with children, and other vulnerable populations.
3. Provide confidential, secure assistance in easily accessible and safe environments.

Standards

- Participant must comply with all applicable federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
 - Program coordinators must remain informed of state SNAP eligibility rules.
 - Assistance must result in submitted applications.
 - Participant must have a consistent defined process for outreach and application assistance for each of the methods that the Program engages (e.g. in person, electronic application, paper application, phone assistance, etc.).
 - Process must include a follow-up component to determine the status of applications. Application determinations typically include aggregate or sample knowledge of applications approved, applications denied, reasons for denial, and benefit amount from approvals.
 - Note: Participants in some states might receive this data automatically, others might follow-up by calling a sample of clients.
 - Data and documentation collected through the process must be secure, including but not limited to encrypted computer software for electronic transmission of information (if applicable) and established policies and procedures related to such.
 - If the Participant is training other organizations to provide application assistance, the organization must remain in good standing with the Participant and comply with all applicable federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
- Additionally:
- Participant must provide annual training or training on major SNAP application changes for the organization.
 - Participant must collect program data from the organization.
 - Participant must provide ongoing technical assistance to the organization.
 - Participant must have a process for periodic monitoring of the organization and addressing areas of concern.



Child Hunger Program Logos

The Feeding America child hunger program Logos were created as a resource for members to help identify the connection between local programs and national efforts. All permissions and parameters for use of the logos shall be in accordance with [Appendix C of the Member Contract](#).

If the Feeding America Participant has a Program Partner, the Feeding America Participant has the responsibility to ensure that the Program Partner fully complies with the permissions and parameters of the Member Contract.



[Program Logos](#): to find program logos, click on "Logos" then "Program Logos"

Program Name	Resource
BackPack Program	BackPack Program HungerNet Section
	BackPack Resource Documents
Kids Cafe	Kids Cafe HungerNet Section
	Kids Cafe Resource Documents
CACFP	USDA At-Risk Afterschool Meal Handbook
	USDA CACFP Website
School Pantry Program	School Pantry Program HungerNet Section
	School Pantry Resource Documents
Summer Food Program	Summer Food Program HungerNet Section
	Summer Food Program Resource Documents
	USDA Summer Food Service Guides
SNAP Application Assistance	SNAP Application Assistance Resource Library
	SNAP Digital Outreach HungerNet Section
Related Resources	Background Check Vendors



Section 2

Community Needs Assessment

In this section you will find information on:

- Purpose and Benefits
- **Community Needs Assessment Research plan**
 - Setting Objectives
 - Outlining Strategies
 - Identifying Resources
 - Managing Time
 - Sample Timeline
 - Talking with Internal Stakeholders
- **Analyze Existing Data**
 - Introduction to Analyzing Existing Data
 - Steps for Analyzing Existing Data
 - Defining Geography Population
 - Finding Data
 - Interpreting Data
 - Mapping Data
- **Collecting New Data**
 - Introduction to Collecting New Data
 - Identifying Stakeholders
 - Methods of Collecting Data
- **Presenting Findings**
 - Developing a Final product
 - Translating the data into Recommendations
 - Reviewing the Findings
 - Presenting Final Findings and Recommendations to Food Bank Decision-Makers
 - Getting Organized: Preparing for your Presentation
 - After the Presentation

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Purpose of Community Needs Assessment

The purpose of the community needs assessment is to identify gaps in child feeding programs in your local community. Having a clear understanding of the existing gaps will help you avoid duplication of efforts and help you direct resources to areas that are underserved when implementing child feeding programs.

While there isn't a formula for conducting a community needs assessment, the general steps outlined below are a framework for how to go about your community needs assessment. This section of this toolkit provides guidance on how to carry out each of the following steps.

1. Develop a research plan
2. Analyze data to identify need
3. Analyze data to assess the reach of current interventions
4. Compare the identified areas of need with current interventions to identify gaps
5. Conduct your own research through surveys, focus groups and/or interviews to collect information that will help you understand the cause of the gaps
6. Develop recommendations on how to fill the gaps

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE OF COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Goal

Conduct a community needs assessment that identifies the prevalence of child hunger and gaps in child feeding programs in the food bank's service area.

Objective

Produce recommendations, supported by quantitative and qualitative research, that identify which programs could be implemented and/or expanded and determine where program sites are needed to address the identified gaps.

BENEFITS OF CONDUCTING A CNA

- Utilize information from a variety of sources, including federal program participation data and school data, information on current services being offered, in addition to collecting your own quantitative and qualitative data to identify needs
- Work to strengthen or build new relationships with community stakeholders such as school personnel, community agency leaders and target client populations
- Work with your food bank to identify opportunities based on information collected, and select one or more program models that best fits the community's needs to expand or implement

Community Needs Assessment Research Plan

Introduction to Developing a Research Plan

Developing a research plan is the first step in conducting a successful community needs assessment. Additionally, it is imperative that during this process you establish goals and objectives for the project.

This section provides steps to take and suggested questions to ask when creating a research plan. Adapt the questions and steps as necessary to build a unique action plan that will contribute to the successful execution of a needs assessment in your community.

Creating a Research Plan

While there are many different resources that provide tools and tips on how to create a research plan, there are several commonalities among the various approaches.

Defining clear and specific objectives and strategies upfront, identifying available resources and managing your time well are key pieces to conducting a successful community needs assessment.

SETTING OBJECTIVES

The first thing you will want to do is set concrete objectives for your community needs assessment. An objective is a long-range aim that is be specific and realistic. You can have multiple goals for your assessment, but each objective will require a different set of strategies.

Guiding questions for setting objectives

- What do you want to learn from your community needs assessment?
- What do you hope to achieve with your community needs assessment?
- Why are you doing this community needs assessment?

Example Goals

1. To identify the gaps in child feeding programs for children between the ages of 5-18 years old during the summer for every county in our service area.
2. Identify potential partners for the expansion of child feeding programs during the summer and after school in counties that have gaps in child feeding programs.

OUTLINING STRATEGIES

Next you will want to outline strategies. A strategy is a specific deliverable you need to accomplish to reach your objective. You can have multiple strategies to meet a stated objective. If you have multiple objectives, you will need to outline strategies to meet each objective.

Guiding questions for defining strategies

- What are the steps that you need to take to reach your goal?

- What information and resources do you already have?
- What information do you need to reach your goal?
- How will you examine that information?
- How can you utilize these results?

Example Strategies

1. To meet example objective number 1, I will:
 - a. Compare the number of children accessing free or reduced-priced lunch to the number of children participating in the summer food program for each county in our food bank service area.
 - b. Create a map that shows the number of summer food sites in comparison to the rate of children living below a 185% of poverty in each county in our food bank service area.
2. To meet example objective number 2, I will:
 - a. Conduct a survey of afterschool programs and summer programs to identify any need for feeding programs and barriers to participation.

IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

Next you identify what resources you will need to implement your strategies.

Guiding questions for identifying resources

- What data sources am I going to use?
- Where am I going to obtain my data from?
- If I am conducting my own research through a survey or focus groups, what resources will I need to accomplish these tasks?
- What stakeholders do I need to bring into the process?

EXAMPLE DATA STRATEGIES

- Assess existing data like [Map the Meal Gap \(MMG\)](#) and school meals data
- Discover new data through focus groups, surveys, interviews
- Analyze findings in maps and draw conclusions from new data

MANAGING TIME

After you have outlined your objectives and strategies, and identified what resources you will need, the next step is to map out a timeline. It is important to set deadlines for each action step in the process.

The work you complete for the community needs assessment will lay a foundation on which you will develop and execute a plan of action to implement and/or expand programs that increase children’s access to nutritious meals. Thus, time management is key.

Project Timeline

The length of time to complete a community needs assessment will depend on the level of local research available, the scope of the assessment and the amount of staff time available to work on the assessment. The timeframe will vary, but below is an example of a six-month timeline for completing your community needs assessment. Keep in mind that this is just a framework; adapt the timeline as necessary.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Month 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set expectations with internal stakeholders about goals and expectations of the community needs assessment• Interview internal stakeholders about existing programs and available resources• Develop a research plan• Begin searching for and identifying existing data sources |
| Month 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue searching for and identify existing data sources• Analyze existing data and begin to identify gaps in the research and gaps in child feeding programs• Identify data collection methods that you would like to use when collecting data in the field• Research organizations and people you want to observe/survey/interview/invite to participate in a focus group• Update research plan |
| Month 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine data collection methods (e.g. observation, survey, interview, focus groups)• Select organizations and people you want to observe/survey/interview/invite to participate in a focus group• Send out invites/meeting requests• Develop data collection tools (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, etc.)• Update research plan |
| Month 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct research in the field (e.g. distribute surveys, conduct interviews, facilitate focus groups) |
| Month 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finish collecting data in the field• Analyze data collected in the field (e.g. analyze survey responses, transcribe interviews and focus groups, identify themes, etc.)• Begin to develop recommendations |
| Month 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalize recommendations• Present to internal stakeholders |
-

Internal stakeholders are integral to the success of child feeding programs and thus are important to include in the community needs assessment process. Internal stakeholders include your food bank's leadership, but also all of the staff that touch the program in some way.

A good starting point is to sit down with internal stakeholders at your food bank to discuss the scope and goals of the community needs assessment and Identifying all parties' expectations. Having weekly or bi-weekly meetings with internal stakeholders will help ensure that you are on the right track.

Listed below are a collection of questions you could use when talking with internal stakeholders at your food bank. This section of the toolkit was modified from the one that was developed for the Feeding America's Child Hunger Corps. Therefore, depending on your role at the food bank, some questions listed below may not be relevant for your interviews. Please select questions to use at your discretion and feel free to add to the list.

Key questions

- What is our food bank's strategy for addressing child hunger?
- What are your expectations for the community needs assessment?
- What insights do you hope to gain from the community needs assessment?

If your food bank is currently operating child hunger programs

- What programs does the food bank currently operate?
- How long have you been operating these programs?
- Why did you start operating these particular programs?
- Is food for programs donated or purchased?
- Where are programs located? What communities do they serve?
- How many children and meals/snacks do your programs serve?
- How do you record and document participation data for your programs?
- Do you have waiting lists for any of your programs?
- How do you currently identify sites?
- Do you partner with other organizations to implement your programs? If so, who?
- Are there any new partnerships you want to build or relationships you would like to strengthen?
- How do you fund your programs? Do you receive any federal reimbursements through CACFP or SFSP?
- Are there resources available to expand existing programs and/or start new programs (i.e. food, funds, staff, volunteers)?
- Do you utilize volunteers to run your programs?
- What challenges have you encountered with operating child hunger programs?
- Have you been able to do anything to overcome any of these challenges?
- Can you describe any successes or best practices?
- Have you done any evaluations of your programs?
- Are there parts of our service area that are underserved or not served at all by current child programs?

- Are there particular areas to which you would like to expand existing programs?
- Are there any new child hunger programs that the food bank would like to start operating?

If your food bank is not operating any child hunger programs

- Why is the food bank not currently operating child hunger programs?
- What have been some barriers to operating child hunger programs?
- Is the food bank operating other programs (e.g. mobile pantry, SNAP outreach, etc.)? What has been successful or has proven challenging with operating these programs?
- Why is starting child hunger programs important to the food bank?
- Is there a particular program you would like to start or a time period on which you want to focus? Why have you identified this focus?
- Are there resources available to contribute towards the development and implementation of child hunger programs (i.e. food, funds, staff, volunteers)?
- Who does the food bank currently partner with to distribute emergency food? Are there any new partnerships you want to build or relationships you would like to strengthen when starting new programs?
- Is the food bank meeting the needs of children through other services (i.e. emergency food pantries)?

Additional questions

- Have you ever done (or are you aware of) a community needs assessment, or other assessments of need for child programs in the community?
- What do you see as the biggest gaps in addressing childhood hunger in the community?
- Are you aware of any time periods during which children are not accessing feeding programs?
- Do you see any other major gaps in services to children?
- Does the food bank have any data that might be helpful with the community needs assessment (e.g. data from the state on child nutrition programs or food bank data documenting their services)?
- Who else at the food bank would be impacted by a decision to implement or expand programs (i.e. finance, warehouse etc.)?
- Do you recommend talking to other staff at the food bank to get their perspective about child programs and expectations for a community needs assessment?
- Are there other organizations in your community currently sponsoring SFSP or CACFP? If so, do you know what percentage of eligible children they are serving?

TIP: GETTING STARTED

Ask your food bank staff to provide you with:

1. Food bank brochures
2. Pamphlets, fact sheets, etc. about food bank's existing programs
3. List of current child hunger program partner organizations
4. Local and state Hunger Study reports
5. Latest food bank research reports

Analyze Existing Data

Introduction to Analyzing Existing Data

After developing a research plan to guide your community needs assessment, the next step is to begin looking at the hard data. Analyzing the existing data will help you begin to understand the local need, the location and impact of existing programs and service gaps. Additionally, in painting a local picture, it is helpful to have national or state level information to set context for your research.

By comparing the level of need to existing program interventions you will get a good picture of what is going on in your local community and be able to begin pinpointing the gaps in service. This process will also allow you to understand what data has already been collected and help direct where to focus your energy when it comes to collecting data in the field.

There is a great deal of existing national and local data on food insecurity and poverty. However, often times it is hard to locate the available research and determine what the facts and figures mean. This section is designed to provide you with an overview of national studies that examine the prevalence of hunger in America, tools on how to interpret the data and suggestions on where to begin your research.

There are several broad steps to take when examining data sources for your community needs assessment.

First, you need to clearly define the geographic scope and population characteristics of the data you want to analyze because this will influence the data sets you use to define need and program interventions.

Next you will need to measure the level of need for the geographic region that you have chosen.

Then you map out where existing child feeding programs are operating in that area. **By comparing these two pieces of information you will begin to identify where gaps exist.**

Steps for Analyzing Existing Data

DEFINING GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The geographic scope of your community needs assessment will impact the data sets that you use when identifying the need and examining the reach of current child feeding programs. When you talk to project stakeholders make sure to clarify the geographic region you will be looking at during the assessment and at what level or levels you will be examining data (i.e. county, city, town, food bank service area, or school district).

DEFINING POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

When you start the community needs assessment it is important to define the population that you will be looking at during this process. Examining the population of children through the lens of different characteristics may reveal additional information that just looking at the group as a whole may obscure.

For example, while 50% of children may be accessing afterschool programs, looking at only children who are food insecure or breaking out by race may reveal disproportionately lower participation rates. Below is a list of different characteristics that are commonly looked at when doing needs assessments on childhood hunger. However, use your judgment based on the specific needs and makeup of your community.

Common population & program participation characteristics to consider”

- Food insecurity rates
- Race, ethnicity or other demographic data
- Number and percentage of children receiving free and reduced-priced school meals
- Poverty information, broken out by “bands”

Please reference the chart below to get a sense of the income levels that determine the percent of poverty measurement.

2019 Federal Poverty Guidelines			
Persons in family/household	48 Contiguous States and DC	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$12,490	\$15,600	\$14,380
2	\$16,910	\$21,130	\$19,460
3	\$21,330	\$26,660	\$24,540
4	\$25,750	\$32,190	\$29,620
5	\$30,170	\$37,720	\$34,700
6	\$34,590	\$43,250	\$39,780
7	\$39,010	\$48,780	\$44,860
8	\$43,430	\$54,310	\$49,940
For each additional person add:	\$4,420	\$5,530	\$5,080

Source: Federal Register, Vol. 84, No. 22, February 1, 2019, pp. 1167-1168

Food Insecurity Rates

Food insecurity rates for the local community give you one picture of the number of individuals struggling to put food on the table. The number of food insecure children is an indicator of need. It will help you easily identify geographic areas where children do not have enough access to adequate nutrition and therefore may need program interventions.

USDA's revised labels describe ranges of food security:

	Description of conditions in the household
High food security	No reported indications of food-access problems or limitations
Marginal food security	One or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake
Low food security	Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake
Very low food security	Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake

Race, Ethnicity, Age and other Demographic Characteristics

Understanding the demographic characteristics of the population at which you are looking will allow you to gain a sense of the characteristics of the community members in need and served by current program interventions. You can identify if there are particular segments of the child population that are not being reached by current program interventions.

For example, overall you could be serving 80% of food insecure children with your programs, but if you take a closer look at age you find that the food bank's programs are reaching 90% of food insecure children above the age of 5 and only 10% of food insecure children that are below the age of 5. This data tells you that your program interventions are not reaching younger children, and to develop a recommendation around this gap, you should further investigate with your own data collection why this age group is not being reached.

Participation in Free and Reduced-Price School Meals

The percent of children receiving free and reduced-price meals is an eligibility trigger for many federal child nutrition programs. Afterschool and summer programs are eligible to participate as open sites in CACFP and SFSP if they are located in the attendance area of an elementary, middle, or high school in which at least 50% of the enrolled children are certified eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Therefore, knowing these schools will allow you to identify specific areas where there are higher concentrations of children in need and programs like SFSP and CACFP will be easier to operate. School eligibility percentages for participation are available at a school level, district, or state level.

Family's Income Level

A family's income level significantly impacts whether or not they are able to put nutritious food on the table. For families in need of food assistance, their income level determines the federal nutrition programs for which their children are eligible.

Children living in households with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty line

These children are eligible for free meals at school and their families may be eligible to receive SNAP. However, just because they are eligible does not mean that they are actually receiving these federal benefits. In 2016, approximately 85% of individuals eligible for SNAP participated in the program.

Additionally, children from families that receive SNAP benefits automatically qualify for free school meals.

Including SNAP assistance in your program may be useful. Visit the SNAP Application Assistance page on [HungerNet](#) for more resources

Children living in households with incomes between 130% and 185% percent of the federal poverty line

These children are eligible for reduced-price school meals, but that does not mean that they are participating. Additionally, the number of children living below 185% as recorded by the Census is used as an eligibility trigger for the Summer Food Service Program.

Children living below other measurements of the poverty line

There may be other income bands that you might want to analyze in your community assessment. For example, if you are using data from the American Community Survey then you could use either 150% or 125% of the federal poverty line because those are the only income bands that the ACS provides.



Program Information

Information about program site locations and participation rates in current federal and charitable child feeding programs helps you assess the gaps in program interventions. For example, by looking at the number and types of programs offered in the community, you may realize that there is a certain area in your food bank's service area that does not currently offer any child hunger programs. If this area also happens to be an area of high need make note of it, because when it comes time to collect your own data you should further investigate why this is and if there are barriers to implementing programs in this area.

Consider:

- Ages of children being served
- Number and type of programs offered
- Participation rates in out of school time programs (Summer, Afterschool, Weekends)

DATA SOURCES THAT SHOW THE NEED

There are many different data sources that can be used as an indicator of childhood hunger in a community. Again, the data sources you are able to use will depend on the geographic scope and the particular population you are examining. Below are some examples of data sources you may want to utilize.

Poverty Data

- [Feeding America](#)—In 2014, Feeding America released *Hunger in America 2014*, a study that explores who is seeking food assistance, including measures of household income.
- [The Census](#)—The last Census was published in 2010. While it is dated, it does provide information about multiple income bands and allows you to compare them with different household characteristics.
- [American Community Survey](#)—The American Community Survey (ACS) is conducted annually as a supplement to the Census. It provides greater detail about local demographic, economic, social, and housing characteristics to show how communities change.

Food Insecurity Data

- Feeding America—Feeding America releases the updated [Map the Meal Gap](#) numbers annually. This study focuses on county level food insecurity numbers for the entire population as well as specifically for children.

SNAP Participation Data

- USDA—The Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households. [This source](#) has a lot of data about families with children and children on SNAP.

School Meals Data

- State agency
 - The State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), usually the Department of Education, collects and keeps records of the number of

children receiving free and reduced-price meals in each school that operates the NSLP. Knowing the number of children that rely on free or reduced-price meals during the week provides a good indicator of how many children may need food assistance when they are not at school. Child nutrition programs, such as SFSP and CACFP, are eligible to operate as open sites with reduced administrative burden in areas that have 50% or more of their students enrolled in free or reduced-price meals. Typically, the State agency will publish an annual list of schools in the state that have more than 50% of their students in the free and reduced-price meal program. However, this varies from state to state, so we recommend speaking with your supervisor about how to obtain this data from the State. Find your state agency contact [here](#).

Local Surveys and Research Projects

- Community-based organizations in the area may have conducted research that would be of value to examine while conducting your assessment. Contact organizations in the local area that provide services to children and/or families in need to inquire about surveys or research studies that have been completed.
- Colleges and universities in the area can be a resource as you begin to examine data sets and collect your own data. Check with local schools to see what research has been done on food security in your community or if there are any students or professors interested in the topic of food security, social service programs, poverty and/or child welfare.

FINDING DATA ON CURRENT INTERVENTION

When analyzing the data on current interventions there are many different things to consider. You should look at the reach of your food bank's current child programs as well as child feeding programs that other community partners operate. You will also want to think about service in terms of different time periods. While children may be adequately served in one time period, there may be gaps in others.

Consider:

- The food bank's current child programs, both federal and charitable
 - Locations, participation numbers, meal type served (e.g. snack, supper, lunch, food package) and frequency of service. Furthermore, it is important to look at where kids come from who are participating at sites to assess the geographic reach of program sites.
- Federal child nutrition programs operated by other organizations—this data is often housed by the State agency that administers the programs. Look on the state agency's website to see if it has been published, if it is not talk, to your supervisor about how to obtain this data.
- Programs serving children that are not connected to the food bank. Common programs include:

❖ 21st Century Community Learning Centers

This federal program provides grants for the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for

children who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. These programs can operate in either the summer or afterschool and usually are in an area where 50% or more of the children receive free or reduced-price meals. Contact your [State Department of Education](#) to get a list of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers in your area. Some of these programs may be already utilizing SFSP, CACFP or NSLP, however this is not always the case.

❖ **Afterschool Alliance**

The Afterschool Alliance is an *alliance* of public, private and nonprofit groups committed to raising awareness and expanding resources for *afterschool* programs. Most states have a statewide organization affiliated with the alliance. These organizations could be a good resource to discuss the needs of children when they are not in school. They also might maintain a list of all the afterschool programs in your state. Find data and a state contact [here](#).

❖ **Boys and Girls Club of America**

The natural partnership between the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Feeding America offers a solid relationship for building a Kids Cafe or summer site - both organizations work together to promote a safe, secure and nourishing environment for kids to learn and grow in health. Boys & Girls Clubs across the country offer comprehensive after school programming for children and many clubs support Kids Cafe programs. Find the club in your community [here](#).

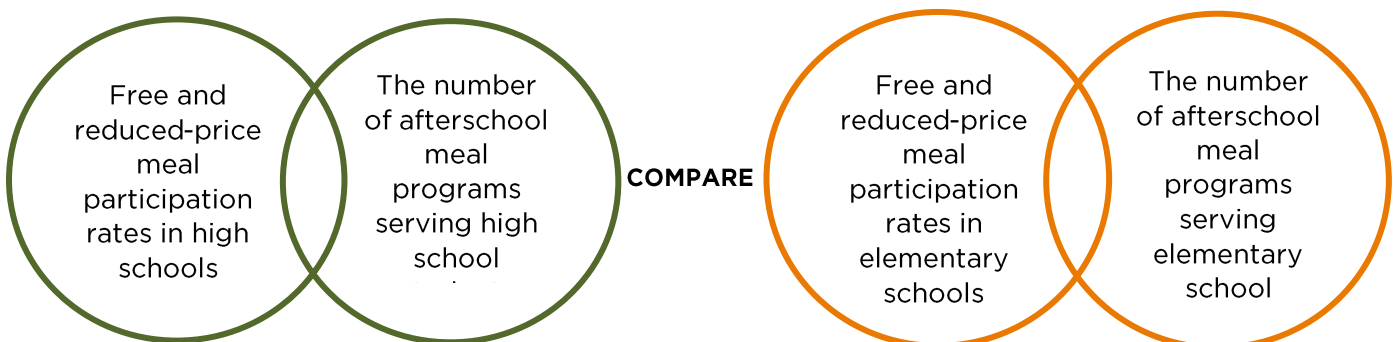
❖ **YMCA**

The mission of the YMCA is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all. YMCAs across the country provide services for children. Find the Ys in your area [here](#).

INTERPRETING THE DATA

To find the gaps in nutrition services to children you will have to compare some measure of the current need in your area to the existing interventions. By comparing information, you will be able to assess how well the community is serving children in need during out of school time periods.

Examine which subgroups of children are not served by current programs looking at age and other demographics. Ex:



Assess where current programs are located in relation to need and begin to identify areas in which programs could be started.

LOCATIONS OF CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

COMPARE TO

AREAS WHERE 50% OR MORE OF THE CHILDREN ARE CERTIFIED TO RECEIVE FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL LUNCH

Identify new opportunities for program sites you can look at afterschool and summer programs in area eligible locations* that are *not* currently utilizing federal child feeding programs.

COMPARE

Current afterschool Programs	Programs Utilizing SFSP and CACFP
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Some of these programs may be buying food out of their own program budget when they are eligible for federal funds, so this would be an important question to investigate when conducting your own research.

**Area eligibility is the attendance area of an elementary, middle, or high school in which at least 50% of the enrolled children are certified eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.*

TIP

Use Excel, statistical software, maps, charts, tables and graphs to analyze and display the data. Visualization of the need and the location of existing interventions will help you begin to develop recommendations about which programs could be expanded and/or implemented to address the gaps(s) in services and will help other people easily understand your findings.

MAPPING THE DATA

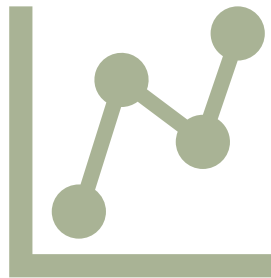
There are different tools that you can use to compare data sets. Utilizing mapping software is one tool. For example, you could identify county level child food insecurity and/or child poverty numbers (that could be 100%, 130%, 125%, 150% or 185% of the Federal Poverty Line [FPL]) on a map, and then plot the food bank's current child programs to identify the areas where this a high number of food insecure children that they are not currently reaching. If you can obtain a list of all of the schools that are area eligible and then compare that to the location of CACFP and SFSP sites you can identify areas for potential program expansion.

Resources

[Map the Meal Gap](#)

[Tufts University's "Exploring Food Production, Access, Health, and Equity with GIS"](#)

[The USDA's Economic Research Service Food Environment Atlas](#)



Collecting New Data

Introduction to Collecting Data

Once existing data has been analyzed you should have a good understanding of the extent of child hunger in your community. The next phase of your community needs assessment involves collecting data to help you to paint a holistic picture of the scope of child hunger and the gaps in program interventions in your community.

Before going out into the field it is absolutely critical that you have a research question developed that you plan to investigate. Research for research's sake is never a valuable use of time.

Collecting data will allow you to address questions that have not been answered through your analysis of existing data sources. Existing data may not show you the whole picture of what is going on in your community in regards to child hunger and targeted program interventions. Surveys, interviews and focus groups can provide you with:

- Insight into what the underlying causes for your findings in the data analysis
- The community members' perspective on the issue
- Potential barriers
- Community priorities
- Additional information not captured by numbers

IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

The first step is to identify major stakeholders in your community that can help you gain insight into the current situation.

Stakeholders are the people or groups of people who are:

- Responsible for the final decision
- In a position to implement the decision, support implementation or prevent it from being implemented
- Likely to be affected by the outcome
- E.g. community leaders, individuals running community-based organizations and future program participants

Definition from Stakeholder Analysis, Design Pathways to Action

Why connect with stakeholders?

It is important to identify and connect with these individuals and groups of people not only to learn about their thoughts and opinions on child hunger in the local community, but also to build partnerships, credibility and community ownership of this project.

QUALITY > QUANTITY

It is more important to select the right types of people to speak with, rather than trying to speak with as many people as possible. If there are many potential people to interview you may want to refine your focus to organizations that provide services to children, families who utilize food bank services and others who work closely with children in other capacities. Do not limit your interviews to organizations which already provide food to children. An organization you interview that serves children, but does not currently provide food assistance, may be a potential new program site when you begin to implement and/or expand programs.

Potential Stakeholders

- Partner organizations
 - Your food bank's agencies, especially those running child hunger programs
- Community organizations
 - YMCA
 - Boys & Girls Clubs
 - Church groups or other religious organizations
 - Community centers
- Schools
 - Elementary, middle and high school teachers
 - HeadStart staff and other early childhood programs
 - School nurse
 - School counselor
 - PTA
 - Superintendents
 - Before and after school care staff
- Community safety nets
 - Emergency room
 - Employment assistance program
 - SNAP office
 - Staff at WIC clinics
 - Homeless shelters
 - Veterans' hospitals
 - Federally qualified health centers
- Community members
 - Food bank clients and others in need
 - Leaders within the community
 - City advisory boards, commissions, committees and task force
- Government officials
 - City government, specifically the Parks and Recreation Department
 - Commission on Families and Children—depends on state
 - State agencies, such as Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services
- Other
 - National service participants in the region
 - Experts and academics in poverty, anti-hunger, child well-being
 - Anti-hunger coalitions, or local taskforces
 - Advocacy groups

METHODS OF COLLECTING DATA

The next step is to determine what data collection method(s) you are going to use to obtain information from identified stakeholders.

Different methods will allow you to explore specific research questions and therefore it is important to know the limitations and uses for each method. Reference the chart below to learn more about the different types of methods used to collect data.

METHOD	WHEN TO USE	THINGS TO CONSIDER
Focus Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you need to solicit opinions, gather feedback and identify social norms on a topic• Multiple people with similar characteristics involved (clients, service providers, teachers)• Allow you to gather descriptive data quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Logistics of organizing focus groups and transcription can be time consuming and expensive• Helpful for descriptive data but they do not provide quantitative data because the groups are not large enough samples
In-depth Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow you to obtain detailed insider information that people might not share in a group setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes a lot of time to conduct interviews• Provide you with a limited amount of opinions on a topic.
Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you need to gather responses from a large sample of people• Surveys allow you to easily compare responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys don't capture spontaneous conversation. If questions are not designed appropriately you may not capture the right information, making your data misleading.

QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

You are able to collect both qualitative and quantitative data with all of the aforementioned research methods. Therefore, when crafting questions, it is important to differentiate between qualitative and quantitative data:

- **Qualitative research** explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. It attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants.
- **Quantitative research** generates statistics using methods such as surveys or structured interviews. To be qualitative the research needs to collect information from a large and representative sample.

Presenting Findings

Developing a Final Product

The objective of the community needs assessment is to develop recommendations, based on your findings, that outline what programs can be implemented and/or expanded and where programs sites should be developed to address the identified gaps in child feeding. How these recommendations take shape and how you decide to present them to your food bank will be dictated by the findings of your assessment, the expectations and available resources.

After completing your assessment, you should be able to articulate:

- Utilizing qualitative and quantitative data
- The level of existing need and gaps in services and put forth recommendations for programs that can be implemented and/or expanded to fill the gap.

The following section is designed to provide you with tips on how to pull all your information together to develop recommendations and present your findings. Pulling together all your findings to develop recommendations will take time. Let the facts speak for themselves but allow the voices and the stories of the people you spoke with to influence your recommendations.



Translating the Data into Recommendations

In order to create recommendations from your research, you will need to analyze both the qualitative and quantitative data you collected in partnership with the existing data sets you analyzed.

Throughout the research process you will be talking to numerous stakeholders and may end up with a range of suggestions on how to address childhood hunger in your community. Combining these varying perspectives and considering your analysis of existing data sets can sometimes prove to be a daunting task. Here are some suggestions on how you might approach this task:

REVIEW THE FINDINGS FROM THE DATA YOU COLLECTED

Use the information from your quantitative and qualitative research, to identify both **themes** and **points of contention**.

Ask yourself: how does the qualitative and quantitative research inform or relate to the analysis of current data sets?

Below are examples of how to review the findings from the data you collected to pull information to influence the development of recommendations.

SCENARIOS

By surveying community stakeholders in an area of high need that has few or no programs, you can measure the community's priorities to get a sense of which programs they see the greatest need for, as well as the barriers and opportunities to starting programs in this area. Let's say that the survey results showed that community members are concerned about children having inadequate access to food over the summer and see the greatest need for summer feeding programs. However, this is a rural area and community members also indicated on the survey that congregate sites are the biggest barrier to successfully starting summer food programs in the area.	By holding focus groups with community stakeholders in a school district with 90% or more of its students participating in free or reduced-price lunch but only a 15% participation rate in SFSP you can gain a better understanding of why participation levels are so low. Let's say there are very few summer food program sites in the area and one of the major themes from the focus groups was that there are few or no safe places for children to congregate in the summer.	By conducting interviews with faculty at the high schools that do not have Backpack Programs and are in high poverty areas, you can ask questions that identify if the faculty members see a need for the program. If they do see a need, they would be in a good position to inform you of the opportunities and barriers to implementing the program. Perhaps you learn during your interviews that the high school tried implementing a pre-packaged food bag model similar to the Backpack model and that the students prefer to select their own food.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>You might recommend that the food bank develops a summer feeding program in that area that tests innovative ways to deliver summer food, such as mobile delivery.</p>	<p>A recommendation could be that the food bank partners with community-based organizations that already provide children with a safe place to congregate afterschool to serve snacks or meals as part of their programming in the summer.</p>	<p>Therefore, you may end up recommending implementing a school pantry rather than a Backpack Programs at the high schools.</p>
<p>Or perhaps you could recommend that adults from the community staff the summer site</p> <p>Or recommend finding options for providing a bus to the location.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ADDITIONALLY:</p> <p>The information you gather from those interviews also informs how you can implement a particular program model.</p> <p>For example, adequate space to distribute food may be a factor in implementing a school pantry. The interview is an opportunity to learn if adequate space is a potential issue and if so, would inform your recommendations.</p>	

REVIEW THE FINDINGS FROM YOUR DATA ANALYSIS

Do not forget about all of the hard work you did when analyzing existing data sets!

Comparing areas of need to where current child programs are offered will help you identify gaps in services to children. While these numbers do not always show the nuances of a situation, they provide a useful baseline to assess the current state of child hunger in your community.

Ask yourself: what does the hard data tell you? Where are the gaps in child feeding programs? Are children being reached during the different out of school time periods?

Below are examples of how to review findings from your data analysis to contribute to the development of program recommendations.

SCENARIOS

<p>If you map existing programs and county child food insecurity numbers on the same map, you may find an area where there is a high rate of food insecurity and few or no programs.</p>	<p>If a school district has 90% or more of its students participating in free or reduced-price lunch, but only 15% of the students participate in SFSP, you may want to suggest that the food bank focuses on expanding the SFSP in this area. However, to write a concrete recommendation you need to dig a little deeper into the data. You need to examine the number of summer food sites in that area.</p>	<p>You have identified an area where 80% of children live in families with incomes below the poverty line</p>
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RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>Your data may identify the need of for a particular program model and partnerships based on the unique circumstances of the area.</p>	<p>If there are a limited number of sites, then you could recommend that the food bank works to expand the number of sites in that area.</p> <p>However, if there are adequate number of sites in that area, but there is low attendance at the sites you need to find out why by conducting additional research.</p> <p>One possible reason could be that children aren't aware of the program. If that is the case, then you could recommend that the food bank needs to support outreach efforts to inform children and families about current program sites.</p> <p><i>Use the facts as a guide but take the extra steps to determine the cause as often as possible.</i></p>	<p>If all of your Backpack Programs in that area are located at elementary schools, you may want to suggest the food bank focuses on starting Backpack Program sites at high schools in this area.</p> <p>However, before you can write a concrete recommendation you will need to get a better understanding with your own research about what the opportunities and barriers are to starting Backpack Programs at these high schools.</p> <p>The data you collect through surveys, focus groups and interviews is critical to creating well informed recommendations.</p>
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Building context

The context in which you frame your findings is very important. Presenting numbers independently of other facts and figures can distort the context. Be cognizant of presenting the information in a manner that highlights the gaps in services and depicts the reality of child hunger in your community.

For example, saying that the food bank is reaching 5,000 children is different than saying that the food bank is reaching just 5,000 of the 95,000 children who are living in food insecure households. In addition to numbers, using quotes from your conversations with community members will be a powerful tool as they will bring real stories to light and support the facts and figures you present.

Talk with internal stakeholders and other decision makers at the food bank

Take the time to discuss the internal opportunities and limitations, as well as external opportunities and limitations with your colleagues and other decision makers at the food bank. These conversations might be helpful in guiding how you prioritize and shape your recommendations.

Get stakeholder input

You could host a stakeholder meeting to analyze and prioritize findings, as well as develop or modify recommendations. Incorporating stakeholders in the decision-making process will help ensure that your recommendations have some level of support from a broad spectrum of community members.

Data as a baseline for program implementation

While the data you collect will prove significant as you develop program recommendations, it will continue to have significance as you begin to implement programs and later when you evaluate the programs you started. The findings of your assessment will be helpful later when you develop a baseline by which you can measure the success of program implementation.

For example, if you identify that your food bank is currently only serving 15% of the children who qualify for summer meals, success of the summer program you implement can be benchmarked against this baseline information.

How do you know what program models to recommend?

Utilize HungerNet and Feeding America's Programs team and your colleagues across the Feeding America network to learn about best practices and identify creative solutions that other food banks have implemented to address the gaps in child feeding programs. Please contact the ProgramsTeam@feedingamerica.org with questions.

You can also research other food banks in your Environmental Peer Group (EPG) to determine which offer similar programs using the [Network Activity Data Center](#) on HungerNet. You can then reach out to them with any questions you have about how they started and run those programs.

Presenting Final Findings & Recommendations to Food Bank Decision-Makers

It is now time for you to share your findings and your recommendations with stakeholders. Presenting your findings and recommendations will be the first step to developing child hunger programming and a culmination of the needs assessment process.

What are the high-level findings of your assessment?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SHARING THE FINDINGS

- ❖ Sharing important findings with your colleagues will allow you to gather additional feedback, “take the temperature” of the food bank decision makers and determine about next steps.
- ❖ Presenting top level findings with community stakeholders will keep them involved, engaged and in the loop about your work and will help strengthen relationships necessary for program implementation/expansion.

Getting Organized: Preparing for your Presentation

Below is a tool to help you prepare for and organize your presentation. Do not feel limited by the organization or format; adapt this list to fit your needs. Be creative! This is your time to share all of the data you have collected and present your recommendations for program implementation and/or expansion.

The Context

Introduction: Why is your focus on child hunger programming?

What were the goals of your research?

The Framework

Expanding an existing child hunger program or implementing a new child hunger program

Considering child hunger programs, including: Kids Cafe (including funding from the CACFP), Backpack, Summer Food (including funding from the SFSP), School Based Pantry and innovative models

Community Needs Assessment

How did you go about constructing and conducting your study?

What were some key existing data sets you used? What did the data show?

What research methods did you use and why?

Who did you speak with/survey?

A High-Level Summary of your Findings

Highlight where the need exists and where there are gaps in services. Use statistics, quotes, findings from surveys, interviews and/or focus groups to illustrate your points

Let people know how they can find out more about your research and findings

Presenting Recommendations

Propose specific ideas and a potential roadmap

Try to be specific: What programs should be expanded or implemented? Where could the sites be located and who are the partners? How many children could these sites serve? In what ways would this project fill gaps? What need exists but is not within the scope of this proposal? How much funding do you foresee the proposal costing and what are potential funding sources? What resources are available (i.e. funds, food, staff and volunteers)?

Link your recommendations to the food bank's strategy and goals

Costs and benefits of implementing your recommendations to the food bank, partners and stakeholders

Utilize visuals: maps, graphs, tables and charts are often the best way to communicate your findings

Soliciting input

Even though this is your "final" presentation, suggestions can help tweak and improve the plan. Emphasize that this recommendations piece is a working document, and let people know that you are seeking their input

Presenting to Different Audiences

Your presentation may alter slightly depending on who you are presenting to. The food bank staff may want in-depth details about a recommendation, yet you may not be able to present this specific information to a stakeholder before it is finalized and approved. Other audiences may not have time to hear a long presentation, or another group may need more background information on food banking.

It is helpful to have a basic PowerPoint presentation from which you can cut, add and tweak to make your presentation appropriate for the audience. Another helpful document you will want to create at the end of the community needs assessment phase is an executive summary. An executive summary is a quick synopsis, usually no longer than four pages, that touches on high level information such as: program overview, how you got your data, results of research and next steps. Ideally, you want the reader to know the makeup of your community, the available programs and the need.

PRESENTATION TIPS

Considering Timing

This presentation should not be the first time you touch base with major stakeholders about your recommendations. It can be helpful to check in with key individuals and decision-makers to make sure your recommendations fit within the strategic plan and capabilities of your food bank.

Considering the Format

PowerPoint can be a good presentation tool as it allows you to move between various findings and recommendations and digitally or graphically represent statistics or trends.

Think about your audience when creating your presentation format.

You could also create a high-level executive summary to distribute, highlighting your major findings and recommendations. This will allow your audience members to walk away with key points.

Sharing Findings

If you have worked closely with partner organizations or other stakeholders throughout the research process, talk to your food bank about finding the right time to share your findings and recommendations with groups outside of the food bank. It can be a great way to gather feedback and build buy-in for the project. We recommend creating an internal and public version of your findings and recommendations.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION

For a child program to be implemented successfully, it is important to gain approval from food bank staff and to keep your community stakeholders engaged. Everyone should be on the same page and support the process and goals. Below are some tips for post presentation activities

- Keep notes of people who made comments during or after your presentation. Follow up with them within a few days to hear more about their suggestions and critiques,
- There may be staff members who did not comment during your presentation but still have things to share. Make an announcement or send out an email letting people know that you are happy to continue the discussion about the findings and recommendations at any time.
- Incorporate feedback and advice you received on your presentation.
- After you have made changes, make sure to let the decision-makers know how you have incorporated new feedback and get their input on the updates



Section 3

Program Planning

In this section you will find information on:

- **Assessing Your Organization's Readiness and Capacity**
- **Logic Modeling**
 - **Basic Components of a Logic Model**
 - **Selecting Your Goal**
 - **Selecting Outcomes**
 - **Defining Activities and Outputs**
 - **Inputs**
 - **Sample Logic Models**
- **Value of A Pilot Program**
- **Identifying Site Locations**
- **Evaluating Potential Sites**
- **Working with Sites**
- **Establishing Relationships and Procedures with Sites**
- **Getting Started**
- **Site Definition and Eligibility Documentation**
- **Identifying Program Participants**
 - **BackPack Program Example Referral Form**
- **Program Integration**
 - **Nutrition and Health Education Resources**
 - **Food Assistance Resources**
 - **Income Support Resources**
 - **Current child hunger programs in Your Community Activity**
 - **Filling the Gaps Activity**
- **Setting Up Systems**
 - **Establishing Relationships and Procedures with Sites**
 - **Recordkeeping and Reporting Procedures**
 - **Report Tracking**
 - **Developing an Outreach Plan**
 - **Staff and Volunteer Screening**
- **Relationship Building**
 - **Characteristics of a successful partnership**
 - **Initiating Partnerships**
 - **Maintaining the Partnerships**
- **Working Across Departments**
- **Budgeting**
 - **Budget Worksheet**
 - **Sample Budgets**

PROGRAM PLANNING

Assessing Your Organization's Readiness and Capacity

Launching and operating any new program is a serious undertaking. Thoughtful planning, allocating resources and ensuring ongoing management are essential to the success of the program.

The first step in program development is to assess your organization's readiness and capacity. Leadership, resources and other organizational capacities are critical in determining the feasibility and timing for starting a new program or initiating significant program growth.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Can your program afford to invest the money, time, and effort required for the success of the program?
- Is this a realistic time for your organization to expand?
- How stable are your funding, leadership, staffing, and existing program operations?
- Will the top leadership enthusiastically support the program?
- Will the top leadership enthusiastically support the program?
- Can you foresee contingencies that will distract you from this new initiative?

Logic Modeling

Once you have determined that you have the capacity to start a new program or continue operating successful ones, you may want to create a logic model. This is a very beneficial exercise for helping to assure program success.

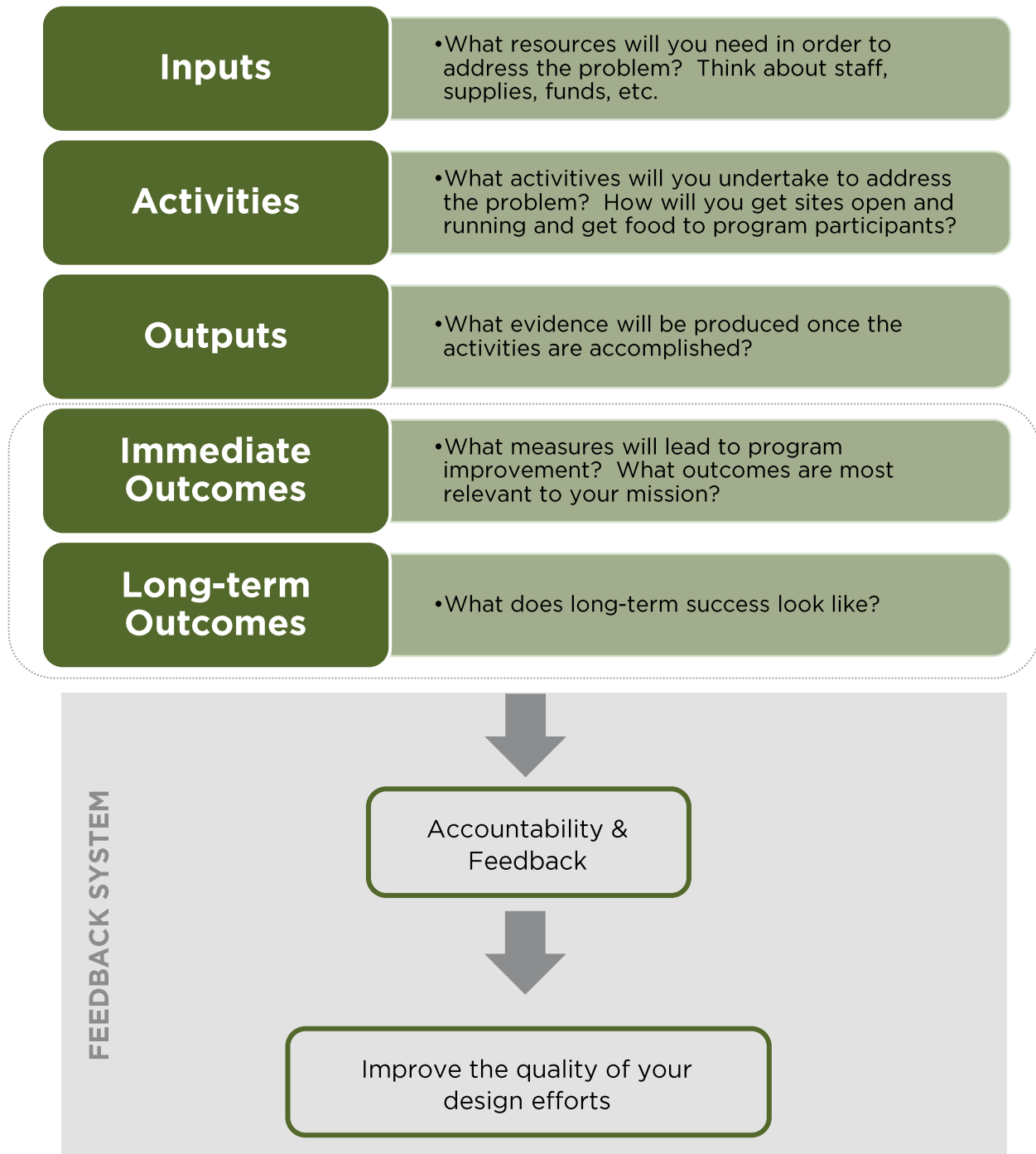
Logic models are used to chart progress toward a program's short and long-term goals. It can also provide an important snapshot of how a program works. The benefits of creating a logic model are:

- Provides a clear method for emphasizing program results, which is a favorable practice in the current funding environment.
- Provides the ability to clearly communicate the components and theory behind your program to internal and external stakeholders.
- Provides clear documentation of your plans and strategies helps to ensure that all staff members are "on the same page."



HOW TO DEVELOP A LOGIC MODEL

To construct any logic model, you begin by identifying the problem to be addressed and fill in the necessary information for each of the categories shown in the chart above. This process is supported by answering the following questions:



At this point, it is also very important to begin developing a feedback system that can provide you with information on whether the model is working as planned or desired. Your feedback system will not help you much if you only track participant outcomes, neglecting to confirm the theory behind your solution, inputs, and processes.

Let's say you have high backpack distribution outputs, but you did not monitor how the actual system of backpack distribution was conducted. In this scenario it would be difficult to repeat what happened at a new backpack distribution site.

A well-constructed logic model provides you with a "blueprint" of your program design that can assist in making informed judgments about your results. If there are any shortfalls when comparing your intended outcomes with the measured results, you can reexamine your program model to see where the problem(s) may lie.

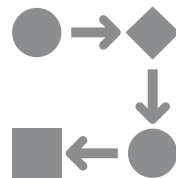
Any of the following could be the cause:

- The participants you actually served differ from the ones you intended to serve
- You had insufficient money or staff, or the wrong kind of staff to deliver the program
- You did not provide the services as planned
- Children did not participate as intended
- Your program theory or solution to the problems may be the wrong approach

Once you have identified the places where any of the components veered from the model, you then have a better idea of the kinds of adjustments needed to ensure better implementation or to make adaptations to the model.

Of course, each child hunger program already has a common problem that they seek to address and have a basic model to follow – i.e., providing children with nutritious meals and snacks or food to prepare other resources are not available. Some components of the models differ from site to site. A sample logic model for each of the three child hunger programs is located at the end of this section.

CREATING A LOGIC MODEL



Logic models may seem overwhelming, but they are easily broken down into steps. It is important to do this step now because this framework will help you understand at a high level what you will need to execute your program and how you will measure success. This program model can also help you articulate to donors and other supporters exactly what you are trying to accomplish and what it will take to get there.

Logic models are often presented in a grid format moving from activities to goals. Though logic models generally are presented with inputs and activities first, when planning your program, you can start with what you are trying to achieve, and then fill in what you need in order to achieve that goal.

Selecting Your Goal

Your impact or goal statement sets the vision of what you are trying to achieve. This is where you answer the question, “so what?” Your goal should describe the impact your program will have on the people it intends to serve. Your impact statement may be something that can be directly measured or it may be something that you will have to select indicators for to help mark your progress along the way. Indicators describe what will be measured and over what period of time and will demonstrate whether or not your outcomes have been achieved.

Example:

Impact Statement: “Our vision is to ensure that every low-income child in our service area has access to meals in the summer.”

Indicator: Percent of low-income school age children who receive meals in the summer months.

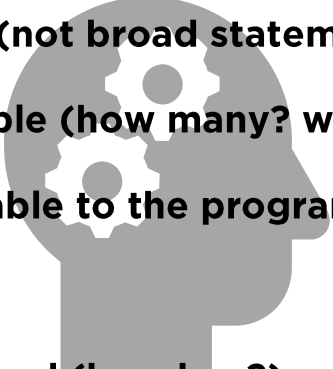
My goal is:

Is this goal measurable? Yes No

If so, what indicators will I use to track progress? If not, how will I know if we are making progress?

Selecting Outcomes

For most people, selecting outcomes is the most challenging part of creating a logic model. Outcomes are the results of your work. One common way to describe outcomes is the SMART model:

- 
- S: Specific (not broad statements)**
 - M: Measurable (how many? what percent? how much?)**
 - A: Attributable to the program**
 - R: Realistic**
 - T: Time bound (by when?)**

The outcomes you select should help **tell the story** about your program; therefore it is essential to think about whether the selected outcome is attributable to your work.

For example, it would be difficult to set an outcome, “the summer program will move families from being food insecure to food secure” because the summer program can’t necessarily be the determinable factor when addressing the situation causing the food insecurity. A better outcome is, “increasing access to meals to fill gaps for food insecure children” because it’s attributable to the summer program. Generally, outcomes about changes in food insecurity status or academic performance are difficult to attribute to a meal or food package-based program.

Outcomes drive behavior, so it is important to think critically about the outcomes you select. By setting a performance measure, you are incentivizing certain behaviors and disincentivizing other behaviors. For example, a food bank sets an outcome of serving 100,000 children this summer. In order to meet this outcome, the food bank is more likely to set up summer meal sites where children can easily congregate. Framing the outcome this way encourages programmatic choices that will drive high volume. Think critically when developing your performance measures to ensure that they are measuring what you intend to track and that they have a direct relationship with your intended outcomes.

You don’t have to pick only one outcome. Consider having outcomes about:

- Efficiency (the cost per meal delivered)
- Effectiveness (percent of clients who reported they like the meals)
- Implementation (the percentage of sites who turn in 100% of their paperwork on time)
- Targeting (number and percentage of children participants from different categories, such as age, geography, race and ethnicity, etc.)

Example:

Continuing with our Summer Food Program example, the outcome for our program is, “we will reach 50% of the children in our area who are eligible for Summer Food.”

List some potential outcomes for your program	What are some indicators that you could use to show progress towards these outcomes?

Defining Activities and Outputs

Now that you have some outcomes defined for your program, it's time to plan how to get there. There are many activities associated with operating a successful program. The remainder of this workbook will help you think about those activities.

For now, take a minute to write down what you think are the three most **important activities** to make your program successful.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Outputs are the tangible results of the program activities. They are usually expressed as the "number of X." Common outputs include the number of:

- Meals served
- Sites
- Days of operation
- Personnel trained
- News stories/media impressions generated
- Partners recruited
- Nutrition education lessons delivered
- Volunteer hours
- On time deliveries

*Use this space to write down the **outputs** you anticipate for your program.*

Inputs

You have defined what your goal is, the outcomes you hope to achieve and how you will get there. Now it is time to map out all the things it will take to make the program happen. There are obvious inputs that nearly all programs will have, such as funding and staff. What about volunteers? How about vehicles to transport your product? What about thermometers, gloves, trash bags and other supplies?

It is important to write down all of your inputs because this will help you determine if you need to adjust your program. For example, after a successful summer, our example food bank decides to set a goal of serving 50% more children the following year. Since the food bank had developed a detailed logic model, they are able to go back to all of the inputs listed and determine not only how much money they need for the expanded program, but whether they have the capacity across all inputs to expand their service.

*Brainstorm a list of the **inputs** you will need.*

Congratulations!

You have just written a logic model for your program.

This tool should be revisited as you adjust your program. Continue asking questions to ensure that the model reflects what you are trying to achieve. Consider:

- Is this the right impact statement?
- Are we tracking the right outcomes? Are they tied to the effect on our clients?
- Do our activities and outputs match the outcomes we are trying to achieve?
- Can outcomes be added to provide a different look at our progress?
- Do our inputs reflect all of the resources we are putting into this program?
- Would our model have to change if we scaled the program up or down?

Resources

[Program Evaluation 101](#)

Sample Afterschool Program Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<p>Staff List all staff involved in all aspects of the program</p> <p>Volunteers Volunteer hours</p> <p>Food Nutritious foods that could be combined to create meals or snacks Meals from vendors</p> <p>Supplies Carriers to keep meals warm Serving utensils Paper plates, etc.</p> <p>Transportation Transporting meals to sites</p> <p>Funding Feeding America national funding Program specific fundraising Local sponsorships</p> <p>Media/PR Established media partners Newsletter Hunger Action Month</p>	<p>Program Agreement Complete Feeding America Program Agreement with ED signature</p> <p>Recipients Identify site locations Identify program recipients</p> <p>Food (Vended vs. Self-Prep) Develop and maintain relationships with food donors and/or vendors Contract with local community kitchen or school kitchen to prepare meals Develop process with food bank production kitchen to produce meals/snacks Develop process with sites to produce meals/snacks</p> <p>Funding Identify and develop program funding</p> <p>Training and Education Train site coordinators and volunteers</p> <p>Schedule Schedule and manage meal production and meal delivery Schedule and manage meal service</p> <p>Transportation Transport meals/snacks or food to sites</p> <p>Media/PR Develop and maintain community outreach Seek opportunities for media attention</p> <p>Monitoring & Evaluation Monitor compliance and encourage best practices at sites Design and implement evaluation tools</p>	<p>Sites Number of sites in operation</p> <p>Meals/Snacks Number of meals/snacks distributed</p> <p>Participants Number of children served</p> <p>Time Number of weeks in operation Nutrition Education Number of lessons provided</p> <p>Fundraising Number of dollars raised</p> <p>Media hits Number of articles/stories</p> <p>Volunteers Number of volunteer hours provided to the program</p>	<p>Funding X% of fundraising goals met</p> <p>Participants X% of participants report they consumed food X% of participants report they enjoyed the food X% of participants experienced decreased signs of hunger</p> <p>Media/PR X% increase in media coverage</p>	<p>Program expansion (sites and participants)</p> <p>Financial sustainability</p> <p>Food sustainability</p> <p>Reduced child hunger in service area</p> <p>Increased awareness of resources available to food insecure children</p>

Sample School Pantry Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<p>Staff List all staff involved in all aspects of the program</p> <p>Volunteers Volunteer hours</p> <p>Food Nutritious foods that could be combined to create meals</p> <p>Supplies Bags/boxes for families to transport the food</p> <p>Shelving for food Tables or bins for food</p> <p>Transportation Transporting food to sites</p> <p>Funding Feeding America national funding Program specific fundraising Local sponsorships</p> <p>Media/PR Established media partners Newsletter Hunger Action Month</p>	<p>Program Agreement Complete Feeding America Program Agreement with ED signature</p> <p>Recipients Identify site locations Identify program recipients</p> <p>Food Develop and maintain relationships with food donors and/or vendors Procure all food and manage inventory of items needed</p> <p>Funding Identify and develop program funding</p> <p>Training and Education Train site coordinators and volunteers</p> <p>Schedule Schedule and manage food delivery to sites Schedule and manage food distribution to families</p> <p>Transportation Transport food to sites</p> <p>Media/PR Develop and maintain community outreach Seek opportunities for media attention</p> <p>Monitoring & Evaluation Monitor compliance and encourage best practices at sites Design and implement evaluation tools</p>	<p>Sites Number of sites in operation</p> <p>Food Number of pounds distributed</p> <p>Participants Number of children served Number of adults served Number of families served</p> <p>Time Frequency of distribution Nutrition Education Number of lessons provided</p> <p>Fundraising Number of dollars raised</p> <p>Media hits Number of articles/stories</p> <p>Volunteers Number of volunteer hours provided to the program</p>	<p>Funding X% of fundraising goals met</p> <p>Participants X% of participants report they consumed food X% of participants report they enjoyed the food X% of participants report decreased symptoms hunger</p> <p>Media/PR X% increase in media coverage</p>	<p>Program expansion (sites and participants)</p> <p>Financial sustainability</p> <p>Food sustainability</p> <p>Reduced food insecurity in service area</p> <p>Increased awareness of resources available to food insecure children and their families</p>

Sample Backpack Program Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<p>Staff List Staff involved in all aspects of the program</p> <p>Volunteers Volunteer hours</p> <p>Food Nutritious and easy-to-prepare items</p> <p>Carriers Backpacks, plastic bags, etc.</p> <p>Transportation Transporting carriers to distribution sites</p> <p>Funding FA national funding</p> <p>Program specific fund raising</p> <p>Local sponsorships</p> <p>Media/ PR Established media partners</p> <p>Newsletter</p> <p>Hunger Action Month</p>	<p>Program Agreement Complete agreement with E.D. signature</p> <p>Recipients (Distribution Sites and Children) Identify & set-up distribution sites</p> <p>Identify program recipients</p> <p>Food Develop and maintain relationships with food donors and/or vendors</p> <p>Procure all backpack items and manage inventory of items needed for carriers</p> <p>Funding Identify and develop program funding</p> <p>Training and Education Train Site Coordinators and volunteers</p> <p>Schedule Schedule and manage assembly and distribution</p> <p>Transportation Transport backpacks or carriers to distributions sites</p> <p>Media/PR Develop and maintain community outreach and seek opportunities for media attention</p> <p>Monitoring & Evaluation Monitor compliance, and encourage best practices</p> <p>Design and implement evaluation tools</p>	<p>Sites Number of sites in operation</p> <p>Packs Number of backpacks or carriers distributed</p> <p>Poundage Number of pounds distributed</p> <p>Participants Number of participants served</p> <p>Time Number of weeks in operation</p> <p>Non-Food Items Number and type of items Provided</p> <p>Fundraising Number of dollars raised</p> <p>Media hits Number of articles/stories</p> <p>Volunteers Number of volunteer hours provided to program</p>	<p>Funding X% of fundraising goal met</p> <p>Participants X% of participants report eating the food</p> <p>X% of participants report that they enjoyed the food</p> <p>X% of participants experienced decreased signs of hunger</p> <p>Media/PR X% increase in media coverage</p>	<p>Program Expansion (sites & participants)</p> <p>Financial sustainability</p> <p>Food sustainability</p> <p>Reduced child hunger in service area</p> <p>Increased awareness of resources available to the food insecure</p>

Start with A Pilot Program

It is highly recommended that food banks planning to start a new child hunger program begin with a pilot program. When a new program is created and put into place, the program partners, community members, and participating children and families come to depend on the program as an important part of their strategy to meet their needs. Expect actions are set and having them met becomes critical. In most cases, if the research, planning and resources are not secured a program may open but may not be able to function or sustain. A program's failure to thrive sends a poor message to other potential program partners, donors and funders and should be prevented when at all possible.

Starting with a pilot program allows your organization to

- Start out small
- Test core assumptions
- Assess your ability to successfully meet the objectives identified in the program logic model
- Produce tangible results to increase buy-in from key stakeholders (i.e. board of directors, donors, volunteers, and community partners)

The length of a typical pilot program is six months to a year.

The goal of a pilot program is to demonstrate that your program concept can be delivered in practice. By taking this approach your organization will be more prepared and knowledgeable when transitioning to multiple sites and/or increasing the number of children and families served

Identifying Site Locations

Selecting the right sites is one of the most important aspects to operating successful child hunger programs. Finding sites with staff that will comply with your guidelines and instructions will help your programs run smoothly. Different programs will require different types of sites. The reference chart below categorizes the two main types of sites and provides tips for identifying the best ones.



SITE TYPE	TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine high need areas using community data (poverty rates, number of food pantries, hunger study data, etc.). • Locate schools with high percentages of students receiving free and reduced-price meals.
Congregate Meal Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine high need areas using community data (poverty rates, number of food pantries, hunger study data, etc.). • Try to find established programs that also operate during the school year, such as YMCA, YWCA or Boys & Girls Clubs. • Ask parks and recreation departments about their recreation programs. • Contact faith-based organizations about activities. • Consider areas where children may congregate such as housing complexes, community centers, libraries, rural trailer parks, etc. • Contact local parent groups to determine the level of community support. • Find schools that offer afterschool programs. • Note: Your program model (i.e. self-prep vs. vended meals) will determine additional criteria for sites. More information is included in the site evaluation forms below

No matter the site type, it is important to find sites with strong champions who are dedicated to the program’s success.

EVALUATING POTENTIAL SITES

When selecting sites for your child hunger programs, it’s a good idea to develop a list of minimum criteria each site must meet. These will vary based on the program model you pursue, but could include:

- Regular paid staff
- Refrigeration/storage space
- Activities to draw in children
- Availability of volunteers (or potential for recruitment)

You may also want to tour and evaluate each potential site in person

WORKING WITH SITES

Schools as Sites

Schools serving low-income communities are the preferred distribution site for School Pantry and Backpack Programs. In general schools offer the greatest probability of regular and consistent access to your targeted program participants. School personnel often have the first-hand knowledge needed to identify children and families in need of the program and are the ideal individuals to coordinate the program.

Note: Schools are set up to be educational institutions, not charitable ones, so they are not eligible to be member agencies of a food bank. However, programs may be located at schools if it is administered as a program or project of the food bank or if another nonprofit organization operates the program at a school. **If the food bank takes the site on as a program or project, it becomes responsible for the provision and direct distribution of food.** Under this model, the food bank retains sole title and responsibility for the food and any liability that may result. At no time may the school pay shared maintenance or any other type of fee for donated food.

Key Questions to Ask When Evaluating a Potential Site or School

- Is there significant need for the program at the site?
- Is the organization and personnel in full support of the program?
- Does the site offer a safe and accessible location for meal service or distribution?
- Does the site have consistent and reliable personnel that are willing and able to handle the necessary coordination to make the program successful?
- Are the staff and volunteers qualified to prepare and serve meals to children?
- Does the site have the physical capacity to accommodate a feeding program such as food storage, food preparation equipment and appliances, empty room, proper shelving, a large parking lot, etc.?
- Is there a strong likelihood the site will be able to accommodate program growth, and provide a sustainable partnership?

Community Organizations as Sites

There are child hunger programs within the Network that successfully administer the program through other types of sites. For example, some programs utilize Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and other after-school programs operated out of social service organizations.

Identify potential partners in your community:

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS AND PROCEDURES WITH SITES

Developing and maintaining a working relationship with each distribution site is a critical step in operating an efficient and effective program. It is very important to clearly communicate the following components:

- The role and responsibilities of the food bank and your program partner
- Program standards and compliance
- Meal service systems and procedures
- Reporting procedures

This can be accomplished by requiring sites to sign a partner agreement. Click on the link below for a template agreement that can be customized to address the unique components of your program.

Resources

[Partner Agreement Template](#)

Site Selection for Child and Adult Care Food Programs

GETTING STARTED

If you are considering becoming a CACFP sponsor to provide food to an afterschool program, the first thing you'll need to do is contact your State agency. They will provide you with an application, training, and assistance with every aspect of running the program.

For State CACFP contacts, please visit [here](#).

Site Selection

Selecting the right site is one of the most important parts of administering the CACFP. Finding sites that have the capacity to comply with site responsibilities will make your program run more smoothly. It is recommended to

- Start by sponsoring already established afterschool programs in low income areas. Try contacting the local Boys and Girls Club or YMCA sites.
- Reach out to local faith-based organizations, community centers and housing complexes that operate afterschool programs.
- Identify organizations operating afterschool programs that are not aware that they are eligible to receive food through CACFP, or do not have the capacity to be a CACFP sponsor and are looking for a community partner. Sponsors may operate the CACFP at more than one site.

Enrichment Activities

An afterschool program must provide some level of enrichment program for the attending children. Programs must be open to all but can limit the number of participating children based on available space, security, or licensing requirements. However, an afterschool program that limits participation based on the ability of a child will not be eligible for reimbursement under CACFP. For example, a competitive sports team that requires try outs for participation would not be eligible, while a sports team that is open to students of all athletic ability would be eligible for reimbursement under CACFP.

Expanded day learning programs may be eligible for reimbursement under CACFP, if the program operates one hour longer than the minimum number of school day hours required for that grade level by the local educational agency. For more information on this issue, please reference the latest [USDA policy memos](#)

Health and Safety Requirements

Afterschool programs must meet state and local health and safety standards to the extent that they exist. Some states require that the afterschool program be a licensed childcare provider, while other states do not have this requirement.

Public or Tax-exempt Institution

Afterschool programs must be public or have tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1886 or participating in another Federal program requiring nonprofit status. Note that for profit centers can participate in the program, but there are specific eligibility requirements that are not discussed in this manual. If you wish to operate at a for profit center, please consult with your State Agency.

Income Eligibility

Under the CACFP there are two tracks for serving food at after school programs—the **At-Risk Program Track** and **Outside-School-Hours Care Program Track**. While this manual mainly focuses on the At-Risk Program Track, it will also briefly touch upon the income eligibility requirements for the Outside-School-Hours Care Program Track.

At-Risk Program Site

- Must be located in a geographical area where at least 50% of the children receiving free or reduced-price school meals
- Reimbursed at the free rate for each child served

Outside-School-Hours Care Program Site

- Can be located anywhere regardless of the percent of students enrolled in the free and reduced-price school meal program
- Sponsors must collect family income information for each participant

- Sponsors will receive the reimbursement rate based on each participant’s family income (see page 14 for more information on reimbursement rates)

Please [contact your State Agency](#) for information about the eligibility requirements for the Out-of-School Hours Care Program under CACFP.

Documenting Area Eligibility: School Data

Operating your program in an area that qualifies as an **At-Risk Program** site will ensure that you serve children who might otherwise go hungry and allow you to run your program with the least amount of paperwork.

Eligibility Documentation		
Income eligibility applications accurately completed for each child	OR	Sponsor may obtain lists of names and eligibility for free or reduced-price meals from schools where children receive school lunch or breakfast

To determine if a site can qualify as an At-Risk Program site under CACFP, identify the elementary, middle, and high schools serving that area. If any of these schools have greater than 50% of children are receiving free and reduced-price school lunch, your site can be eligible and serve all the children from that community (up to 18) without collecting additional paperwork. Elementary schools are typically the school that is referenced for a site to qualify as an At-Risk Program site under CACFP because they generally have the highest enrollment in the National School Lunch Program and serve the smallest geographical area.

Eligibility Documentation
<p style="text-align: center;">School Data</p> <p>Must use the total number of students enrolled in the free and reduced-price lunch program from the most current October, unless the NSLP State agency decides to use another month</p> <p>Data is good for 5 years, unless a State Agency decides to implement a 3-year period</p>

Generally, sponsors will find it most helpful to obtain a list of eligible areas (based on school meal participation rates) from their State agency. However, not all states provide this list. If that is the case, sponsors may directly contact their local school district in order to obtain the most current October’s free and reduced-price data to document the need of the area they wish to serve.

In certain situations, children in public school systems are routinely “bused” from their neighborhood school to schools in other neighborhoods. In this scenario, sponsors may determine eligibility based on the enrollment/attendance data obtained for:

- The school the children attend and are bused to, or
- The school the children would have attended if were not for the school’s busing policy (the neighborhood school where the children live).

Identifying Program Participants

After identifying program partners and site locations, you'll need to establish a method for identifying the program participants. Your food bank can take the following approaches to identify children with your Afterschool Programs through outreach efforts focusing on:

- Children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.
- Children living in food insecure households.
- Schools or communities with very high percentages of children that qualify for free or reduced-price school meals and live in food insecure households.

Administering a program without any eligibility criteria can create confusion and frustration for the meal sites, which may negatively impact your ability to serve children who are truly in need. Clear eligibility criteria also help to maintain a consistent and equitable program. There will be different perceptions as to who is hungry, so it is in the best interest of your program to make sure your intentions are clear as to whom you want the food to go to. Once you have determined your criteria, it is ideal if the referral process is administered by the site coordinators.

WHO IDENTIFIES THE PARTICIPANTS?

The decision of who will be responsible for identifying and referring program participants is usually made by each individual site. There is not one standard approach to this program component. Generally, site coordinators manage the referral process, and utilize their colleagues for helping to identify the appropriate children. Referrals are typically made by teachers, school counselors, nurses, and social service providers. With that said, it is important that site staff Participants have a clear understanding of the program, and specifically, the referral guidelines and procedures.



BackPack Program: Is Parent Permission Necessary?

One very important rule to keep in mind is that every distribution site is different. For some sites, the principal or director may think it is necessary that the parent/guardian is contacted in advance about participation in the BackPack Program. Other sites prefer to send a letter home in the backpack the first time the child takes it home. This approach may increase acceptance of the program since the parent/guardian is able to see first-hand what the child will be receiving. A suggested option for handling this situation is to provide a sample letter to send home to the parent/guardian, and then let each site decide what will work best for their policies and procedures. For sample permission slips, please refer to the [Sample Member Resources page](#) on HungerNet.

FEEDBACK FROM THE NETWORK

Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma: Probably one of the biggest problems we had initially was trying to explain and identify chronically hungry children. If you do not have a clear grasp on who the backpack is for, then you will not be able to educate staff as to how to identify backpack recipients and in the meantime, you could be wasting resources that could have been used for expansion and reaching even more children in need. As a result of an evaluation luncheon with the principals and Food 4 Kids coordinators we discovered that staff had a hard time determining who should be on the program. This became evident when we started interviewing kids and maybe half of them would not be considered chronically hungry in our eyes. To help solve this problem we developed a checklist for determining chronically hungry kids. The school staff is given the checklist and then they make referrals accordingly. This has been very helpful.

See [HungerNet](#) for example referral forms

Program Integration

Kids Cafe, School Pantry, and BackPack Programs all play a crucial role in providing children and their families with access to food when other resources such as free and reduced-price school meals are not available. Additionally, many food banks have also found the program to be a great opportunity to help educate and connect families to other vital programs that support food and economic security.

The types of resources you may integrate into your new programs or existing programs can include:

- Nutrition and health education resources
- Food assistance resources
- Income support resources
- SNAP outreach resources

The issue of childhood obesity has become a pressing issue for this country. Your child hunger programs can provide a vehicle for engaging low income families in the national dialogue about healthy eating and nutrition. Nutrition education materials targeted towards children and parents, recipes, and information about the foods distributed can be offered at your programs.

Some food banks utilize nutrition education materials created by the USDA like the [Choose MyPlate](#) and [Team Nutrition](#) (specifically check out the print materials). Others utilize registered dietitians or dietetic interns to create their own nutrition education materials. Others have found it helpful to partner with local nutrition educators from the [Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program](#) (EFNEP), a federally funded program administered through USDA's Cooperative Extension Service to develop nutrition education materials. Food banks often provide these materials, from MyPlate brochures to kid friendly recipes utilizing some the ingredients provided in the program.

Feeding America members have a variety of innovative approaches and philosophies to providing nutritious food and nutrition education to agency staff as well as directly to children and adults in the communities. One excellent resource is the [Choice Pantry Nudge Toolkit](#) which can be deployed at School Pantries. Find more resources on the [Community Health and Nutrition](#) section of HungerNet and Feeding America's [Hunger and Health](#) website.

Resources

[USDA MyPlate Materials](#)

[USDA Team Nutrition Materials](#)

[American Dietetic Association: Eat Right](#)

[American Heart Association Nutrition](#)

FEEDING AMERICA NUTRITION POLICY OVERVIEW

Clients of Feeding America food banks and their partner agencies are often unable to access and/or afford the variety and quantity of foods needed for a healthful diet. The Feeding America network can play an important role in increasing the ability of low-income Americans to secure a healthy diet. The 2015-2020 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) outline the categories of food that constitute a healthy diet, including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean protein. To reinforce and promote the foods highlighted in the DGA, the Feeding America network will emphasize the foods in the above categories that also meet the thresholds for specific nutrients of concern. We refer to these foods as "Foods to Encourage" (F2E). Feeding America will work to increase access to F2E through our food distribution, nutrition education, advocacy and awareness activities. We can position ourselves to lead the effort to eliminate hunger while also using our resources to promote healthful food choices for our clients.

FOOD ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

The child hunger programs provide a tremendous opportunity to connect food insecure households with other food assistance resources. Many food insecure households, especially those that need assistance for the first time, are not aware of the different private and public food assistance programs that are available to them.

- **Emergency Food Assistance:** Use the School Pantry program as an opportunity to provide families with information about emergency food distributions by providing lists of agencies or helpline phone numbers.
- **The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** SNAP provides low-income individuals and families with federal benefits to buy food.
- **The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP):** SFSP is a federal program designed to provide meals to low-income children during the summer months. This program plays a critical role in providing low-income children with nutritious food when school is out for the summer. Many low-income children are not aware of the summer feeding sites in their community. The School Pantry program is a great way to inform children and their families of this resource available over the summer months. Food banks can distribute flyers or postcards with lists of site locations or a phone number to call before the school year ends.
- **2-1-1 Call Center:** The 2-1-1 call center is a national initiative that seeks to reserve this three-digit telephone number nationwide for connecting individuals with the most essential human services. As of 2018, the 2-1-1 reaches 94.2% of the total U.S. population. Incorporating 2-1-1 outreach materials into your School Pantry distributions is an easy way to help connect families and children with an array of resources they may need access to on a regular basis or in a time of crisis.

Resources

[SNAP Outreach Materials](#)

[Summer Hunger Documents](#)

[SFSP USDA Website](#)

[2-1-1 Call Center](#)



INCOME SUPPORT RESOURCES

Low income families of the children utilizing child hunger programs are oftentimes in need of assistance beyond food resources. These programs provide an opportunity to connect families struggling financially with resources that will help them achieve some level of financial stability.

One example of an income support is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a refundable tax credit for low-income families and is one of the largest anti-poverty tools that our country has. During tax season there are major EITC outreach campaigns and free tax preparation sites for low income families. Learn more about EITC outreach [here](#).

Another issue faced by Feeding America clients is lack of access to healthcare and insurance. Learn more about how clients could receive health care coverage through Medicaid, CHIP, or the Affordable Care Act [here](#). Additionally, many clients may be eligible for the federally funded Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The Department of Health and Human Services has an [available brochure](#) for LIHEAP outreach.

SNAP RESOURCES

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest and most robust federal nutrition program, yet only approximately 41% of the network's client households participate in the program, though more than 88% are estimated to be income eligible. Lack of information and awareness about the program is a contributing factor to low participation. Therefore, many food banks are making a concerted effort to connect families with SNAP. SNAP outreach can be as involved as helping individuals and families fill out SNAP applications by operating a SNAP Application Assistance Program or using digital outreach to increase SNAP referrals, but it can be as simple disseminating information about the program and who may be eligible.

Many food banks are inserting SNAP outreach materials and applications into backpacks. Other food banks are going a step further and partnering with schools to conduct trainings and referrals for the program.

Learn more about SNAP outreach from the [Feeding America SNAP Resource Center](#)

Learn more about Digital Outreach on [HungerNet](#)

Order SNAP outreach materials from [USDA.gov](#)

Filling the Gaps

Use the chart on the next page to plan how to fill gaps in child feeding programs identified in your assessment.

	Gap	Programmatic Intervention	Geographic Area	Potential Partners
Weekends				
After School				

	Gap	Programmatic Intervention	Geographic Area	Potential Partners
Summers				
At Home				

Setting Up Systems

RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

You'll need to establish clear reporting guidelines with each program site. Consider the following questions when setting up reporting systems.

- How often do you want sites to submit meal counts/distribution logs (daily, weekly or monthly)?
- What kind of accounting records will you require sites to keep?
- Will you require the site to have parents sign permission forms?
- Will you require parents or children to fill out intake forms?
- Will each child need a referral form on file to participate in the program?

- How often will you monitor each site?
- Will the site be required to maintain paper files?
- What is your preference for receiving reports (email, mail, online reporting system, etc.)?
- Are there any consequences for late reporting or incorrect reporting?

Once you've identified answers to the questions listed above, you need to clearly communicate the following:

- The date and time reports are to be submitted.
- Information that needs to be included in each report.
- Submission method (online, fax, mail, etc.).
- Any consequences for late reporting (see below).

REPORT TRACKING

It's a good idea to develop a tracking system to maintain and record accurate data. When meal reports are submitted to your office, you can enter them into either a database or spreadsheet. Information can be used to automatically calculate a summary of totals for each site that includes the number of children served, meals served, or any other data you require sites to report.

Note on Late Reporting

Dealing with sites that do not report on time or submit incomplete reports is one of the most common challenges with program operations. Many times, food banks rely on these reports to receive federal reimbursement for meals served. Receiving inaccurate data from program sites can prove costly. There are several systems put in place by food banks to mitigate this loss.

- Conduct weekly verification and adjustment of numbers.
- Provide access to daily and weekly online reporting for your sites.
- Institute site monitoring procedures and data monitoring procedures.
- Provide incentives to sites to submit accurate reports on time. (i.e. non-food gifts for the sites, gift cards, or recognition in newsletters, etc.)
- As a last resort, outline consequences for late reporting such as charging the cost of unreported meals to sites, or in severe cases, suspending program operations.

DEVELOPING AN OUTREACH PLAN

Once you've identified program sites, you'll want to work with each site to develop a plan to reach out to potential program participants. There are several tactics that may work for your program. Here are some examples:

- Work with school guidance counselors to identify children.
- Use the school's automated calling system to notify parents of distributions or meal sites.
- Advertise programs to parents through school orientation materials.
- Talk to parents and distribute program information at parent/teacher nights.
- Advertise sites and distributions through school newsletters or other publications.
- Distribute program information at other nearby agencies.

It may be more challenging to get the word out about SFSP when school isn't in session. Visit [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov) to see the [Raising Awareness](#) section of the [SFSP Toolkit](#).

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SCREENING

All Feeding America national programs require that any adult staff or volunteer with direct, repetitive contact with children pass a national background check.

Additionally, Feeding America recommends that local food bank boards review their current screening policy for staff and volunteers. Feeding America recommends that your local attorney review these procedures to ensure compliance and consistency with state and federal employment laws and established human resource practices. **Each organization (member food bank or program partner operating a program) is responsible for establishing its own standard of care.** The following list may serve as a valuable reference when developing your own standard of care:

Screening Policies

- Review screening policy and procedures with board of directors and legal counsel.
- Ensure the policy complies with current federal and state employment laws.
- Ensure the policy complies with Feeding America's program standards.
- Establish a policy for criminal records or actions that would bar employment/volunteering.
- Provide candidate with means of contesting negative or inconclusive background check reports.
- Apply screening process equally to staff and volunteers.
- Review the employer's policy and procedures with newly hired staff and volunteers.
- Obtain written acknowledgement of understanding and acceptance.

Employment Screening Procedures

- Include the following in job descriptions:
 - Statement of character required for employment
 - Employment history detail
 - Affidavit of criminal records
- Obtain written permission from candidate to conduct background check.
- At a minimum, include in criminal background checks of a candidate:
 - Social Security trace
 - National Sex Offender Registry Search
 - National Criminal Record Search
- When applicable, include with job description:
 - DMV record check
 - Credit record check
- Cross reference application and Social Security Trace for inconsistencies.
- Obtain reference checks from at least three (3) sources.

Feeding America recommends that food banks refer to the [Staff Screening Toolkit](#), written by the Nonprofit Risk Management Center. This publication is available for members and program partners.



Relationship Building

Implementing new programs and expanding existing programs cannot succeed without building effective relationships and partnerships. While many of the essentials of child hunger programs can be accomplished without outside involvement, child hunger programs serve and benefit the community as a whole.

Before reaching out to your usual partners, brainstorm a list of all the possible partners in the community. Child hunger programs have the potential to open new doors to partnerships with the medical community, government, and human resources professionals. Additionally, they may open different opportunities with your existing partners including grocers, donors, and your food outreach network.

To help in the process of identifying partners that may work best for your program models, here is a list of partnerships that other food banks have found beneficial:

Government Partners	Private Partners	Non-Profit Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA regional offices • Local and county SNAP offices • County commissioners and councils • Economic development boards • Libraries • Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery stores • Farmers markets • Hospitals • Hotels • Bodegas and convenience stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner feeding agencies • Churches and faith-based organizations • State associations • Colleges and universities • Community action groups • Other food banks • Existing after school programming (YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

Before contacting any potential partner, it is important to envision what a successful partnership will look like. There are no guarantees, but there are steps you can take to try to find the best fit. When reviewing potential partners, consider the following:

- **Alignment of purpose:** The best place to begin could be to ask yourself which of your potential partners is engaged in activities that align well with the primary purpose of your project. The collaboration should have mutually agreed upon priorities and objectives.
- **Attitude of trust and respect:** it is crucial that all partners trust and respect one another if your work is to succeed. Be sure to manage your expectations throughout the entire process so that the integrity of the partnership is ensured.
- **Ability to perform:** Which candidate is best positioned to carry out their agreed upon duties to ensure the success of the project? Make sure your work complements, rather than duplicates, their existing processes.
- **Capacity for, or awareness of, communication:** Which possible partners will reliably document and communicate project details to all partners?
- **Adaptability to learn and change:** This is necessary so that you and your partners can make needed changes, both in the moment and during periodic evaluations.

INITIATING PARTNERSHIPS

Once you have determined which of your prospective partners you will approach, it is important to start off on the right foot. For organizations you have worked with in the past in another capacity, it can be as easy as reviewing what worked best in your previous collaborations. For new partners, a more tactical process may need to be developed.

- **Know the organization:** Research and be prepared. Take the time to learn about the organization and study their website. Are your missions compatible?
- **Know the need:** Be able to clearly describe the need you are addressing with your partnership. Come prepared with the findings from your Community Needs Assessment to establish a clear picture of the needs of the community and show your potential partner why the program is necessary. You need to know everything about the service area before you can convince others that a change needs to be made and that you need their help.
- **Know your plan:** Paint a picture of what your project plan looks like. Create materials that provide partners with a clear



understanding of the program and its benefits.

- **Know the collaboration:** Discuss the importance of the project and what role their organization can play. Be sure to present it as a “win-win” situation for all agencies/organizations involved and be prepared for any questions your partner may ask.

MAINTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

Now that you have established your partnership, it is important to maintain this relationship. Depending on the complexity of your collaboration, this may need to happen in a variety of ways:

- **Communication:** Communication is essential throughout the entire life of the partnership but plays a particularly vital role in the initial steps of the collaboration. Set a standard for your organization to return messages and phone calls to the partner in a timely manner.
- **Checking in:** It is always good to touch base with your partner even when you do not have a formal agenda. Respect their time and be sure to ask if there is anything you can help them with.
- **Contracts:** Funding-based and high complexity projects are likely to come with a formal, legally binding contract detailing the responsibilities of each partner. These contracts should go through the same process as the other vendor, donor, and government contracts at your food bank.
- **Memorandum of Understanding:** Less formal than a contract, Memorandums of Understanding detail the expectations of each partner’s contribution to the partnership. This is an easy way to demonstrate the standard you have set for your programs.
- **Joint progress reports:** If presenting a program report to your Board of Directors or other group, invite your partners to share their perspective on the collaboration.
- **Appreciation:** Look for opportunities in your newsletters, marketing, and social media to publicly highlight the partnership and its impact on the community.

Working Across Departments

As you begin the process of planning your program it is important to spend a lot of time developing processes and relationships with your partners. However, it is also important to spend time establishing relationships and processes **internally** across your organization. Developing a successful program takes coordination amongst multiple areas and new programs will be most successful if everyone involved has a clear idea of the purpose and role that each individual can play.

Consider the following questions:

- Who needs to sign off on the direction I plan to take this program?
- Who else will be affected by adding this new program?
- What infrastructure will we need to put in place in order to be successful?
- Who needs to be able to effectively answer questions about this initiative?
- Who may have ideas or relationships that can strengthen the program’s development?
- Who will I need to reconnect with throughout the process to determine if modifications are needed?

Who Needs to Sign Off?

In order to ensure that your program is well supported, it is important that the goals align with the strategic vision and mission of your organization, and that your organization is ready to take on this initiative. Think about the decision makers at your organization; you may want to request some time to brief your Executive Director, the senior leadership team, and in some cases (if this is a very new idea for your food bank) the Board of Directors.

Who Will This New Program Affect?

This is the key question to consider as you build a new program. Consider every area within your food bank and think about the impact that your program may have on that area. You may want to do this as a brainstorming session with representatives from each of the other functional areas. Typical questions to discuss include:

- Will we have to alter our delivery routes to accommodate this program? Do we have enough trucks? Is there a driver available?
- Is there enough staff available to pick the food off the warehouse shelves? Is someone available to help coordinate the volunteers?
- What kind of supplies will we need (tape, boxes, bags, etc.)?
- Do we typically have the appropriate items needed, either as donated or purchased items?
- Will we need to purchase food for this program?
- Will we need to set up any special processes in our system to track food going to this program?
- How will we track funds that are restricted to this initiative?
- Are there special codes or processes that the finance department will need to put in place?
- Do we have enough resources to build this program into our overall fundraising strategy?
- What information does the fundraising team need in order to talk about this program with donors?

Add your questions here:

Budgeting

The list of inputs you created will help you as you start to put together your budget. There are two main types of costs that you will need to take into account:

- **Direct costs** include those items that are associated specifically with your program – staff, food and equipment. Direct costs are items that wouldn't exist if your program wasn't happening.
- **Indirect costs** are those items that are shared across multiple projects – office space, staff time from leadership, shared vehicles. These costs are often more complicated to allocate but should be included in your budget.

Budgeting for Child Hunger Programs

Individual programs within a nonprofit typically require their own specific budgets to gain support from outside donors and other funding sources, as well as to provide necessary program management controls. Program budgets should allow for all the employees, services, facilities, and other elements needed to organize, carry out and evaluate operations of a specific program. Properly developed and managed budgets help food banks provide greater impact at a lower cost and increase the likelihood of securing outside funding.

Income

Child hunger programs have two types of income:

- **Cash Contributions:** all relevant received, committed, and pending cash donations that help support the program. Cash contributions to the program come from corporate and foundation grants, fundraising events, individual donors, government reimbursement, and allocations from your organizational budget.
- **In-Kind Contributions:** gifts of goods and services instead of cash. These can include donated food, volunteer hours, advertising materials, and miscellaneous materials.

Expenses

Program expenses include:

- **Personnel:** wages and taxes paid on all employees and contractors. If the employee is working less than full-time on the project (e.g. just the school year) then note this in the budget.
- **Direct Program Costs:** non-payroll costs of directly operating the program. This should include the costs of food, non-food items, transportation, marketing, etc.
- **Administrative Costs:** costs incurred outside of direct program or payroll costs. These costs exist with or without a child hunger program. For instance, although a grantee had offices and computers before beginning their program, computers and offices should now be listed as an expense according to the percentage for which they are being used towards the program.

- **In-Kind Contributions:** must be listed as an expense in a budget, not just as income. This is important in order to give a proper description of the size of the grantee and the cost of operating the program.

Budget Worksheet

Use this space to list out some of the costs you think your program might incur in the next year.

Line item	What it includes	How to estimate	Program budget
Staffing	Salary and benefits for Coordinator, Monitors, Site Staff, Driver or other associated staff.	Salaries can be estimated using averages for your food bank. Benefits can be estimated by multiplying the salary by a fringe rate, usually between 10-25%. Ask your Human Resources department for the preferred method of calculation.	
Equipment	Refrigerators, trucks, coolers, warmers, etc. Equipment rental, purchase and maintenance.	List out items that you think your program will need, and the approximate amount of time you expect those items to last.	
Food	Purchased food, donated food, shared maintenance or transportation, vended meal per unit costs.	Look at your menus and think about the mix of donated or purchased meals. If using vended meals, multiply your expected total number of annual meals by the cost per meal.	
Supplies	Disposables needed to run your program. Don't forget to include gloves, trash bags, thermometers, plates, silverware, napkins, cups and any other packaging supplies for your meals.	Create an estimate for each separate item.	

Transportation	Vehicle maintenance, mileage, cost of purchasing an additional vehicle.	Unless you have a dedicated vehicle for your program, this is likely an indirect cost you will have to allocate. There are several ways of doing this – take the total delivery costs and allocate by the number of miles traveled for your programs or the number of drops. Just be consistent about your methodology.	
Outreach Costs	Costs for advertising your program to participants. May include printing and production costs for flyers, PSAs, brochures, etc.	This will vary with your program model, but don't forget to include these costs.	
Administration/ Overhead	These are the direct costs to administer your program: your office space, computer, phone, postage, as well as indirect costs such as a % of time from other departments that support your project.	There are many ways to calculate overhead. Talk with your finance department about the preferred method.	
Site Management	Depending on your relationship with the sites operating your program you may have site space costs (rent, lease), pest control costs, security or other costs.	This will vary with your program model.	
Other Costs			

For planning purposes, you may want to repeat this exercise 2-3 years in the future. Forecasting what the growth of your program looks like makes it easier to plan multi-year funding.

See the following pages for samples of budgets for child hunger programs

Sample Afterschool Program Budget

POTENTIAL REVENUES		ANTICIPATED EXPENSES	
Cash Contributions		Program Costs	
Donation #1		Food	
Donation #2		Food Storage Containers	
Donation #3		Holding Cabinets	
Donation #4		Insurance	
Donation #5		Supplies and Disposables	
Donation #6		Equipment	
Donation #7		Vehicle Insurance	
Individual Contributions		Vehicle Repair & Maintenance	
Government Grants		Vehicle Insurance	
CACFP		Truck Fuel	
SFSP		License Fees	
United Way		Personnel	
Investment Income		Driver's salary (X% of time)	
Civic Organizations		Project coordinators salary (X% of employee's time)	
Other		Chef's salary (X% of time)	
In-Kind Contributions		Other salaries (specify)	
Food		Payroll taxes	
Advertising		Consulting fees	
Volunteers		Employee benefits	
Other		Administrative Costs	
TOTAL	\$0.0	Rent (X%)	
		Utilities (X%)	
		Postage (X mailings)	
		Office supplies/telephone	
		Printing	
		Conferences/Training	
		Local Travel	
		Other (e.g. Accounting)	
		Marketing Materials	
		Parent/guardian info sheet	
		Graphic Design Fees	
		Vehicle Design and Decal	
		Other Marketing Costs	
		In-Kind Expenses	
		Volunteers	
		Materials (misc.)	
		Other Contributions	
		TOTAL	\$0.0
Core Program Outcomes			
	# Meals/Snacks served		
	# Children served		
	# Number of days open		
	# New sites opened		
	Average cost per meal		

Sample School Pantry Program Budget

POTENTIAL REVENUES		ANTICIPATED EXPENSES	
Cash Contributions		Program Costs	
Donation #1		Food	
Donation #2		Boxes	
Donation #3		Reusable grocery bags	
Donation #4		Insurance	
Donation #5		Vehicle repair and maintenance	
Donation #6		Vehicle insurance	
Donation #7		Truck fuel	
Individual contributions		License fees	
Government grants		Other supplies	
United Way		Personnel	
Investment income		Driver's salary (X% of time)	
Civic organizations		Program coord. salary (x% of time)	
Other		Other salaries (specify)	
In-Kind Contributions		Payroll taxes	
Food		Consulting fees	
Advertising		Employee/fringe benefits	
Volunteers		Administrative Costs	
Other		Rent (X%)	
TOTAL	\$0.0	Utilities (X%)	
		Postage (X mailings)	
		Office supplies	
		Printing	
		Conferences/training (X)	
		Local travel	
		Other (accounting, etc.)	
		Marketing Materials	
		Parent/guardian info sheets	
		Program launch flyers/postcards	
		Graphic design fees	
		Vehicle design and decal	
		Other marketing costs	
		In-Kind Expenses	
Core Program Outcomes		Volunteers	
Number of clients served		Materials	
Number of distributions		Other contributions	
Number of distribution sites open		TOTAL	\$0.0
Pounds of food distributed			
Program costs (annual)			

Sample BackPack Program Budget

POTENTIAL REVENUES		ANTICIPATED EXPENSES	
Cash Contributions		Program Costs	
Donation #1		Food	
Donation #2		Boxes	
Donation #3		Backpacks	
Donation #4		Ziploc bags	
Donation #5		Insurance	
Donation #6		Vehicle repair and maintenance	
Donation #7		Vehicle insurance	
Individual contributions		Truck fuel	
Government grants		License fees	
United Way		Other supplies	
Investment income		Personnel	
Civic organizations		Driver's salary (X% of time)	
Other		Program coord. salary (x% of time)	
In-Kind Contributions		Other salaries (specify)	
Food		Payroll taxes	
Advertising		Consulting fees	
Volunteers		Employee/fringe benefits	
Other		Administrative Costs	
TOTAL	\$0.0	Rent (X%)	
		Utilities (X%)	
		Postage (X mailings)	
		Office supplies	
		Printing	
		Conferences/training (X)	
		Local travel	
		Other (accounting, etc.)	
		Marketing Materials	
		Parent/guardian info sheets	
		Program launch magnets	
		Graphic design fees	
		Vehicle design and decal	
		Other marketing costs	
		In-Kind Expenses	
		Volunteers	
		Materials	
		Other contributions	
		TOTAL	\$0.0
Core Program Outcomes			
Number of carriers distributed			
Number of clients served			
Number of carriers distributed			
Number of distribution sites open			
Pounds of food distributed			
Avg Cost per carrier			



Section 4

Program Implementation

In this section you will find information on:

- **Distribution**
 - **Delivery Logistics**
- **Distribution Models and Procedures for the School Pantry Program**
- **Distribution Models and Procedures for the BackPack Program**
 - **Food Procurement Considerations**
 - **BackPacks and Other Carriers**
 - **Assembly Methods**
 - **Delivery**
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program**
 - **Serving Times and Meal Components**
 - **Reimbursements**
 - **Serving and Producing Meals**
- **Summer Food Service Program**
 - **Meal Components**
 - **Reimbursements**
 - **Serving and Producing Meals**
- **Delivery Approaches for Rural Areas**
 - **Delivery Planning**
- **Food Safety and Sourcing**
 - **Food Safety**
 - **Menu Planning**
 - **Food Sourcing**
 - **Meal Planning Outlines**
- **Meal Requirements**
 - **Meal Production and Menu Planning**
 - **Tips for BackPack**

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Section overview

The focus of this section is on developing and expanding programs that increase the number of nutritious meals served to children in need. Building on the research gathered during your community needs assessment, this section will walk you through the steps necessary to build strong, sustainable programs.

We know this may be new, uncharted territory and developing a program can be challenging. The purpose of this section is to guide you through the process with best practices and advice that comes from the collective experience of program staff across the Feeding America network. Once you have a clear understanding of the existing programs, the service gaps and overall food bank initiatives, you can confidently and competently tackle the project of implementing programs.

Although you may have different project models in mind and the scale of your efforts may vary within communities, we hope that this workbook will be useful to staff throughout the entire network, regardless of location. Remember, this is meant to serve as a guide rather than a prescription for how to develop a program.



Distribution

Distribution is different for each program and contingent on how you implement the program model. Therefore, delivery logistics will depend on the type of food you are serving (hot, cold or shelf stable), and where the food is being prepared or packaged (at the food bank, on site or at a third location). Since there is no one size fits all approach to distribution, this section will walk you through the different aspects you should consider for logistics.

Establishing Relationships and Procedures with Distribution Sites

Developing and maintaining a working relationship with each distribution site is one of the most critical steps in operating an efficient and effective program. When program partnerships fail, the conclusion is usually that the project was faulty in the initial planning stages. In general, effective program partnerships begin with a clear understanding of the program objectives, what the FA Participant's expectations are, what the Program Partner's (i.e. distribution site) expectations are, and how to get started. Before a site begins distributing, it is very important to establish mutually agreeable expectations for the following program components: the role of the FA Participant and Program Partner, program standards compliance, distribution systems and procedures and reporting procedures

PREPARATION OPTIONS

Since distribution is heavily dependent on the type of food you are serving and where the food is being prepared or packaged, outlined below are some common options for program models. Once you choose a preparation model, then you will be able to determine delivery logistics. Delivery and preparation are also heavily dependent on the food you are serving to children (see food sourcing section for details).

Distribution Models Overview

Kids Cafe

Self-Preparation (site)	Self-Preparation (central production)	Vended
Product is delivered to the site Sites produce their own meals	Food banks prepare meals in a central location, like their community kitchen or production kitchen and deliver meals to sites.	Food banks purchase meals from a school food authority or food service company that are then delivered to each site

BackPack Program

Central Pack	Self-Pack (site)	Self-Pack (third location)
Individual food bags are packed at the food bank	Pallets of food are distributed to the site The site is responsible for packing individual food bags	Pallets of food are distributed to a packing site that is not the distribution site The packing site is responsible for packing individual food bags

School Pantry

Mobile Pantry	On-Site Pantry
Distribution via a dry and/or refrigerated vehicle that provides for direct client distribution	Dedicated space on the school's campus

Delivery Logistics

To start planning delivery logistics you need to know the following:

1. The program you are implementing
2. The type of food you are distributing
3. The method of preparation or packaging



Once you have made decisions about these three aspects of the program, you can start thinking about delivery options. There is no one size fits all approach to delivery but outlined below are things to consider and questions to ask when figuring out logistics.



Program	If...	Then you need to consider...
Kids Cafe	Vended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If the vendor can be responsible for the distribution ✓ If not, then you need to determine delivery methods from the vendor to the sites (see self-prep central production) ✓ The shelf life of the meals
	Vended (Shelf-stable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The frequency of delivery to the sites ✓ If the vendor can be responsible for the distribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, then you need to determine delivery methods from the vendor to the sites (see self-prep central production)
	Self-prep (central production)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If site coordinators can pick up the food from the food bank or if the food bank needs to deliver to the sites ✓ If the food bank is delivering to sites, then you will need to identify vehicles and map out distribution routes ✓ The packaging of meals ✓ The timing of deliveries to ensure food safety ✓ The proper equipment for storing food during delivery
	Self-prep (site production)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The frequency of product delivery to the sites ✓ If the product can be included in already established food bank delivery routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, then you need to determine if there are vehicles available for delivery or if the site can pick up the product at the food bank
BackPack	Central pack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If there is an area in the food bank to pack the bags ✓ If you need volunteers to help with the packing ✓ Packaging of individual bags ✓ What will you pack the bags in once they are assembled? ✓ The frequency of delivery to the sites ✓ If the packs can be included in already established food bank delivery routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, then you need to determine if there are vehicles available for delivery or if volunteers can pick up the product at the food bank
	Self-pack (site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The amount of storage space at the school available for product ✓ How will you communicate which type or how many items to put in each pack? ✓ The frequency of product delivery to the sites ✓ If the packs can be included in already established food bank delivery routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, then you need to determine if there are vehicles available for delivery or if volunteers can pick up the product at the food bank

	Self-pack (third location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If the volunteers deliver the bags from the packing site to the school ✓ How you will communicate which type or how many items to put in each pack ✓ What will you pack the bags in once they are assembled? ✓ The frequency of product delivery to the packing sites ✓ If the product can be included in already established food bank delivery routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, then you need to determine if there are vehicles available for delivery or if volunteers can pick up the product at the food bank
School Pantry	Mobile delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If trucks are available to deliver the food to the school ✓ If some products need to be refrigerated during delivery ✓ If at the site, you distribute from the truck or from another location at the school
	Permanent in-school pantry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The amount of space available for storage of product ✓ If distributing perishable products, you will need to determine space and capacity for refrigerators and freezers ✓ The frequency that you deliver product to the school ✓ If the product can be included in already established food bank delivery routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, then you need to determine if there are vehicles available for delivery or if volunteers can pick up the product at the food bank

Distribution Models for the School Pantry Program

The School Pantry program can operate under several different models. The most common are mobile pantry and permanent. Each of these models is detailed below.

Mobile Pantry

A mobile pantry is a method of distribution via a dry and/or refrigerated vehicle that provides direct food distribution to clients in an organized format managed either by food bank or member agency representatives.

Mobile pantries are a great choice if you're distributing perishable product since it takes food directly to clients in a timely manner. It's also a good option if the school you're working with doesn't have adequate indoor space to store food but has access to a large parking lot or an area for a mobile pantry vehicle to park.

Permanent In-School Pantry

A permanent School Pantry has dedicated space on the school's campus. This model works well if the school has an empty classroom, office or other location that is easily or safely accessible to children and their families.

When planning a permanent School Pantry the amount of space available will dictate the amount of food you'll be able to store and distribute. In order to store and distribute perishable products you'll need adequate space and capacity for refrigerators and/or freezers.

Distribution Procedures for the School Pantry Program

Each site's distribution procedures will vary and will depend on the type of distribution model operated. There is not one standard approach that will work for every site; however, each site should develop a plan that clearly communicates how their systems and procedures will be administered. The following components should be considered when developing distribution plans.

Food Storage

If you are operating permanent sites, each site will need an approved location in the building where food can be safely stored.

Key issues to consider:

- All food must be stored at least six inches off the ground on a pallet, shelf, desk, etc.
- The storage area should be dry, clean, and free of pests.
- The storage area should be locked when not in use.
- Inventory should be rotated. Always check the label on the box to make sure you are using the oldest dates first.

Distribution Method

You will want to work with your sites to help them develop a plan for how food should be distributed.

Key questions to consider:

- How food will be distributed (i.e. pre-packed bags, client choice)?
- Will you offer reusable grocery bags, boxes, etc. for families to take the food home?
- If you use reusable bags, what system will you put in place to make sure they are returned?
- Is there adequate space for clients to move through the pantry?
- If operating a mobile pantry is there adequate parking and do you have a backup plan for inclement weather?
- Will you require parents to be present with children during distributions?
- What is the best time to distribute food to children and their families?
- How often will you distribute food?
- Have staff members or volunteers that will have direct, repetitive contact with children passed a national background search?

Record Keeping

Keeping accurate records will help you run a smooth program. You'll be better prepared to estimate the amount of food each site will need and will be able to paint a clear picture of your program that will assist fundraising efforts.

Key questions to consider:

- What system will you use to record program recipients and other necessary documentation?
- How will you record the total number of children, adults and families who receive food?
- How will you track monthly data to be reporting to Feeding America annually through the Network Activity Report?

Parental Notification

Determine how you will handle the issue of parental permission. Often, the school principal or site coordinator will feel it is necessary that parents or guardians are contacted in advance about participation in the School Pantry program. This is especially important if you choose to require parents to be present during distributions. If you are distributing food to older children, you may opt to send a letter home with the child during the first distribution.

A suggested option is to provide each school with a sample letter to send home to the parent or guardian and let each site decide what will work best with their policies and procedures.

Visit [HungerNet](#) for a template of parental permission forms.

Recipient Orientation

You'll want to create a process for explaining the program and any guidelines to the recipients. Key questions to consider:

- How will the program and guidelines be explained to the recipients?
- How will distribution operate?
- If reusable bags are used, how will you explain the process for returning bags?



Distribution Considerations for the Backpack Program

QUESTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION CONSIDERATIONS

How do the Backpack Program standards affect the partnership with distribution sites?

As you may have noticed, the first four items listed on the sample Partner Agreement Template are the Program Standards that must be adhered to by each Feeding America Participant operating the program. Appropriate steps need to be taken to ensure that your program partners are also adhering to these standards, and thus keeping your Backpack Program in compliance with the Program Agreement.

Does every staff member and volunteer involved with the Backpack Program must pass a national background check?

Staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children must pass a National Background Search. National background searches are done to ensure the children's safety. Careful screening of staff and volunteers who work with children is an important risk management precaution. In most cases, this standard does not apply to staff and volunteers that assemble the backpacks/carriers, or deliver the backpacks/carriers to the sites, due to the fact that they will not have "direct and repetitive contact with children." The standard applies to the staff and/or volunteers that are responsible for distributing the backpacks/carriers to the children. The ways in which these background checks are performed are at the discretion of Participant and the partner agency. Feeding America understands the cost of this requirement and is committed to providing discounted national vendors to help alleviate costs. For more details and resources, please refer to the Backpack Program Sites/Partners [page](#).

Who manages the program at the distribution site?

It is time to address the distribution systems and procedures once a clear understanding of the program objectives and staff expectations have been reached. It is strongly recommended that each site selects a coordinator to be responsible for managing the program at their site, as well as serving as the FA Participant 'main contact person. Also, by having the Principal or Executive Director sign the partner agreement you gain an additional level of support and accountability.

In choosing site coordinators, individuals should be able to be respectful of the confidentiality of the children being served and adhere to the agreed upon terms of the Program Partner Agreement. The site coordinator position typically requires no more than two hours of work per week; however, this time fluctuates based on the number of program participants, and level of support from other staff Participants and volunteers.

Site Coordinators

Suggested Site Coordinator responsibilities:

- Attend required BackPack Program orientation and meetings
- Make sure food is only given to approved program participants
- Make sure food is distributed by approved adults each Friday
- Help to ensure that the confidentiality of participants is protected
- Communicate any necessary information about the BackPack Program to the Participant
- Contact referred students and parents and explain the program
- Maintain and submit all necessary records and reports (student referrals, distribution records, etc.)
- Call the Participant when food supply is low, or the numbers need to be adjusted
- Assure that food is being properly stored off the floor and on shelves, tables, etc.
- Keep the stock rotated – use oldest items first
- Make sure backpacks/carriers are accounted for

Do you recommend conducting training sessions for site coordinators?

One-on-one or group training sessions for Site Coordinators are a highly recommended practice. As previously mentioned, developing and maintaining a working relationship with each distribution site is one of the most critical steps in operating an efficient and effective program. Training sessions are a critical component of developing this working relationship. This meeting provides an ideal opportunity to make sure the site has their system worked out for administering the program. Many successful programs throughout the Network have developed a training manual and site checklist in order to provide the site with the necessary resources and direction. Please refer to the BackPack Program page found on HungerNet for more details and resources.

Who identifies the participants?

The decision of who will be responsible for identifying and referring program participants is usually made by each individual site. There is not one standard approach to this program component. Generally, site coordinators manage the referral process, and utilize their colleagues for helping to identify the appropriate children. Referrals are typically made by teachers, school counselors, nurses, and social service providers. With that said, it is important that site staff Participants have a clear understanding of the program, and specifically, the referral guidelines and procedures.

Distribution Systems and Procedure for the BackPack Program

Each site's distribution procedures will differ slightly. Once again, there is not "one standard approach" to distribution that will work for every site; however, every site should develop a plan that clearly communicates how their systems and procedures will be administered. The following program components should be considered when developing distribution plans.

Food Storage

Each site will need an approved location in the building where food can be safely stored. Key issues to consider:

- All food must be stored at least 6 inches off the ground on a pallet, shelf, desk, etc.
- Storage area should be dry, clean and free of pests.
- The storage area should be locked when not in use.
Rotate the inventory. Always check the label on the box to assure you are using the oldest dates first.

Distribution Method

Develop a plan for how food will be distributed. Key issues and questions to consider:

- Determine if you will pack items in a Food Bank backpack, the child's own backpack, a plastic bag, or other carrier.
- If you use Food Bank backpacks: How will they be labeled to indicate whose backpack it is? Where will the students return backpacks on Monday?
- If you use the child's backpack: When and how will the food sack be placed in their backpack?
- What will be the best time for children to receive their backpack?
- What will be the most efficient and confidential way to hand them out?
- Who will be the back-up person if the site coordinator is absent?
- How will you maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality? How will you distribute the food in a way that will not embarrass the program participants, or make the other children feel left out?
- Have the staff members or volunteers that will be in direct contact with the children received a clear report from their National Background Check?

Record Keeping

Determine how you will keep accurate records. Key questions to consider:

- What system will you use to record program recipients and other necessary documentation?
- How will you record if the children received food?
- How will you record monthly data for your monthly report to the Feeding America Participant?

Parental Notification

Determine how you will handle the issue of parental permission. Refer to the aforementioned details regarding options for handling parental notification.

Visit [HungerNet](https://www.hunger.org) for a template of parental permission forms.

Recipient Orientation

Determine how you will handle the process of explaining the program to the recipients. Key issues to address:

- How will the program be explained to the recipients?
- Explain the importance of participants returning their backpacks on Monday if your site uses Food Bank backpacks. If not returned, how will you handle distribution the following week? Discuss the importance of waiting to open the backpack until they get home.

Food Procurement Methods

There are a number of food sources available to program Participants and agencies.

- **Warehouse** – Donated product already in warehouses is the most frequent food source for the Backpack Program. Items include granola bars, meat sticks, crackers, peanut butter, and cereal.
- **Purchases** – Items not frequently donated, such as aseptic milk, fresh produce, and single-serve items are often bought for the Backpack Program.
- **Other** – Corporate sponsors, local restaurants, and truckers with overload are sometimes able to donate fresh produce and other food appropriate for the Backpack Program.

FOOD PROCUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL PROGRAMS

When choosing food to provide to children, Participants should consider the:

- **Perishability** – Participants that assemble and distribute carriers weekly should consider providing fresh produce that is not easily bruised and can be eaten raw, such as: apples, pears, oranges, grapefruit, and carrots. When weekly distribution is not an option, easy-open canned fruit and vegetables are recommended. These can include peaches & pears, fruit cocktail, mandarin oranges, green beans, peas, corn, and mixed vegetables. Dried fruit and fruit juice are also good options.
- **Nutrition** – Nutritious meals include a variety of foods from four of the five food groups of the recommended [USDA MyPlate](#) (fruit, vegetable, grain, protein, and dairy). Based on available resources, programs should do their best to develop menus in accordance with the 2015 USDA Dietary Guidelines, paying particular attention to provide a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean protein and dairy products that are often available in limited supply in food insecure households. Complete dietary guidelines can be found [here](#).
- **Allergies and Health Concerns** – Sites should be aware of the special needs of their recipients, such as food allergies and dietary restrictions (e.g. diabetes or peanut allergies), when distributing food. A suggested best practice is to request that distribution sites identify any children with allergies and/or dietary restrictions, and to take the necessary steps to ensure restricted items are not served to them. Some Participants also ask for food allergies on the program permission slip.

- **Quantity** - Food provision should take into account the time covered (weekend or holiday), the age of the participant (older children require more food and are better able to prepare food), and the number of participants to be fed (carriers can serve single participants, as well as siblings). As previously mentioned, it is important to be aware of how heavy the backpack can become, and to adjust it accordingly. Find permission slips template for the Backpack Program [here](#).
- **Preparation** - Participants should try to offer ready-to-eat items whenever possible and avoid the distribution of canned goods that require can openers.
- **Safety** - Participants should avoid glass, paper, foil, and other similar containers that can be dangerous if broken or easily compromised.
- **Participant Age** - should be taken into consideration when developing a Backpack Program. Elementary school students are at a critical stage of growth and development. They are the most in need of food and the least able to secure it on their own. Middle and high school students are better able to prepare and store food properly and are more stigmatized by their peers for receiving food aid.



FA PROCUREMENT OPTIONS

Grocery Purchasing Program

The Grocery Purchasing Program (GPP) connects members to a diverse, national vendor base through an online platform (Purchasing Portal) to help drive down procurement costs for members by consolidating network spend to leverage purchasing power. Through the Purchasing Portal, members can place orders directly for a variety of food and non-food products they are looking to purchase. The product listing is available on [HungerNet](#) and is updated often with new items and up to date pricing.

Choice System

The Choice System is a web-based application that allows members to acquire product donations made available through the national organization. The Choice System eliminates subjectivity and inefficiency in matching local food inventories with donation offers and provides more food to hungry Americans across the country. Find more information on [HungerNet](#)

Cluster

A group of members who voluntarily agree to form a coalition to handle processing of donated products, whether of less-than-trailer-loads (LTL) and full trailer-loads (TL). Donations will be offered, allocated and receipted through the cluster head..

To learn more about how these programs can help your organization or agencies save money, please contact the FA Food Sourcing Department at 312-263-2303.



BACKPACKS

Backpacks have the advantage of being a ready and secure means of distributing food to children in need. Backpacks also maintain a level of confidentiality by not making the food visible to other children, which helps to protect the dignity of the children. Backpacks of different varieties can provide an added level of discretion to the program. If all your backpacks are the same, and if a site is worried about confidentiality, then you can give each site the option of using the child's own backpack or the one that you provide. In terms of distribution, the food can either be placed in a plastic sack at your food bank, which then gets put into the backpack, or the food can be placed directly into the backpack.

Key questions and issues to consider when evaluating the use of backpacks for distribution:

- Does your budget include the necessary allocations to purchase backpacks or have you secured the appropriate product donations?
- Be aware that backpacks are occasionally lost, stolen, or destroyed, and may need to be replaced
- Backpacks require regular sanitization and cleaning, which needs to be accounted for when planning program costs and staff/volunteer time. Programs that put food directly into the backpacks will need to be more concerned about sanitation, while those who have the food pre-assembled in a sack may avoid the need for weekly sanitation.
- Do your sites have the necessary space to store the backpacks?
- Do your sites have a plan for dealing with the scenario of participants not returning their backpacks on Mondays?

Backpack Weight

Experts recommend that the total weight of a backpack not exceed 15% of the weight of the child. This means that a 50-pound child should have a backpack that does not exceed 7.5 pounds. The total weight would include books and other school supplies being carried, in addition to the contents provided through the Backpack Program. Although a backpack provided for a family may exceed this weight limitation

OTHER CARRIERS

Some sites prefer to distribute food to children via other carriers, most frequently plastic grocery or zipper storage bags that can be inserted into a child's backpack. If the child does not have a backpack, sites have sometimes purchased one for them. Anonymity is difficult to maintain if the plastic bag is the sole carrier, and not placed in a backpack. Using other carriers, such as plastic bags, has the bonus of being less expensive than backpacks. The major drawback of other carriers is that they are not reusable and may not provide the children with the same sense of association as with a backpack.

Key questions and issues to consider when evaluating the use of other carriers for distribution:

- Have you purchased the respective bags or secured the necessary donations?
- Have you accounted for the fact that these bags are not reusable?
- Be aware that program participants may not enjoy receiving plastic bags as much as backpacks
- Have you considered the confidentiality implications associated with this method?

ANONYMITY v. DIGNITY

The Backpack Program is rooted in not just a mission to provide food to hungry children, but to preserve children’s dignity by minimizing the stigma of poverty; h, the importance of anonymity varies across the Network. In some instances, children or their parents are embarrassed when others know they receive food aid. Some Participants distribute backpacks of various styles in a discrete manner in order to minimize the stigmatization of program recipients. In other cases, the children look forward to receiving their backpacks and carry them with pride. Some Participants even put the food bank logo, program name, or sponsors right on the backpacks. One child said backpacks are “the only present I receive at school.” In either case, the key word for your program should be dignity, not anonymity.



Logistics

ASSEMBLY METHODS

A best practice model is to assemble the backpacks or carriers at the food bank, with the advantages of having control, storage space, volunteers, and convenience. However, some Participants have also been able to successfully utilize the facilities of their various volunteer groups and/or program sites to assemble sacks.

The assembly process is typically performed by food bank employees, food bank volunteers, and members of volunteer organizations, such as the Junior League. Staff and volunteers who pack and distribute food carriers do not need to be ServSafe® certified, as long as donated and/or salvaged food has been inspected by individuals who are ServSafe® certified.

In addition to staffing issues, there are several other programmatic issues, such as: storage space, inventory control, and transportation costs that directly impact your approach to managing and administering this critical component of the program. This process is supported by answering the following questions:

- Have you determined the location for assembly? Does this location offer the necessary space, inventory control measures, and supervision?
- Do you have adequate staff/volunteer support to assemble the number of carriers needed for your program?
- Have you developed an efficient and effective strategy for the assembly process? Are the steps and procedures documented and/or easily explained to staff and volunteers responsible for assembling the backpacks or carriers?
- How will you communicate which type or how many items to put in each pack?
- Do you have a food bank staff member to supervise the assembly process?
- What will you pack the bags in once they are assembled?
- Will the backpacks or carriers be delivered to your partner agencies, directly to the sites, or will they be picked-up directly from the food bank? How will you pack the orders to accommodate your choice of delivery?
- Have you budgeted appropriately for the transportation costs associated with delivering assembled orders?

DELIVERY

The number of times you deliver each month will depend on the number of children referred to the program and the available storage space. Most programs typically deliver either a two week or four week supply of food. You may find that you must make more deliveries at the beginning stages of your program until you get a feel for how big your orders are and how much space each school or site has. At the time of delivery or their pick-up, it is recommended to get a physical inventory count so that you can adjust the next order accordingly.

See the later section on [delivering to rural sites](#) for tips on how to navigate transportation challenges associated with rural delivery



Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

In order to receive reimbursements through CACFP, sponsors must follow a protocol for the meal service that limits when, what and how meals can be served. Sponsors and sites are responsible for following a set of rules in order to receive reimbursement and it is the sponsor's responsibility to verify that staff, sites, and food vendors (if applicable) follow these rules.

SERVING TIMES

At-Risk Program sites are reimbursed for food served after the school day ends, on weekends and school vacations during the school year. If meals and snacks are served on weekends or school vacations they can be served at any time of day. Schools operating on a year-round basis may receive reimbursement throughout the year.

At-Risk Program sites can't claim reimbursements for food in the summer, unless a site is located in an attendance area of a school operating on a year-round school calendar and qualifies for reimbursement under SFSP. Meals or snacks must be served after the school day ends but there are no federal requirements for the timing of these services. If serving both supper and snack, please consult with your State Agency regarding their policy on the amount of time that must elapse between serving times.



MEAL COMPONENTS

The USDA requires certain components in each type of meal in order for them to be reimbursable. Each meal has varying requirements concerning the inclusion of the following four groups of foods: milk; fruit and vegetables; meat or meat alternatives; and grain. Meal pattern requirements also dictate the serving size of each component. On the next page you will find a short reference chart for the CACFP meal pattern and sample meals:

CACFP Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 & 13-18
Breakfast			
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Vegetables, fruit, or both	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains	½ oz eq*	½ oz eq*	1 oz eq*
Lunch & Supper Meal Patterns			
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz	1 ½ oz	2 oz
Vegetables	⅓ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Fruits	¼ cup	½ cup	
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq
Snack Meal components (select 2 of 5)			
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Fruit	½ cup	½ cup	
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1oz eq

*Meat and meat alternates may be used to substitute the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week.

Oz eq = ounce equivalents

Sample Snack

¾ cup carrot and celery sticks	4 oz low-fat yogurt
2 tbsp. peanut butter	¼ cup whole grain granola
Water	Water

Sample Lunch/Supper

2 oz lean hamburger made from 100% ground beef	2 oz grilled jerk-spiced chicken
1 whole wheat bun	½ cup rice
½ cup roasted broccoli	½ cup black bean and red pepper salad
¼ cup baked sweet potato fries *	¼ cup pineapple *
1 cup fat free milk	1 cup fat free milk

*A vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement

REIMBURSEMENTS

Sites submit claims to their State agency to receive reimbursements. The calculated reimbursements are based on the number of meals/snacks served multiplied by the current reimbursement rate. Records should be kept on the number of meals served at a site.

Sponsors receive reimbursement based on the number of meals served. Afterschool programs that utilize the **At-Risk Program Track** are reimbursed at the **free rate** for every child that receives a snack and/or supper in eligible states. Afterschool programs that utilize the **Out-of-School Hours Care Program Track** are reimbursed for snacks and suppers at a rate based on each participant's family income.

Children of families that earn below 130% of the federal poverty line will be reimbursed at the free rate. Children of families that earn between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty line will receive the reduced rate. Children of families that earn above 185% of poverty will be reimbursed at the paid rate. Please reference the chart below for the most current reimbursement rates.

2019 REIMBURSEMENT RATES				
Per Meal Rates in whole or fractions of U.S. \$		Breakfast	Supper	Snack
Contiguous States	Paid	\$ 0.31	\$ 0.31	\$ 0.08
	Reduced	\$ 1.49	\$ 2.91	\$ 0.45
	Free	\$ 1.79	\$ 3.31	\$ 0.91
Alaska	Paid	\$ 0.46	\$ 0.51	\$ 0.13
	Reduced	\$ 2.57	\$ 4.98	\$ 0.74
	Free	\$ 2.87	\$ 5.38	\$ 1.48
Hawaii	Paid	\$ 0.35	\$ 0.37	\$ 0.09
	Reduced	\$ 1.79	\$ 3.48	\$ 0.53
	Free	\$ 2.09	\$ 3.88	\$ 1.06

In addition to cash reimbursement, the USDA makes donated agricultural commodities or cash-in-lieu of commodities available to institutions serving suppers under CACFP. The current rate for cash-in-lieu of commodities is 23.5 cents per supper.

Using CACFP for Administrative Costs

CACFP sponsors can spend up to 15% of their annual reimbursement on administrative costs. Generally, a State Agency cannot require a sponsor to spend a specific amount of the reimbursement on food. However, there are three exceptions.

1. When lack of food expenditure is a contributing factor to not meeting the meal pattern
2. When the meals can only be improved by an increase in expenditures for food
3. When a sponsor has reached the maximum nonprofit food service account balance permitted by the State, but its continuing to receive reimbursement in excess of expenditures

PRODUCING & SERVING MEALS

Sponsors have several options to get the meals served at their sites (described below). A sponsor has the option of preparing its own meals, either at a central location or at each site, or obtaining them through a vendor.

Note: No matter the production method, it is ultimately the Sponsor's responsibility to make sure all meals meet the meal pattern requirements and that other applicable guidelines, like those concerning food safety, are followed.

See the section on [Meal Requirements](#) to learn more about the different ways in which meals can be prepared and obtained. **All meals must meet USDA dietary requirements, despite their method of production.**

In order to receive reimbursement, each child must receive every component of each snack and/or supper. The food can be served either under the unitized method or the family style method.

- **The unitized method of service** means that you provide each child with at least the minimum serving size of each meal or snack component.
- **The family style method of service** means that the components of each meal are readily available at each child and that each child can serve themselves each meal component.

When serving meals, sponsors need to ensure they meet all applicable State and local law and regulations.

Food banks contracting with a vendor should also make provisions for changes in ordering and for corrective action if meals are inadequate. Frequently, CACFP sites will experience changes in daily participation, which can sometimes be anticipated and should be reported to the vendor, so the Sponsor does not purchase more meals than necessary. **Sponsors will only be reimbursed for the meals served, not the meals ordered.** Moreover, if meals do not meet meal pattern requirements, are not of sufficient quality, or are otherwise inadequate, the food bank should have a course of action to correct the meal production.

The delivery of meals must be documented via delivery receipts that include the number and type of meals delivered to each site. This is required for the meals to be reimbursable and should be incorporated into the training of site staff as needed.

Resources

[CACFP Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks](#)

[CACFP Meal Pattern Guidelines](#)

[ChooseMyPlate.gov Daily Food Plan Resources](#)

[Healthy Food Bank Hub](#)



Summer Food Service Program

In order to receive reimbursements through SFP, sponsors must follow a protocol for the meal service that limits when, what and how meals can be served. Sponsors and sites are responsible for following a set of rules in order to receive reimbursement and it is the sponsor's responsibility to verify that staff, sites, and food vendors (if applicable) follow these rules.

MEAL COMPONENTS

The USDA requires certain components in each type of meal in order for them to be reimbursable. Each meal has varying requirements concerning the inclusion of the following four groups of foods: milk; fruit and vegetables; meat or meat alternatives; and grain. Meal pattern requirements also dictate the serving size of each component. See the next page for a short reference chart for the SFSP meal pattern.

SFSP Meal Patterns

FOOD COMPONENTS/ITEMS	BREAKFAST Serve all three	LUNCH OR SUPPER Serve all four	SNACK Serve two of the four
Milk	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	
Fluid milk (whole, low-fat, or fat-free)	1cup1 (½pint, 8 fluid ounces)	1cup (½pint, 8 fluid ounces)	1cup (½pint, 8 fluid ounces)
Vegetables and Fruits – Equivalent quantity of any combination of...	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	
Vegetable or fruit or	½ cup	¾ cup total	¾ cup
Full-strength vegetable or fruit juice	½ cup (4 fluid ounces)		¾ cup (6 fluid ounces)
Grains/Breads – Equivalent quantity of any combination of...	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	
Bread or	1slice	1slice	1slice
Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc. or	1 serving	1 serving	1 serving
Cold dry cereal or	¾ cup or 1 ounce		¾ cup or 1 ounce
Cooked cereal or cereal grains or	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Cooked pasta or noodle products	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Meat/Meat Alternates Equivalent quantity of any combination of...	OPTIONAL	REQUIRED	
Lean meat or poultry or fish or	1ounce	2 ounces	1 ounce
Alternate protein products or	1ounce	2 ounces	1 ounce
Cheese or	1ounce	2 ounces	1 ounce
Egg (large) or	½	1	½

Cooked dry beans or peas or	¼ cup	½ cup	¼ cup
Peanut or other nut or seed butters or	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	2 tablespoons
Nuts or seeds or		1 ounce=50%	1 ounce
Yogurt	4 ounces or ½ cup	8 ounces or 1 cup	4 ounces or ½ cup

REIMBURSEMENTS

Most sponsors must be approved to receive reimbursement for serving lunch and one other meal. Some sponsors serve breakfast only or breakfast with a snack. Sponsors receive reimbursement based on the number of meals served. Please reference the chart below for the most current reimbursement rates.

2019 REIMBURSEMENT RATES				
Per Meal Rates in whole or fractions of U.S. \$		Breakfast	Supper	Snack
Contiguous States	Rural or Self-Prep Sites	\$2.30	\$4.03	\$0.95
	All Other Types of Sites	\$2.26	\$3.97	\$0.93
Alaska	Rural or Self-Prep Sites	\$3.73	\$6.53	\$1.55
	All Other Types of Sites	\$3.66	\$6.42	\$1.51
Hawaii	Rural or Self-Prep Sites	\$2.68	\$4.72	\$1.11
	All Other Types of Sites	\$2.63	\$4.64	\$1.09

PRODUCING & SERVING MEALS

A sponsor may contract with a vendor or prepare its own meals through an agreement with a school. Meals that are self-prepared are reimbursed according to a “self-prep” rate that excludes some operational costs.

Resources

- [SFSP Nutrition Standards for SFSP Meals and Snacks](#)
- [SFSP Meal Pattern Guidelines](#)
- [ChooseMyPlate.gov Daily Food Plan Resources](#)
- [Healthy Food Bank Hub](#)



Delivery Approaches for Rural Areas

Programs operating in rural settings can pose logistical challenges. Additional transportation costs, including gas and staff time, will be incurred. Outlined below are some innovative approaches that some network members have implemented to overcome delivery challenges in rural areas.

Mobile Delivery of Summer Meals

Since it can be difficult to establish summer food sites in rural areas, some food banks have implemented mobile delivery of summer meals. Food banks utilizing this delivery model pack lunches in insulated bags with frozen ice panels and load them into a delivery van. The van then goes to multiple congregate locations, such as a park, stopping for 15-30 minutes at each site to serve meals to the children. Food temperatures are taken and recorded at each stop and children use antibacterial hand wipes to meet the hand washing requirement.

Partnering with Distribution Companies

Partnering with distribution companies for delivery is often implemented with the Backpack Program, but this approach can be adapted and applied to other programs. Some delivery companies have generously donated their time to deliver packed food sacks to schools that are on their delivery routes. Partnerships with delivery companies can be leveraged different ways, but it is an innovative way to engage corporate donors and their employees.

Regional Deliveries

Regional deliveries of food are often utilized when implementing the Backpack Program, but this approach can be adapted and applied to other programs. Deliveries are made to a designated area (i.e. vacant parking lot) that is in close proximity to multiple partner agencies and/or sites. This delivery method allows the food bank to make one drop-off for multiple sites and prearrange a time and location to meet them.

DELIVERY PLANNING

Now that you have read through the different aspects you need to consider when planning distribution, start thinking about delivery options for your own program. Use the prompts below to guide you through the process.

Program Model: (check the boxes that apply)

- Kids Cafe
 - Vendor
 - Self-prep (central)
 - Self-prep (site)
- BackPack
 - Central pack
 - Self-pack (site)
 - Self-pack (third location)
- School Pantry
 - Mobile
 - On-site pantry

Delivery Plan

Refer to the chart in the delivery logistics section on the previous page. Find the section that corresponds to the program model you are implementing. Use the “things you should consider” outlined in that section to guide you through the process of answering the following questions and to map out a delivery plan.

1) Is the food delivered to the sites or are the sites picking up the food?

2) If being picked up, where is the pick-up (the food bank or central location near sites)?

3) If delivered, who is doing the delivery (the food bank, vendor, or a third party)?

4) If delivered by the food bank, can you add on to existing deliveries or do you need separate delivery routes?

5) What is the frequency of delivery or pick-up?

6) How are you packaging the food for delivery or pick up?

7) How are you ensuring food safety?

Use this space to map out your plan for getting the food to the sites.

Food Safety and Sourcing

Food Safety

Food safety is an important component of all child hunger programs from food preparation and storage to distribution. All kitchens that produce meals or snacks for your programs must meet local health department standards and certifications. Check with your local Health Department for licensing requirements.

In addition, the Feeding America member contract states that food banks must provide some form of food safety training to at least one representative from each member agency.

If agencies utilize food provided by the food bank to make meals, their key food service program staff are required to meet local commercial food safety standards.

Resources

[Feeding America Food Safety Resources](#)

Menu Planning

Serving foods that have nutritional value, taste good to children and meet program meal pattern requirements (if operating a federal program) requires careful menu planning. You may want to

Key Questions to Ask When Planning Menus

- How far in advance can you plan your menus?
- Have you considered both donated product and purchased items?
 - If you are starting with donated product, ask “what do I have?” then fill menus with purchased food to complete meals.
 - If you are starting with purchased ask “what do I need?” then fill in with available donated as extras.
- Have you considered cycling menus or rotating package contents (offering flexibility and variety)?
- What kind of staff, equipment, time and storage are available? Are there any limits on these resources that will affect your menu planning?
- How can you incorporate contrasts of color, texture, flavor and methods of preparation?
- Are the foods child-friendly?
- Are you distributing perishable or non-perishable foods or a combination of both?
- If serving perishable meals, are they hot or cold?
- How are your menus being evaluated? By whom?
- Do you have a plan for allergies and health concerns?
 - A suggested best practice is to have sites identify children with dietary restrictions and take necessary steps to ensure restricted items are not served to them.

identify a team of individuals who can assist with this process, including food bank staff in food sourcing and food purchasing, kitchen staff, site staff and either a staff dietitian or nutrition intern.

Menu planning varies for every program, but there are basic considerations that you should take into account when planning the menu or package contents for any programs. For some programs, your menu will be heavily dependent on the distribution systems that you put in place (see the distribution section for more details).

Food Sourcing

After you have planned your menus, you will now have to think about from where you will source food. There are many options for food sourcing. In choosing where you will source food, consider:

- The menu you are trying to create
- Financial resources that are available
- Infrastructure available to support meal/package creation
- Your program model (How much? How often?)
- The number of participants you are trying to serve

Additionally, food sourcing depends on where you are preparing the food. As mentioned in the menu planning section, there are various options for preparing food. Food can be prepared at the food bank prior to delivery, on site where the food is being distributed or by a vendor.

The preparation method you choose will impact where and what type of food you source. Outlined below are different options you should consider when determining where to source food for your program:

- Current Inventory
 - Check your warehouse to see if there is donated product available that can be used in one of your programs.
 - Check with food sourcing staff to see what is currently available and/or what could be procured through the [Choice System](#).
- Purchasing Product
 - If there are items that you need for your program that are not frequently donated, then you will need to purchase that specific product.
 - It is important to communicate with food sourcing staff the needs of your program, as they may not be aware of what to procure to support the program.
- Community Gardens/Food Bank Gardens
 - Building a garden is a terrific source of fresh produce and an alternative to processed foods that can be used in your menu.
- Other
 - Corporate sponsors, local restaurants and truckers with overload are sometimes able to donate fresh produce and other food appropriate for your program. You can also consider holding a food drive and ask people to donate specific food items that you will need for your program.

Vending

If a food bank does not prepare meals itself or have sites that prepare meals, they can contract with a vendor to prepare meals. Food banks can purchase meals through local school food authorities (SFAs) or food service management companies (FSMCs), which are for-profit, private companies. Vending meals requires less work than preparing meals and monitoring meal patterns, though costs can vary. See the [CACFP section](#) on purchasing meals for more information.

Nutrition and Food Sourcing

Evaluating the nutritional quality of individual food items, meals and menus is a challenging yet important task. In addition to the nutrition guidelines outlined in the Federal Nutrition Program section above, many food banks set goals to help improve the nutritional quality and variety of the food they provide through their programs and food distributions.

To get started, consider the following questions:

- Are the Executive Team and Board committed to including concepts of nutritional quality into food sourcing goals and long-term strategic planning?
- Do we have staff or volunteers to manage this project? Short-term or ongoing?
- Will we include donated product, purchased product, or both into the evaluation?
- Are we looking for a snapshot of the nutritional quality or an in-depth tool to use for analysis and education?
- How much control do we have over each of our food streams? Where can we have the most impact if we set nutrition goals?

There are many approaches to evaluating the nutritional quality of the food sourced and distributed. Some food banks choose to focus on specific categories such as fresh produce, lean meats and low-fat dairy; some choose to assign ranks or values to all food items by using information from a product's nutrition fact label; others use nutrient thresholds to avoid excess amounts of specific nutrients like sodium, trans fat and added sugars.

To determine which approach is best for you, it's critical to set a clear objective and then determine the best tool to help you meet your goal.

Avoid vague objectives such as:

- "To increase the amount of nutritious food"
- "To decrease processed foods"

Here are some examples of clear objectives:

- "To include at least 2 fresh produce items in each Backpack distribution for the upcoming school year"
- "To serve only fat-free or 1% milk in all meal programs"
- "To have all menus in the Kids Cafe program meet the current USDA Dietary Guidelines, using the MyPlate template"



DETERMINING THE AMOUNT OF FOOD TO SOURCE

1) How many sites?

2) How many children?

3) How many meals per day?

4) How often are you serving?

SOURCING FOOD

Are there items available in your current inventory? Yes No

List current items available in your inventory:

2) Are there other ways you could get donated product for your program?

3) Do you need to purchase food? Yes No

If yes, what?

4) Can you get products through Feeding America's Choice Program or Purchase Program?

Yes No

If yes, what?

5) Do you need to vend? Yes No

If yes, with who?

Resources

- [2015-2020 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- [Community Health and Nutrition Resources on Hunger Net](#)
- [Product Sourcing HungerNet Section](#)
- [Food and Grocery Purchasing HungerNet Section](#)
- [What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl](#)
- [Nutrition.gov](#)



Meal Requirements

TYPES OF MEAL PRODUCTION

A food bank may prepare meals at a central location or have sites prepare meals. Food banks can purchase foods, use various product in food bank inventory, use commodities to supply meal ingredients, use produce from food bank or site gardens, or blend these resources. There are three basic models of meal production. Each model is detailed below.

Self-Preparation (site)	Self -Preparation (central production)	Vended
Sites produce their own meals	Food banks prepare meals in a central location, like its community kitchen, and deliver the food to each site	Food banks purchase meals from a school food authority or a food service company that are then delivered to each

Self-Preparation

Food banks that decide to prepare meals at their own facilities may prepare meals in their on-site kitchens or package unitized meals with healthy shelf stable items. Food bank kitchens offer the capacity to prepare batches of hot meals, package meals that can be frozen and reheated, or prepare cold meals for delivery to sites.

Food banks may also serve as the staging area for the construction of shelf stable meals that can be distributed to sites at intervals. For sponsors delivering hot meals to their site or delivering meals to sites that lack adequate storage they need to ensure they meet all applicable State and local law and regulations.

Sites can also prepare meals, which can reduce delivery costs as well as other costs associated with the use of food bank facilities and resources. In addition, if sites already prepare meals and are simply partnering with the sponsor to get access to cheaper food or administrative assistance with the CACFP, it will be easy to integrate the administrative work with the food preparation and meal service already taking place at the site.

Purchasing Meals

If a food bank does not prepare meals itself or have sites that prepare meals, they can contract with a vendor to prepare meals. Food banks can purchase meals through local school food authorities (SFAs) or food service management companies (FSMCs), which are for-profit, private companies. Vending meals requires less work to prepare meals and to monitor meal patterns. Vending often includes delivery and may include other necessary supplies like utensils, napkins, trash bags, or other items. Vending may be a more affordable option than self-preparation

depending on the resources of a sponsor and its sites as well as the number of meals that need to be prepared.

School Food Authorities (SFA)

Many food banks, contract with local SFAs to provide meals. SFAs are experienced in producing meals in bulk that satisfy USDA meal pattern requirements and, oftentimes, meals that children enjoy and will eat. **Sponsors may contract with SFAs without going through a competitive bid process, which is required for vendor contracts in excess of \$10,000** (value may vary by State).

Food Service Management Companies (FSMC)

Food banks can use a FSMC to supply meals for their sites although this usually requires a competitive procurement using a request for proposal (RFP). An FSMC is usually a private company, though the designation can also refer to a public entity or a private nonprofit organization. Typically, food banks that purchase meals from an FSMC also have the organization deliver the meals to each site and may also include the provision of utensils, napkins, and other items in the contract. Check with your State Agency to determine the maximum dollar value beyond which a food bank would be required to award the contract based on a competitive bid process. Bids more than \$50,000 must be submitted to the State Agency for approval and States must respond within 10 working days of receipt before soliciting proposals from vendors. Several States have additional requirements regarding contracts with FSMCs, depending upon the amount of the contract.

Note: CACFP regulations for FSMC contracts include several requirements for the meals, contract length, cancellation, and delivery. The process for obtaining bids from an FSMC is not difficult, but it does have specific steps.

MENU PLANNING

Serving meals and snacks that have nutritional value, meet program meal pattern requirements and taste good to children requires careful menu planning. You may want to identify a team of individuals who can assist with this process, including food bank staff in food sourcing and food purchasing, kitchen staff, site staff and either a staff dietitian or nutrition intern.

Key Questions to Ask When Planning Menus

- Have you set aside a time and place to plan menus?
- Is it possible to plan well in advance?
- Have you considered both donated product and purchased items?
- Have you considered cycling menus (offering flexibility and variety)?
- Have you considered the available kitchen staff (either at your central kitchen or at each site), equipment, time, and storage available?
- Are you planning snacks last to fill in possible nutritional gaps left by breakfast and lunch?
- Are you striving for contrasts of color, texture, flavor, and methods of preparation?
- Do you have a plan to evaluate your menus?

Meal and Snack Requirements

A meal consists of all five food groups (fruit, vegetable, grain, protein and dairy) of the recommended USDA MyPlate food chart. Meals may be hot or cold. A snack consists of at least two of the five food groups.

Resources

[CACFP Child Meal Pattern Guidelines](#)

[Nutrition.gov Meal Planning Resources](#)

START PLANNING!

If you are self-preparing meals at a Kids Cafe, use the menu below as practice for completing a full week for your specific program.

Week 1	Menu	Portion Size
Monday	Meal: Component 1: Component 2: Component 3: Component 4: Snack:	
Tuesday	Meal: Component 1: Component 2: Component 3: Component 4: Snack:	
Wednesday	Meal: Component 1: Component 2: Component 3: Component 4: Snack:	
Thursday	Meal: Component 1: Component 2: Component 3: Component 4: Snack:	
Friday	Meal: Component 1: Component 2: Component 3: Component 4: Snack:	

Tips for Backpack Contents

Ideally, Backpacks should contain a variety of foods from each food group, including items that can be used together to create complete meals. Special attention should be paid to include a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy products, and items low in sodium, sugar, and fat. However, many programs will have a different approach to the type and number of food items to include in a Backpack.

Should the Backpack include snacks or complete meals?

There are different philosophies about this and programmatic issues, such as budgetary constraints, that directly impact the decision to provide snacks or complete meals. Some programs focus on serving as many children as possible and include mainly snack type items as means for reducing the cost per child. Other programs focus on providing each participant with enough food to ensure that they have complete meals for the entire weekend, even if it means that they have to serve a smaller number of children. There are also many programs within the Network that strive for the midpoint of this service continuum. It is important to weigh the pros and cons of each approach and determine what is going to be the most cost effective and beneficial for the children. In the end, your program will have to decide what approach works best for your community, the objective of your program, and your available resources.

Is the goal to feed the individual or the entire family?

As in the case of the previous question, there is not one right approach to this issue. However, programs should decide upfront how they will address this question. Currently, many Participants aim to provide Backpack Program recipients with enough food to share with their siblings. Participants have developed at least two distinct ways of dealing with this issue:

- Some distribute a Backpack with a standard amount of food for each child. If there are multiple children in a family whom the site wants to accommodate, each child receives a sack of food in the Backpack.
- Some food banks determine Backpack portions according to family size. Specifically, they use free or reduced lunch paperwork or enrollment forms to identify how many children there are in a participating family. If family sizes are not available, the food bank can provide larger portions regardless.

Children then receive the appropriately sized Backpack based on the number of siblings. This approach allows them to meet the needs of students who may not be able to receive their own Backpack because they are enrolled in a school without a program, or because they are too young. In either scenario it is very important to be aware of how heavy the Backpack can become, and to adjust it accordingly

In general, the primary objective is to provide food for the child, and programs should try to utilize other resources available through the food bank in order to address the needs of the whole family. For example, you can place information about nearby pantries in the child's Backpack.

How often should our program distribute backpacks?

According to the National Program Standards, distributions must be made a minimum of once a month during the school year. Most programs distribute carriers weekly and provide additional distributions for vacations and holidays.

Do programs include other items in the backpacks besides food?

Some programs that have available resources have been able to include other beneficial items in backpacks. If possible, the Backpack Program can provide an excellent way to distribute important items and resources to at-risk families.

Examples include:

- Advocacy material (food stamp information, food pantries or soup kitchens)
- Information for food resources during service interruptions (e.g. holidays, weekends, summers)
- Food preparation and storage instructions
- Sample menus and nutrition information (worksheets, information brochures)
- Service supplies (napkins, sporks, plates)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Shampoo and soap
- School supplies (pencils, ruler)
- Physical education information and activities





Section 5

Program Sustainability

In this section you will find information on:

- **Funding**
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
- **Visibility and Awareness**
- **Knowledge Transfer**
- **Outcomes and Impact**
- **Marketing Your Program**
 - **Messaging**
 - **Advocacy and Outreach**
- **Fundraising**
 - **Finding New Funding Sources**
 - **Grant Writing**
- **Site Management**
 - **Site Coordinator Responsibilities**
 - **Monitoring**
 - **Volunteer Management**
- **Record Keeping Requirements**
 - **Process Documentation**
 - **Create your own step by step timeline**
 - **Options for Documenting Information**
 - **Record Keeping for CACFP**

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

Components of Sustainability

FUNDING

Without a funding plan, program goals cannot be achieved. Ensure you have a plan that analyzes potential sources of money, lays out a map for future funding, and takes into consideration all of the non-monetary ways to utilize funds.

Programs that draw from diverse funding sources have an easier time achieving long term sustainability. This may be beyond your control but do what you can to reduce your reliance on a sole funding source or funding type.

- ✓ Seek financial support from multiple sources and levels
 - Food bank general operating funds
 - Community grants or resources
 - Federal funding or other reimbursements
 - Feeding America grants
 - Active fundraising (individual, corporate, foundations and bequests)
- ✓ Think about how to reduce utilization of funds by drawing on donations or volunteers
 - Can you use donated food versus purchased food in a program?
 - Are you utilizing skilled volunteers?
 - Are there other ways you can cut costs without sacrificing the integrity of the program?

Resources

[Feeding America Member Grants](#)

[Feeding America External Opportunities](#)

[USDA Federal Nutrition Programs:](#)

[Summer](#)

[Afterschool](#)

[The Foundation Center's Foundation Directory](#)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

It's important to consider partnerships in your sustainability plan, because if partners are not engaged during your transition, the integrity and impact of your program will decrease.

A key component of sustainability will **be empowering local sites or partners to continue running programs and** ensuring that someone at your food bank is able to manage those relationships in your absence. Think about different ways to foster community involvement in your programming. Consider all of the partners impacted by your program, from your internal work team to the greater community in which your program(s) operates.

How can you ensure wider involvement and engagement on each of these different levels?

- ✓ Food Bank Staff
- ✓ Sites and Site Coordinators
- ✓ Community Groups and Community-Based Organizations
- ✓ Program Volunteers
- ✓ Clients
- ✓ Donors

Full participation of all relevant stakeholders, and open lines of communication will help foster strong partners, from sites to donors. Work on continuous relationship building and improvement.

Resources

[Collaborating for Clients HungerNet Page](#)

[Community Tool Box: Creating and Maintaining Partnerships Toolkit](#)

VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS

Your community is comprised of all the people that touch your program, and all of the people that your program impacts. How are you spreading awareness of the program and its benefits? How are you getting people outside of your food bank to have an opportunity to be a part of the program, either by volunteering, being aware of ongoing activities, or participating in other ways? How are you ensuring that community members, both those who may be eligible for participation and those who are not, are aware of the program? Within all those different groups, be sure you:

- Promote the program
 - Have a thoughtful outreach plan for potentially eligible clients or families, make sure to revisit often
- Educate and inform all stakeholders about the program
 - Utilize this [stakeholder mapping activity](#) to determine different stakeholders and establish the best way to be in contact with each of the different groups
- Promote the program results
 - Use existing program communication modes to include success stories about the program, from anecdotes to evaluation results.
- Develop program leadership
 - Support other food bank staff, volunteers, or other individuals in becoming program leaders by sharing processes and teaching them how to be effective program supporters
 - Empower sites to take on programmatic aspects to remove the burden from the food bank and engage the local site
- Create strong channels of communication and communicate openly with all involved
 - Share information consistently in ways that are tailored for each group of stakeholders.

From sharing small successes, or quotes from program participants with your internal team, to effective outreach to potential clients, **making sure that the benefits and successes of the program are understood will go a long way in increasing program sustainability.**

It is critical to promote program successes within your food bank as well. Determine the potential vehicles, such as an internal update email, newsletter, or staff meetings, where you can share client anecdotes, site coordinator stories, pictures, or general successes with a wider audience at your food bank.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

If your program, or the philosophy behind it, only lives within you and your immediate team, it won't take root within your food bank. Additionally, even if everyone at your food bank is on board with your work, if you haven't created the supporting infrastructure for the program, the program won't succeed. Think about the knowledge you have gained and create a way to share that information with others.

- Create policies, procedures, and protocols for knowledge transfer:
 - Identify the process that needs to be established, or is already taking place, which should be defined by your ultimate program goal.
 - If your goal is to bring on a new program site, what are the necessary steps in the sequence they need to be performed in order to accomplish this goal?
- Make an outline of all the work that goes into your program from beginning to end to determine what needs to continue in your absence
 - Note which tasks are essential to complete, which are good to complete, and which are not necessary for the program to function
 - Determine what resources are needed to complete this work. What resources are needed to accomplish this? Include tangible resources like money and food, but also intangibles like time and expertise, which will help determine how to make sure all these steps can be shared with other staff.
 - Develop cost effective, and affordable strategies that take into account the realities of your food bank
- Share and spread your project infrastructure. Discuss these steps with other staff at the food bank. Loop in the people that need to be informed and need to be committed to this work.
 - If helpful, send calendar invites for up to a year with key deadlines to stakeholders at your food bank, or site coordinators, as a friendly reminder that will help them keep your program top of mind.
- **Document institutional knowledge:** There are many ways for an organization and an individual to identify, store, and transfer knowledge. Some strategies will work better in one organization than in another, and some may not be appropriate for specific types of content. The challenge is to identify and develop complementary ways to manage and transfer knowledge within a team, department, food bank, or across a community.



Methods for Knowledge Transfer		
Interviews	Guides	Mentoring
Knowledge Maps	Storyboards	Databases
Templates	Lessons Learned by Debriefings	Lunch and Learns
Standard Operating Procedures	Best Practices	FAQs
Podcasts	Program Manuals	Contact Lists
Calendar Invites	Stakeholder Mapping	

Make this process as easy as possible for people to ensure that they will use it – think about what was useful to you in establishing and implementing a program and what may be useful to other people. **Above all, keep it simple.** Creating these processes and tools will involve work from your end, but your final steps should be easy to follow.

Resources

[Capacity Self-Assessment Tool](#)

[Kids Cafe, Backpack, and School Pantry Resource Documents](#)

[SNAP Application Assistance](#)



TIPS FOR SUSTAINING A PROGRAM

One of the major (and maybe the most important) lessons I learned when considering how to create and maintain a sustainable program is to **collaborate with internal stakeholders at the food bank**. Working with marketing, development, finance, and transportation was key to ensure that all the factors needed on our end were in place to create programs from scratch and that those programs could continue beyond their pilot phases. Once everyone was on the same page about the vision for sustaining school pantries, we were then able to execute the program within our service area by encouraging each site to understand the importance of buy in for hunger relief programs at their individual schools.

*Traci Simmons, Child Hunger Corps Member
Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, OK*

Make sure your directions include a **calendar of deadlines**. Deadlines are something people can understand, and something people can follow. If you don't leave deadlines, information that should have been sent out in May is all of a sudden being sent out in July, putting your programming in jeopardy. **Observe your team's strengths and complement them**. If your team is really good at being organized but sometimes needs a cheerleader, leave little fun sticky notes in your notes that will provide encouragement and relevance to their work. If they sometimes lack organization, organize things for them before you leave. They'll appreciate that it's a little bit of you, and through the process, you'll come to realize what you brought to the table too.

*Rachel Rieder, Child Hunger Corps Member
Second Harvest Heartland, MN*

Marketing Your Program

The objectives of marketing are to secure more food, funds and friends (volunteers) for your program. Towards this end, Feeding America maintains a marketing plan and provides marketing materials in printed and electronic form at no cost. Participants should use marketing materials developed by Feeding America in conjunction with other materials they develop for their specific program.

Messaging

Messaging is perhaps the single most important aspect of marketing. When marketing your child hunger programs, you should focus on three aspects of the program:

1. The existence of hungry children in your community (provide numbers).
2. How the program alleviates hunger (provide numbers).
3. That the program is cost-effective (provide examples – less than \$___ per child per week).

The following is a list of marketing materials that may support your marketing efforts:

- Local brochure/flyer
- Local and National Child Hunger Statistics Fact Sheet
- Program Fact Sheet
- Program press release template

For more information and resources, please refer to the [Marketing and Communications page](#) on HungerNet or contact the Communications Department at Feeding America.

Resources

[Press Release Template](#)

[Child Hunger One Pager](#)

[SNAP Program Outreach](#)

[Digital Outreach HungerNet](#)

PROGRAM NAMES

Program names are an important component of marketing, often offering potential funders a first impression of the program. A good name will be remembered by volunteers and potential donors, increasing their commitment to the program. The national office encourages startup programs to use the names “Kids Cafe”, “School Pantry”, “The Backpack Program” in order to maximize the exposure of the program.

To this end, Feeding America has created new child hunger program logos. The logos were created as a resource for member food banks to help identify the connection between local programs and national efforts. All permissions and parameters for use of the logos shall be in accordance with [Appendix C of the Member Contract](#) previously executed.

Advocacy

Feeding America encourages member food banks to incorporate general public advocacy and public policy advocacy as part of their child hunger programs. Personal outreach to families should mainly involve information regarding alternative methods of food sourcing and trying to make their reliance on these programs temporary. Public policy efforts should be targeted toward local child hunger policymakers.

Resources

[Advocacy & Public Policy HungerNet Section](#)

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES FROM THE FEEDING AMERICA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM

[Latest from the Government Relations Team](#)

[Federal Child Nutrition Programs](#)

[Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2019 Legislative Priorities](#)

[Child Nutrition Reauthorization Summer Priorities](#)

Outreach

A successful program is one that proactively engages the community and that is where outreach comes into play. You have already contacted the initial community members to identify proper sites and appropriate participants, but there must be consistent and constant outreach to sustain and grow your program.

Utilize your food bank staff. Many food banks have a dedicated Community Outreach staff member whose job is to engage local citizens.

SFSP OUTREACH

The Summer Food Service Program incorporates mandatory outreach. The new law requires schools to inform families about the availability and locations of SFSP meals. We recommend that food banks sponsoring SFSP and/or conducting SFSP outreach contact their local schools to coordinate efforts. Find USDA SFSP Outreach resources [here](#).

Outreach to Parents and Children

It is critical to communicate with the parents and children who need the program—after all, the program exists for them. Let them know about current happenings, smart eating and other opportunities.

Ways to engage this audience:

Newsletter

sending out a monthly or quarterly newsletter can help give a large overview of the efforts of the food bank, the upcoming events, the available programs, etc.

Fun fact sheets

creating one-page takeaways is a useful way to continually teach parents and kids about the importance of nutrition, easy recipes, other available programs, etc.

Flyers

handing out information sheets or posting them on bulletins in schools is a great way to disseminate details about programs (e.g. summer feeding sites).

Take suggestions

create surveys or suggestion sheets that make communication a two-way channel.

Digital marketing

create ads in search engines or social media, display banner ads, or target potential participants via an email list.

Postcards

if you're working with schools, postcards highlighting program details can be sent to all families eligible to participate. Additionally, postcards can be inserted into backpacks to advertise other programs such as Summer Food, School Pantry, etc.

Media Communication

Utilizing local media is a great way to get the word out to the community—it's broad coverage with little effort. Support from the media will boost not just awareness in the program, but also credibility. The media can also help advertise program sites. Feeding America has created several resources to help you in your media outreach efforts. Click on the links below to view.

Resources

[Master Case Statements](#)

[Press Release Template](#)

[Marketing & Communication HungerNet Section](#)

PRESS RELEASE PREP:

Who are the key players involved?

What are the high-level details of the program?

Where is the new program?

When was it started?

How did the new program come to be?

Community Engagement

Use the space below to list the top 3 child hunger facts for your community.

1.
2.
3.

Community support is essential to help sustain and grow your program. You must continually communicate with old and new donors, volunteers and participants to help spark word-of-mouth. Let them know the purpose of the program, the need for donations, the rewarding experience of volunteering and goals reached with new partners. The more aware and involved your efforts, the more investment and commitment people will have in the success of the program.

Ways to spark engagement:

- Prepare educational and informational presentations to community groups
- Plan meetings with stakeholders like Department of Health, Department of Education and superintendents
- Host events at neighborhood schools
- Attend council meetings
- Utilize social media

Fundraising

It's important to think about the types of funding available to utilize all opportunities and maximize sustainability. Although as program staff you may not be responsible for writing a funding proposal or submitting reports, it is critical that you work closely with your development and grant staff at your food bank. This will help ensure that the grant opportunity matches the needs of your program, program data and proposals are realistic and accurate, and that program staff are aware of the goals and requirements of each grant opportunity. Program funds typically come from the following sources:



- Grants (local partners, corporations, foundations, and Feeding America national grant opportunities)
- Direct Mail
- Special Events

Finding New Funding Sources

Regardless of the type of funding desired, the grants process involves three distinct phases: **preliminary planning and research, effective proposal writing, and proposal follow-up.** To complete these phases successfully, the grant seeker should consider the following steps:

STEPS IN THE FUNDING PROCESS	
Steps	Questions to Consider
Step 1: Identify a Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the problem? • How does my plan address the problem?
Step 2: Identify Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who should I approach for funding? • How do I obtain information about potential funders?
Step 3: Develop Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the goals and objectives of the program? (refer to your logic model) • How will the program be carried out? • How will I budget the program? • What type of proposal format should be used? (e.g., forms or letters)

Step 4: Submit Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I consistent with the funder’s application deadlines? Am I sending the proposal to the appropriate contact?
Step 5: Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the proposal accepted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If not, why? • Should I submit a revised proposal?

IDENTIFYING INTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Feeding America’s Member Grants team maintains a current and future list of internal grant opportunities. These opportunities are posted and explained in detail on the [Grants HungerNet page](#). In addition, new opportunities and important deadlines for internal grants are usually included in Feeding America’s weekly Network Connection and Programs Monthly newsletters. To sign up for these newsletters visit [the newsletter sign-up page](#).

Along with development staff at your food bank, we suggest that you keep on the lookout for new grants to support your program.

IDENTIFYING EXTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Member Grants team also collects and posts relevant external grant opportunities for member food banks. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but does provide a good place to start looking for [external grant opportunities](#). Additional government and private funding resources are explained in detail in the following sections.

Government Funding

Federal nutrition programs are a sustainable funding source for food banks to leverage in their efforts to feed children during out of school time periods. These are entitlement programs; there is no cap on the number of children who may be served. This allows organizations to start and expand programs based on local need and not be solely reliant on private funds. Outlined on the next page are two federal nutrition programs network members can utilize to feed children after school and during the summer months. Government funding includes reimbursements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Please refer to [CACFP](#) and [SFSP](#) section in this toolkit.

Private Funding*

Private funding can be obtained from a variety of sources, such as foundations, corporations, voluntary agencies and community groups. For the most part, philanthropic organizations fund programs which either address their individual interests or benefit a particular group.

Examples of major types of philanthropic organizations include:

- **Private foundations**
 - Receive income from an individual, family or group of individuals. The funding priorities of private foundations are usually based on the personal philosophies of the founding members.
- **Corporate foundations**
 - Receive contributions from a profit-making entity, such as a corporation.
- **Community foundations**
 - Involved in grant giving within a specific community or region.
- **Direct giving programs**
 - Philanthropic arms of corporations which donate goods and services for charitable causes.
- **Voluntary agencies**
 - Private organizations which support charitable programs that are consistent with their overall mission. The American Red Cross, for example, provides printed materials and staff consultation for health projects in various communities.
- **Community groups**
 - Local organizations which focus on supporting projects within their communities. Examples of these organizations include churches, Junior Leagues, and civic organizations.

New funding sources are found with searching. The following resources are good places to start:

- [GuideStar](#)
- [Foundation Center](#)
- [Council on Foundations](#)
- [Chronicle of Philanthropy](#)
- [GrantSpace](#)
- [TGCI, The Grantsmanship Center](#)

Look into companies that are already donating food or funds to your organization as well as large companies operating in your local area. Occasionally, they are willing to support a worthwhile program. Searches can be narrowed down by looking into donors' criteria.

Key questions to ask when searching for new donors

- Do they fund specific programs?
- Would they be interested in funding a program to alleviate child hunger?
- What is the average size of their gift?
- What is the appropriate timing for submitting a request?
- How do we go about getting in touch with the organization?

Once a suitable donor is found, research the organization itself. Useful information can usually be found on the organization's website, especially in the "about us" section. Websites are also a good place to find a contact person within the funding organization. Questions for a contact person in the organization can include:

Key questions for potential donors

- Is the program a good fit with this particular organization?
- For corporations, are there cause-related marketing opportunities?
- What would be an appropriate size for a funding request?
- What is the next step? It is important to develop a relationship with the organization before a request is made.

It may be necessary to send a letter of inquiry (LOI). These are a one- or two-page summary of what would go into a future proposal. A LOI, like a grant itself, should be written with the objectives of the grant making organization in mind. Focus on finding ways of framing the program to fit the needs of the grant maker. If the LOI is accepted, donors suggest submitting a full proposal. If not, the donor will most likely say the proposal does not meet their qualifications. The following should be included in the LOI:

- A brief description of your organization
- A brief problem/needs statement (include geographic description, population size, poverty rate, free/reduced lunch participation, and other means of displaying need)
- A description of the program
- A brief overview of financial need
- Potential name-recognition opportunities

**adapted from [USDA, Rural Information Center](#)*

Grant Writing

RENEWING ANNUAL GRANTS

When looking to renew annual grants first call the appropriate contact at the grant maker to inquire about a grant renewal. Next find out what information you are required to report on the previous grant(s). Finally, find out the scheduling for next year's grant cycle.

WRITING EFFECTIVE GRANT PROPOSALS

Even the brightest ideas and best program designs will be wasted if you can't communicate them clearly to people outside your organization. You will have more luck getting grants and contributions if you can describe your plans and expected results, so they are understandable and compelling to people who are unfamiliar with your work.

Earlier in the manual, the logic model was introduced as one effective approach to charting progress toward a program's goal and designing and describing an appropriate outcomes evaluation system. If you have completed logic model, you have done the groundwork for writing clear, successful funding proposals. One key to success in this regard is an ability to understand and respond to funders' perspectives. Keep in mind who you are soliciting for funding.

- **Who** is the funder? Consider the perspective and experience of both the funding organization and the individuals who are likely to review your proposal.
- **What** are the funder's needs regarding this possible partnership with you? Is it to build or maintain a reputation, to foster community development, or to act as stewards for other people's money – as with government sources or the United Way?
- **Why** is this potential funder handing out money? Is it to serve specific groups, to address certain problems, to finance research and development projects, or some other purpose?

Probably the two most important desires or needs of funders in making their allocation decisions are that the proposed project is aligned with their funding priorities and criteria and that fund recipients will succeed at delivering effective programs.

The quality of your proposal and underlying program design are the keys to persuading funders that your proposed project is a sure thing. In a limited amount of space, your proposal must demonstrate to others unfamiliar with your group and its activities, that your:

- Organization has the capacity to implement the project and to serve the needs of your program participants
- Objectives and the proposed methods and resources for accomplishing them are feasible
- Activities are appropriate for your target population and the problem you are addressing
- Evaluation plan will determine whether your objectives for program processes and participant outcomes are met



Site Management

As previously mentioned, establishing effective and open communication standards with your sites is imperative to the success of the program. It is also strongly recommended that each site selects a coordinator to be responsible for managing the program at their site as well as serving as the food bank's main contact person.

In choosing site coordinators, individuals should be respectful of the children being served, be able to manage daily program activities, and adhere to the terms of the program agreement.

Site Coordinator Responsibilities

- Attend required Kids Cafe orientation and meetings
- Ensure food is prepared and distributed in a safe way by approved adults
- Make sure meals are distributed to program participants on the days and times advertised
- Communicate any necessary information to the program participants and their caregivers
- Maintain and submit all necessary records and reports (enrollment forms, meal records, menus, food delivery invoices, etc.)
- Communicate with the food bank if problems arise, food supply is low, or meal numbers need to be adjusted
- Provide and manage all program staff and volunteers
- Provide enrichment activities and nutrition education as described in the partner agreement (Kids Cafe)
- Maintain a healthy and productive relationship with other program partners
- Make sure food is being properly stored off the floor and on shelves, tables etc. (School Pantry)
- Keep the stock rotated using oldest items first (School Pantry)

TRAINING

Offering training sessions to your site coordinators is highly recommended. Training sessions are a critical component of developing a working relationship with each of your sites and will allow site coordinators to successfully assume the areas of responsibility outlined above. This interaction between the food bank and site provides an ideal opportunity to make sure each location has their system worked out for administering the program.

Many successful programs throughout the network have developed a training manual and site checklist in order to provide their sites with the necessary resources and direction. Please see below for links to additional resources.

Resources

[Sample Member Site Training and Orientation Materials](#)

Monitoring

The Feeding America member contract requires that all agencies must be monitored once every two years. It is a best practice to monitor all program sites, especially those who prepare and serve food, on a regular basis. Not only will it keep the lines of communication open between you and your program sites, but you will be more aware of how programs are operating and more able to address issues as they arise. Both to [CACFP](#) and [SFSP](#) include specific monitoring requirements. Please review each program's regulations carefully.

Purpose of a Monitoring Visit

Monitoring can often foster increased communication and positive interaction between member and site staff but can sometimes prove to be an overwhelming and frustrating experience. The keys to achieving success are advance preparation and close attention to the approach of the monitor.

It is important to think about the purpose of a monitoring visit before performing one. The most obvious reasons for such a visit include the following:

- To ensure that program standards and guidelines are being met including distribution, recordkeeping, and sanitation and food safety standards.
- To increase communication between member and agency.
- To provide the unique perspective a new pair of eyes can bring to the program.
- To give program staff the opportunity to showcase their program.
- To provide the occasion to brainstorm and fine-tune the program as professionals in an increasingly complicated field.
- To reconcile any discrepancies in meal counts or other records with the site staff.
- To ensure that the program is being implemented according to the program design.

Advance Preparation

The most effective means of tracking monitoring dates is by creating an annual calendar that lists every program site and the date each was last monitored. You'll want to consider several things when creating your calendar, such as weather conditions at certain times of year, program operation schedules (i.e. Summer Food, school-year only programs, etc.), the proximity of one site to another and traditionally busy times of year for program sites (and the food bank).

Resources

[Sample Monitoring Form](#)

The most common process used to prepare for an agency monitoring visit involves the following steps:

Step	Action
1	Call the site coordinator in advance of the monitoring visit and set a day and time.
2	Follow up after your call with a letter or email that states the date and time agreed upon and gives a brief explanation of the monitoring process.
3	Review the program site file. Look specifically at the record of the last monitoring visit and for any relevant correspondence or memos filed since then.
4	Review the monitoring form to be used. Attach any data or documents that may be useful during this monitoring visit.
5	Discuss the program site to be monitored with appropriate staff members. For instance, how do the delivery drivers feel about the site?
6	Make sure to pack a flashlight and a temperature gauge (if necessary) as well as a blank copy of the monitoring form.

The Monitoring Visit

When performing the monitoring visit, it is helpful to be aware of the emotional aspects of this kind of “inspection.” The staff may feel a little worried or fearful especially if it’s the first time the site has been monitored.

A respectful and pleasant approach on the part of the monitor will usually set everyone at ease and result in more listening and sharing of information than is possible in a tense atmosphere. Here are some suggested techniques to lessen the tension:

- Arrive on time
- Smile
- Have a monitoring plan and explain it to each person as appropriate during the visit
- Compliment people for the good aspects of what they are doing whenever possible

The type of site you’re monitoring will determine the specific things you’re looking for during each visit. For example, you’ll look for different things at a Backpack Program site vs. a Kids Cafe where they’re serving hot meals.

Here is a common list of things to observe:

- Make sure the site coordinator or other appropriate staff is onsite, and that at least one person on location has been trained in the details of operating the program.
- Look at the food storage and handling areas. Check for proper sanitation, safety, pest control and food storage practices.
- Inspect any food preparation areas for proper procedures and sanitation practices.
- Review the receiving, inventory and distribution process and the related recordkeeping system.
- Observe food delivery or meal preparation making sure meals are handled according to local health codes.
- Observe meal service/distribution ensuring proper sanitation and that it occurs during approved timeframe.
- Look for accurate meal service/distribution recordkeeping.
- Think about processes or procedures that might help the program run more smoothly.

General Guidelines for Monitoring

- Do not nitpick. Try to view each situation from a realistic perspective, but also remember that you are there to ensure that the program is reaching children in the intended way. Ensuring the children's safety, food safety and program integrity are the reasons that you are conducting this visit.
- Consider the ultimate goal of monitoring in each instance. Is this goal to be heard and understood? Is it to create a good line of communication between the food bank and the site or to create an atmosphere of fear?
- Do not be too laid back. Record what you see even if you feel certain a problem is being addressed. This will lead to a more uniform monitoring technique, leaving no question that the site was given a thorough review.

Complete the following steps before you leave the site:

Step	Action
1	Complete the monitoring form. Record your arrival and departure time and any violations or corrective actions taken.
2	Either discuss violations and corrective actions with the site supervisor onsite or schedule a follow up phone call.
3	Have site supervisor sign the monitor form.
4	Schedule another monitoring visit if necessary.

Volunteer Management

After volunteer candidates have been identified and screened, it is important to match candidates with volunteer positions most suitable with their skill set and availability. Depending on the systems and materials you created while developing your program (e.g. volunteer intake forms, volunteer policies, etc.) it is important to communicate with your volunteers what is expected of them and what the food bank will provide (e.g. training).

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

After your volunteers have completed the paperwork required by your food bank to serve as a volunteer, a logical next step is to host a volunteer orientation. child hunger program volunteers may play different roles so you may want to consider conducting multiple trainings.

For example, you may have one volunteer training for sorting and packing food and a separate volunteer training for providing administrative support. Volunteers serving as a site coordinator should attend your site coordinator training.

Volunteer Orientation

- Provide an overview of food bank operations
 - Give volunteers a tour of the food bank
- Provide an overview of the child program(s) they will support
- Outline volunteer roles and responsibilities
 - Have them sign any paperwork that has not yet been completed
 - Communicate any food safety issues
- Discuss importance of keeping time commitment
 - Highlight ramifications for repeated missed volunteer shifts (for ongoing volunteers)
- Cover volunteer check-in and time keeping systems
- Highlight volunteer recognition opportunities
- Training evaluation form

“Volunteering can be a tremendously rewarding experience, both for the individual who offers his time and for the organization to which he gives it. Many people are willing to help out, if they feel that their contributions will be well used and useful. By developing a plan of action for involving volunteers, you will be better able to tap into this rich resource.”

- Community Tool Box

Resources

[Community Toolbox: Training Volunteers](#)

MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

Providing guidance and supervision to your volunteers is essential for volunteer productivity and retention. You (or the person responsible for managing volunteers) should understand volunteers' expectations and the volunteers should be made aware of the food bank's expectations.

Volunteer Management Tips

- Make your volunteers feel welcomed
- Make sure volunteers are well matched to their assigned task(s)
 - Volunteers' skill sets and interests should match the activities they are assigned to. If you find a volunteer is not well matched, reassign them to a different task.
- Create instruction sheets
 - There may not always be a staff member present, and volunteers may forget the various tasks they are responsible for. Craft instruction sheets and/or posters that outline their responsibilities.
- Offer additional training opportunities
 - For ongoing volunteers, it is important to schedule additional trainings outside of orientation.
 - Many individuals volunteer not only to give back, but to also develop skills and learn. Provide opportunities for volunteers to grow and develop in their role.
- Keep volunteers informed
 - Volunteers should be updated about any major organizational changes or program changes that impact their work or the clients being served.
- Creating a bulletin board with announcements Make sure volunteers' time is well used
 - People want to feel like they are contributing to the food bank's mission. Make sure that volunteers have projects to complete (not just busy work) and that their volunteer shifts are well structured.
- Seek volunteers' input
 - Ask volunteers how the program could be improved. Volunteers come in with a fresh set of eyes and may have ideas that you may have not yet considered.
 - Ask volunteers how their experience is going. Adapt volunteer shifts to address volunteers' concerns, as appropriate.
- Make sure volunteers feel connected to the issue
 - Highlight how their work impacts program operations and ultimately contributes to meals and snacks being served to children in need.
- Validate and recognize volunteers for a job well done
 - Volunteers are donating their time. Thank them for their efforts and commitment to serving the food bank and its clients. Even small gestures of thanks (e.g. having staff come and thank volunteers after a volunteer shift, sending a thank you note, recognition in the food bank newsletter, etc.) can go a long way.
 - Volunteer awards and appreciation events can be a way of recognizing volunteers.

Remember that volunteers not only contribute their time and energy to your program, but they also can serve as food bank and anti-hunger champions. Additionally, many volunteers can become advocates and/or donors. Making sure volunteers have a positive experience is vital to the success of not only the program you are managing, but to the entire food bank's operations.

Resources

[Urban Institute's "Volunteer Management: Practices and Retention of Volunteers"](#)
[Community Tool Box- Providing Support for Staff and Volunteers](#)
[Volunteer Retention and Feelings of Connections](#)

Record Keeping Requirements

Process Documentation

Proper documentation allows for all your hard work to be recognized and reused. It is important to be clear and concise when documenting. This will help you efficiently and effectively evaluate if your program is on track with how it was planned, as well as be a great tool for future program managers.

Things to Document

Documentation should include detailed information about the program's development and execution. You not only want to document **what** you did to develop the program but also **why** you did it. For example, document both the program's proposed budget as well as the actual budget. In addition, keep notes on why key decisions were made, who was involved in the decision-making process and what processes/procedures were followed. For example, why did you choose to source certain items, who is your main contact in the warehouse, how long does it take to order a shipment of the item and what is the cost.

It is important to keep record of internal and external contacts. In addition to phone numbers and email addresses you will want to document the relationship, so your predecessor knows who to go for what.

Below is a list of items to keep record of. While this list is not exhaustive, it provides you with a starting point of materials and resources to document.

- Executive summary of community needs assessment
- Research methodology and notes on the source from which your statistics were pulled
- Programmatic recommendations based on findings of needs assessment
- Logic model
- Proposed budget and actual budget
- Food bank staffs' roles and responsibilities in program
- List of sites and main contacts
- Site coordinator responsibilities
- Signed program agreements
- Report templates
- Consequences for late reports
- Distribution methods
- Items donated and sourced; menus
- Resources for program volunteers
- Vendor contact info (for food, supplies, backpacks, etc.)
- Outreach materials
- Presentations given
- Feedback forms
- Program evaluations
- Documentation of the number of meals and snacks served
- Program timeline
- List of key internal and external stakeholders with notes on relationships

CREATE YOUR OWN STEP-BY-STEP TIMELINE

It's helpful to be aware of what you're completing as the program is developing and to document particular tasks as they are being completed. By doing so you create a guide that sets up a feasible, workable plan for either yourself or your successor to use as you begin to plan for the next year of the program. Try to find the fine line between too much detail and a high-level description.

Use the timeline chart below to write down the steps of the procedures used to develop your program.

Month	Completed Tasks
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

It's important to remain organized throughout the development and implementation process to make documentation easier on you and fellow coworkers. Because there are so many steps and components that go into implementing or expanding a program, it is key to be cognizant of where and how work is saved. There are several options for organizing your materials including a database of contacts, spreadsheets, hardcopy files, etc. You want it to be easy for someone new to pick up and keep the program(s) going, so keep your materials organized- in whatever way works best with the resources you have.

Work can get buried or misplaced without proper documentation. Below are a few tips for keeping your materials organized.

Electronic Information:

- Create folders and sub folder with logical labels that are mutually exclusive and exhaustive
- Title files clearly with dates
 - Delete old versions of documents if no longer needed
- Save, sort and flag important emails
- Save contact information (email addresses, phone, etc.) of all key program contacts

While it does take extra time, we recommend putting together a **“Process Documentation Binder”** that houses a hardcopy of important documents that led to your programs development (use the list provided on the previous page to get a sense of what to include).

DOCUMENTATION TIP

Keeping a record of your contacts doesn't need to be burdensome.

Short little notes will suffice. Such as:

“Bob Jones, (202) 555-6673, bjones@dodgehighschool.org
School Pantry Site Coordinator at Dodge High School.

Been there for 2 years, very responsive/dedicated to program success,”

Record Keeping for CACFP

CACFP sponsors are required to keep all records for at least three years. Sponsors will be monitored by the State agency and must be able to make all required records available to the State agency during monitoring visits. State record keeping procedures vary by state but listed below is a general overview for the records you will need to keep.

Documenting Meal Service

Each afterschool program that serves food using the CACFP At-Risk Program must keep the following records:

- Daily attendance in afterschool program using dated rosters or sign-in sheets
- Daily dated meal count records
- Dated menus for each snack and/or meal service to establish that meal patterns were met
- Records establishing eligibility
- Records of fiscal management and training of staff



Record Keeping for SFSP

Documenting Meal Service

Sponsors must use daily records and collect these at least weekly from sites.

- Meals delivered or prepared, by type (breakfast, snack, lunch, supper). A designated member of the site staff must verify the adequacy and number of meals delivered by checking the meals when they are delivered to the site •
 - Vended programs must support this information with a signed delivery receipt •
 - Programs with a central kitchen should also support this information with a signed delivery receipt for good Program management
- Complete first meals served to children, by type
- Complete second meals served to children, by type •
- Excess meals or meals leftover •
- Non-reimbursable meals •
- Meals served to Program adults, if any •
- Meals served to non-Program adults, if any

Find all recordkeeping requirements for CACFP [here](#) and SFSP [here](#)

Please consult with your State Agency for their specific record keeping requirements for CACFP and SFSP.



Section 6

Program Evaluation

In this section you will find information on:

- **The Evaluation Process**
- **Program Intention**
- **Practical Evaluation**
 - **Practical Evaluation Framework**
 - **Practical Evaluation Standards**
 - **Barriers to Evaluation**
- **How to Conduct an Evaluation**
 - **Stage 1: Engage Stakeholders**
 - **Stage 2: Describe the Program**
 - **Stage 3: Focus the Evaluation Design**
 - **Stage 4: Gather Credible Evidence**
 - **Stage 5: Analyze Data and Justify Conclusions**
 - **Stage 6: Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings and Share Lessons Learned**

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Section Overview

- About evaluation and its purpose
- Program intention including some common types of evaluation questions
- About practical evaluation
- How to conduct an evaluation: each stage provides you with a definition of the topic, why it's important and how to apply specified standards to that stage with questions to consider for practical application. There are checklist, worksheets and templates to guide you through each stage
 - Stage 1: Engage Stakeholders
 - Stage 2: Describe the Program
 - Stage 3: Focus the Evaluation Design
 - Stage 4: Gather Credible Evidence
 - Stage 5: Analyze Data and Justify Conclusions
 - Stage 6: Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings and Share Lessons Learned

About Evaluation

Program evaluation allows us to learn how to run the best programs possible. Evaluation provides information for assessing activities and making better decisions. It is the first step toward increasing organizational effectiveness and, in turn, successfully marketing and documenting your work. Rather than thinking of evaluation as the test that follows your work, begin to think of evaluation as the measures you put in place *beforehand* to help you run your programs.

Evaluation allows you to:

- Set realistic goals by providing information for making and fine-tuning strategic program decisions
- Identify training and technical assistance needs
- Be accountable and credible to your constituents, your community, your partners, your funders, and yourself
- Motivate by providing documentation of your achievements.
- Guide budget and resource allocation
- Generate support for programs and make the case for added resources.
- Summarize and highlight your achievements

EVALUATION VS. MONITORING AND RESEARCH

Evaluation is the systematic process of asking questions and then collecting and using information to help answer those questions.

Monitoring is measurement, on an ongoing and regular basis, of program implementation, or the outcomes of a program or service.

Research is the systematic process of collecting data in a controlled environment in order to prove or disprove a hypothesis.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

There are five simple steps in the evaluation process. Use them to develop an approach that fits your community.

STEP	ACTION
1. Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One or more people take the lead and form an evaluation team• Set goals and develop an evaluation plan
2. Ask Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formulate questions that are essential to evaluation• Think about what you want to know• Determine your sources of information
3. Track Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather information through different methods:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Observations○ Interviews○ Focus groups○ Surveys○ Debriefs• Decide which method fits your situation best
4. Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the information• Analyze patterns• Draw conclusions
5. Apply What You've Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about what you will do with what you've learned• Share the information with others• Make recommendations• Develop an action plan

Program Intention

Many of us already assess our efforts without necessarily calling it evaluation. We assess the value and impact of our work all the time when we ask questions, consult partners, make assessments based on feedback and use those judgments to improve our work. Many different questions can be part of a program evaluation depending on how long the program has been in existence, who is asking the question and why the information is needed. In general, evaluation questions fall into one of these groups:

- **Implementation:** Were your program’s activities put into place as originally intended?
- **Effectiveness:** Is your program achieving the goals and objectives it was intended to accomplish?
- **Efficiency:** Are your program’s activities being produced with appropriate use of resources such as budget and staff time?
- **Attribution:** Are there changes in your clients’ lives that are the direct result of the program as opposed to other things that are going on at the same time? (This typically requires the rigor associated with an academic research model)

Common Types of Evaluation Questions

Type of Evaluation	Sample Research Question for Food Banks	Focus of Evaluation	Evaluation Model
<p>Implementation evaluation answers questions about how the program is formed, looking at strengths and weaknesses of the process. These questions may be posed to assess benefits of various program models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were we able to add more non-school sites to the Kids Cafe program as a result of our collaboration with new partner x? • How long does it take to fully implement a School Pantry Program? • Did children participate in the Kids Cafe program daily? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the program being implemented as planned? • How is the program achieving its objectives? • What activities were conducted? • What materials or services did participants receive (Outputs)? • What did people experience? • How is our coalition working? • Do we have the “right” stakeholders? 	<p>Practical Evaluation</p>

Type of Evaluation	Sample Research Question for Food Banks	Focus of Evaluation	Evaluation Model
<p>Effectiveness evaluation (short-term effects or benefits of a program and how the program purposes are achieved). These types of evaluations may seek to identify what parts of the program are working and which are not and/or which models have better short-term results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did nutrition education participants learn from the program? • Did eligible School Pantry program families complete SNAP paperwork? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effects did the program have on the participants from the start to the end? • Did program participants' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors change as a result of the program? 	<p>Practical Evaluation</p>
<p>Efficiency evaluations focus on program costs versus their benefits. These questions may, too, be posed for the purpose of assessing the ease/burden of various models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many backpacks were distributed compared to last year? • What percent of the School Pantry poundage is nutritious? • What are the costs associated with opening a new program site compared to operating second year sites? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities were conducted? • What resources were required to implement the program? What materials or services did participants receive? 	<p>Practical Evaluation</p>
<p>Attribution evaluations focus on long-term client status or system changes. In many programs, the long-term goals are so distant or are influenced by so many factors other than just the program that evaluating them is beyond the range of what an internal practical evaluator can accomplish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Backpack Program result in higher grades? • Does the School Pantry Program lead to increased food security among participating families? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the client achieve success (however defined by the program) as a direct result of the intervention? • If this program model were implemented elsewhere, would it be expected to have similar results? 	<p>Academic Research</p>

Practical Evaluation

DEFINITION

There are innumerable definitions for evaluation. The definition for evaluation used here is one proposed by Michael Quinn Patton in [Practical Evaluation \(1982\)](#)

The practice of evaluation involves the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs, personnel, and products for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make decisions with regard to what those programs, personnel, or products are doing and affecting.

Components of Practical Evaluation

1. Data is collected in a systematic manner
2. Evaluation must focus on the activities, characteristics and outcomes of the program being evaluated
3. The purposes of evaluation are to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make decisions about the program.
4. Context: can reasonably be implemented within the context and constraints of a particular situation
5. The team or collaborative approach involves a group of people who share the decision-making responsibilities for the major aspects of the evaluation

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Often individuals want an understanding of information about “activities” and “outcomes.”

Activities

Activities are what people actually do to accomplish their goal. They can be documented by numbers, frequency or duration, such as:

- 40 children consistently participated in the Kids Cafe Program for the entire year; an additional 20 participated during the summer.
- 50 pounds of food were served to families once a week for 36 weeks at 2 community sites.
- The food bank secured a new \$25,000 grant from the ABC Corporation in support of the Backpack Program.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact which results from project activities. When determining outcomes, you should focus on results that are relevant to the mission, can be tracked and are attributable. They can be short-term or long-term and include impact at the individual, organizational or community levels, such as:

- As a result of the program, the food bank has improved relationships with community partners
- As a result of the program, children ate more nutritious food on a more regular basis than before they entered the program
- As a result of the grant, the organization has increased access in underserved areas

Outcome Measurement

Outcome measurement documents the extent to which you actually achieve the results you have promised. It can be a powerful management tool that aids in quality assurance and accountability. An appropriate outcomes evaluation system can provide:

- A systematic way to monitor changes in participants that result from the services you provide
- Feedback indicating the need to adjust in your program design or delivery
- Evidence that what you do really works – in a cost-effective manner
- Findings that contribute to the development of “best practices” that support successful program expansion
- A way to share your process and results with other Afterschool Programs so that Feeding America member food banks can learn from each other’s experiences

Public and private funders’ demand for outcomes is rooted in two current social attitudes. First, there is more of a sense that our nation’s resources for problem solving are limited so we must be careful how we spend them. Second, although Americans traditionally believe in the value of social services, there is also an opinion that the services are not doing enough for enough people, leading to the desire to guarantee that money is being spent wisely.

In short, it is no longer enough to assume that you will get good results simply because you have good staff, child hunger expertise and a well-regarded program model. Those variables focus only on what the logic model refers to as “inputs.” The public, and funders in particular, want to see that your staff and model do produce the desired results or outcomes.

Creating and conducting program evaluation requires a commitment of staff time and organizational resources, but it is well worth the investment. In the end you’ll have invaluable data to inform your service delivery and allocation of staff time, money, and space. As already suggested, by taking on the responsibility of outcome evaluation for your child hunger programs, you greatly enhance your ability to get funding and even grow your program.

ARE YOU READY TO EVALUATE OUTCOMES?

While it is understood that the evaluation focus of the program will shift over time, here are some handy decision rules to decide whether it is time to shift the evaluation focus toward an emphasis on program outcomes:

Sustainability: Political and financial support will exist to sustain the intervention while the evaluation is conducted.

Fidelity: Actual intervention implementation matches intended implementation. Erratic implementation makes it difficult to know what “version” of the intervention was implemented and, therefore, which version produced the outcomes.

Stability: Intervention is not likely to change during the evaluation. Changes to the intervention over time will make it hard to know which aspects of the intervention caused the outcomes.

Reach: Intervention reaches a sufficiently large number of clients (sample size) to employ the proposed data analysis. If you expect to see a small change in a client (which we would, given the relatively small role a food bank plays in a client’s life, compared to all the other influences out there), you would need to have a much larger group of clients receiving the intervention in order to see the change in a statistical analysis.

Dosage: Clients have sufficient exposure to the intervention to result in the intended outcomes. Interventions with limited client contact are less likely to result in measurable outcomes as compared to interventions that provide more in-depth intervention with clients.

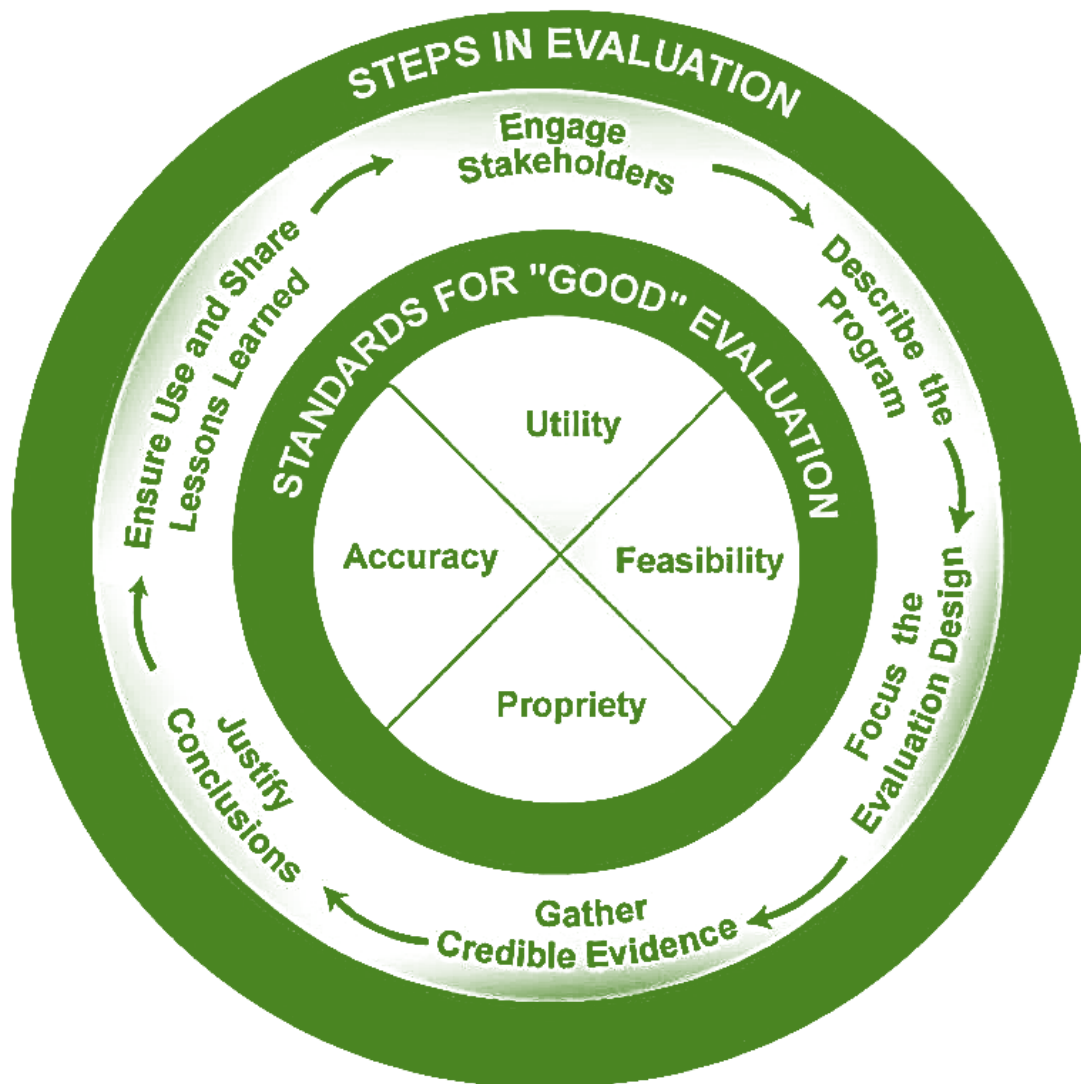
Remember, a shift toward evaluating outcomes may mean that you are looking to attribute outcome results to the program being evaluated, which means you probably need to move toward an academic research model. You may need to consider if an academic research model is feasible for you in terms of cost and access to the appropriate research experts.

Practical Evaluation Framework

The practical evaluation framework presented below provides a conceptual roadmap that can be adapted to a variety of settings and within many different groups and communities.

The framework is intended to help those involved in practical evaluation address the following six questions:

1. Who is the evaluation for?
2. What program are we evaluating?
3. What methods will we use in conducting our evaluation?
4. How will we gather information that is credible and in what forms?
5. How will we analyze and justify our conclusions?
6. How can we be assured that what we learn will be used?



Useful

Is it useful to evaluate your program? Will the results be used to improve operations or allocate resources better? Will the evaluation answer stakeholders' questions?

Evaluation is useful in developing new program proposals, in reauthorizing existing programs, in justifying requests for additional funding, in accounting for use of public funds and especially in improving program performance.

Notes:

Feasible

Is it feasible to evaluate your program? Given your specific political environment and current resources, can you afford to do it? Do you have adequate support to conduct the evaluation? Does your budget allow for contracting with outside professionals to conduct the evaluation? If not, do you have personnel, time and monetary resources to do it in-house? If you cannot evaluate all aspects of your program, what parts can you evaluate?

Notes:

Proper

Are you able to conduct the evaluation properly? Is the approach fair and ethical? For example, in conducting a survey, the results are intended to be kept confidential. Are you truly able to maintain that confidentiality within the constraints of your organization and with the types of data processing and analysis required?

Notes:

Accurate

Is the evaluation accurate? It is important that appropriate data collection methods have been used and that the data have been consistently collected. For example, if you have several people involved in conducting interviews, have you provided adequate training to ensure consistency and quality in gathering the information? Have the data analyses been conducted appropriately? Correct data can be misinterpreted in the analysis phase.

Notes:

BARRIERS TO EVALUATION

Any of the following may cause poorly constructed or conducted evaluations that result in false assumptions or conclusions from inaccurate, missing or irrelevant data.

1. Lack of Management Support
2. Lack of Resources
3. Lack of Skills
4. Lack of Relevant Data
5. Fear of Consequences

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EVALUATION

The Collaborative Approach

Reduces Suspicion and Fear

Increases Awareness and Commitment

Increases the Possibility of Achievement of Objectives

Broadens Knowledge Base

Teaches Evaluation Skills

Teaches Stakeholders

Increases Possibility Findings will be Used

Allows for Differing Perspectives

Practice Exercise: Barriers to Evaluation



Instructions: List some barriers that might prevent you or your program from conducting an evaluation.

Resources

[Program Evaluation HungerNet Page](#)

[American Evaluation Association](#)

How to Conduct an Evaluation

STAGE 1: Engage Stakeholders

Stakeholders are:

- People who care about what will be learned from the evaluation and about what will be done with the knowledge gained.

Key stakeholders for practical evaluation fall into three major categories:

Those involved in program operations	Management, program staff, partners, funding agencies and coalition members
Those served or affected by the program	Clients, advocacy groups, community members and elected officials
Those who are intended users of the evaluation findings	Persons in a position to make decisions about the program, such as partners, funding agencies, coalition members and the general public or taxpayers

These stakeholders will likely be the same people you identified in the [Community Needs Assessment](#).

A successful evaluation will designate its primary intended users – such as community-based organizations, groups of citizens, program staff and funders – early in the evaluation’s development and will maintain frequent interaction with users to be sure that the evaluation specifically addresses their values and needs.

Why is it important to include different types of stakeholders?

Evaluation cannot be done in isolation. Almost all food bank program work involves partnerships – alliances among different organizations, board members, those affected by the problem and others. Therefore, any serious effort to evaluate a program must consider the different values held by the partners or stakeholders.

Stakeholders must be part of the evaluation so that their unique perspectives are understood. When stakeholders are not appropriately involved, evaluation findings may be ignored, criticized or resisted.

Opening an evaluation to opposing perspectives and enlisting the help of potential program opponents can strengthen the evaluation’s credibility. Likewise, individuals or groups who could be adversely or inadvertently affected by changes arising from the evaluation have a right to be

involved. This means including those who would be affected if program services were expanded, altered, limited or ended because of the evaluation.

The amount and type of stakeholder involvement will be different for each practical evaluation. In many instances stakeholders will not be directly involved in designing and conducting the evaluation. They can be kept informed about progress of the evaluation through periodic meetings, reports and other means of communication.

Some community initiatives form an evaluation team – made up of various stakeholders – as part of their overall planning and evaluation process. While not all members have practical evaluation experience or training, at least some members do. This type of arrangement can work well when there is a commitment to build the capacity of community-based organizations, local advocacy groups or interested citizens to learn about and participate in practical evaluation.

APPLYING STANDARDS

Including stakeholders in evaluation planning and implementation is one way to ensure a quality evaluation to meet evaluation standards. The two standards that apply most directly to Stage 1 are utility and propriety. As you carry out this stage, the questions presented in the following table will help you to clarify and achieve these standards.

Standards for Stage 1: Engage Stakeholders	
Questions	Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you included individuals and organizations that will be affected by the evaluation in your evaluation planning group? • Have you considered adding new stakeholders as your practical evaluation is implemented? • Are participants in the evaluation planning group trustworthy and competent? 	<p>Utility: Ensures that the evaluation is useful and answers questions that are directly relevant to users.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are individuals clear about what is to be done, how, by whom and when? • Is there a written understanding? • Have steps been taken to assure that all stakeholders and the population served will be respected and their values honored? • Have conflicts of interest been discussed to ensure that the results or findings will not be compromised? 	<p>Propriety: Ensures that the evaluation is ethical, conducted with regard for the rights and interests of those involved.</p>

SUMMARY OF STAGE 1: ENGAGE THE STAKEHOLDERS

Stage 1 represents the process through which many voices are heard. As the first Stage, it makes the benefits of the evaluation clear to all stakeholders. Completing this Stage helps ensure that the focus of the evaluation – and ultimately the results of the evaluation – supports the needs of the stakeholders.

Stage 1: Engage the Stakeholders Exercises & Resources

- Checklist: Engaging Stakeholders
- Reflection Exercise: Engaging Stakeholders
- Worksheet: Identifying Stakeholders
- Worksheet: What Matters to Stakeholders
- Template: Stakeholder Interviews

STAGE 1 CHECKLIST: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS



Use the following checklist to keep track of your progress in identifying and utilizing stakeholders in your practical evaluation.

- Identify stakeholders, using the three broad categories discussed: those affected, those involved in operations and those who will use the evaluation results.
- Review the initial list of stakeholders to identify key stakeholders needed to improve credibility, implementation and advocacy or funding/authorization decisions.
- Engage individual stakeholders and/or representatives of stakeholder organizations.
- Create a plan for stakeholder involvement and identify areas for stakeholder input.
- Target selected stakeholders for regular participation in key Stages, including writing the program description, suggesting evaluation questions, choosing evaluation questions and disseminating evaluation results.

STAGE 1 REFLECTION EXERCISE: ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are a stakeholder or a program for which you would be responsible for identifying and bringing people together. The following questions may help you think about how to approach Stage 1.

Who are the people who fall into the three types of stakeholder categories, i.e., those involved in implementing the program, those served or affected by the program and the primary users of the evaluation?	
How could you go about finding out what each stakeholder cares about?	
What communication strategies could you use to ensure that different interests are represented?	
What challenges or barriers might you face in identifying and recruiting stakeholders?	
How could you deal with these challenges or barriers?	

STAGE 1 WORKSHEET: IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are a stakeholder or a program for which you would be responsible for identifying and bringing people together. The following questions may help you think about how to approach this Stage.

Category		Stakeholders
1	Who is affected by the program?	
2	Who is involved in the program?	
3	Who will use the evaluation results?	

Which of these are key stakeholders we need to engage to:

Increase <u>credibility</u> of our evaluation	<u>Implement</u> the interventions that are central to this evaluation	<u>Advocate for changes</u> to institutionalize the evaluation findings	<u>Fund/authorize</u> the continuation or expansion of the program

STAGE 1 TEMPLATE: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW



Throughout the evaluation planning process, you will be asking some or all stakeholders the questions listed here (either formally or informally). Use this form to document and keep track of responses that may be valuable to your evaluation design.

Stakeholder Name:

Who do you represent and why are you interested in this program?	
What is important about this program to you?	
What would you like this program to accomplish?	
How much progress would you expect this program to have made at this time?	
What do you see as the critical evaluation questions at this time?	
How will you use the results of this evaluation?	
What resources (i.e. time, funds, evaluation expertise, access to respondents and access to policymakers) might you contribute to this evaluation effort?	

STAGE 2: Describe the Program

A Program Description

- Summarizes the program being evaluated
- Explains what the program is trying to accomplish and how it tries to bring about those changes
- Illustrates the program's core components
- Establishes a program's ability to make changes
- Specifies its stage of development
- Describes how the program fits into the larger organizational and community environment

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION ELEMENTS

There are seven elements of a program description. A well-defined program description lays the foundation for focusing the evaluation (Stage 3). Note that this is very similar to the structure of the [logic model](#) you constructed for your program.

Seven Elements of a Comprehensive Program Description		
1	Need	What is the big problem you aim to address with your program?
2	Targets	Which groups or organizations need to change or take action to make progress on the issue?
3	Outcomes	How and in what way do these targets need to change? What action specifically do they need to take?
4	Activities	What will your program and its staff do to move these target groups to change/take action?
5	Outputs	What tangible capacities or products will be produced by your program's activities?
6	Resources/Inputs	What is needed from the larger environment in order for the activities to be mounted successfully?
7	Relationship of Activities and Outcomes	Which activities are being implemented to produce progress on which outcomes?

Additionally, a complete program description includes discussion of:

- **Stage of Development:** A program’s stage of development also affects the evaluation process. For example, an evaluation of a new program may differ significantly from an evaluation of a program that has existed for a number of years. One way of viewing the intent of evaluation at different stages is through the different goals of evaluation at three commonly recognized stages:

Stage of Program	Evaluation Goal
Planning: program activities are untested	To refine plans as much as possible
Implementation: program activities are being field tested and modified	To see what happens in the “real world” and to improve operations
Effects or outcomes: enough time has passed for the program’s effects to emerge	To identify and understand the program’s results, including those that were unintentional

- **Context:** A description of a program’s context considers the important features of the environment in which the program operates. This includes understanding the context in terms of:
 - History
 - Politics
 - Geography
 - Social and economic conditions
 - What other organizations have done

A realistic and responsive evaluation will be sensitive to a broad range of potential influences on the program. An understanding of the context lets users interpret findings accurately.

DEVELOPING AND USING LOGIC MODELS

Once the components of the program description have been identified, a visual depiction is often a helpful way to summarize the relationship among any or all of the components. This clarity can help with both strategic planning and practical evaluation. While there are many ways to depict these relationships, logic models are a common tool employed by evaluators. For more information on how to develop a logic model, see the earlier section on [logic modelling](#) in the [Program Planning section](#) of this toolkit.

Standards for Stage 2: Describe the Program	
Questions	Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the program description complete? • Have you documented the context of the program so that likely influences on the program can be identified? 	<p>Accuracy: Ensures that the findings can be considered correct.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the evaluation complete and fair in assessing all aspects of the program, including its strengths and weaknesses? 	<p>Propriety: Ensures that the evaluation is ethical, conducted with regard for the rights and interests of those involved.</p>

SUMMARY OF STAGE 2: DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM

Stage 2 outlines the foundation to ensure a well thought out practical evaluation. It is important to keep in mind that the breadth and depth of a program description will vary for each practical evaluation, meaning that many different activities may be part of developing the description. Multiple sources of information may be pulled together to construct a well-rounded description. Discussion with stakeholders can confirm the accuracy of an existing program description. Descriptions of what’s going on may be checked against direct observation of activities in the field. Addressing contextual factors (such as staff turnover, inadequate resources, political pressures or strong community participation) that may affect the program can broaden an otherwise narrow program description.

Stage 2: Describe the Program Exercises & Resources

- Checklist: Describing the Program
- Reflection Exercise: Program Description
- Worksheet: Raw Material for Logic Model
- Template: Logic Model

STAGE 2: CHECKLIST FOR DESCRIBING THE PROGRAM



Use the following checklist to keep track of your progress in developing a comprehensive program description.

- Compile a comprehensive program description including need, targets, outcomes activities and resources.
- Identify the stage of development and context of the program.
- Convert inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes into a simple global logic model.
- Elaborate the model as needed.
- Develop more detailed models from the global model as needed.

STAGE 2 REFLECTION EXERCISE: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following questions may help you think about how to approach Stage 2: Describe the Program.

<p>How are your program's goals, objectives and strategies defined?</p>	
<p>How are your program's activities, processes and products linked to the program's outcomes?</p>	
<p>What resources might be available to implement the program?</p>	
<p>What else might be happening in your community that could have an impact on your program? What other programs have been tried and by whom?</p>	
<p>Is your program new or has it existed for a year or more? (As you read the next Stage, think about how this could influence how you focus your evaluation.)</p>	

STAGE 2 WORKSHEET: RAW MATERIAL FOR YOUR LOGIC MODEL



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. Use the space below to brainstorm activities and outcomes in preparation for building your logic model.

Activities	Outcomes
What will the program and its staff actually do? Which come first? Which come later?	What changes do we hope will result in someone or something other than the program and its staff? Which come first? Which might come later?

STAGE 3: Focus the Evaluation Design

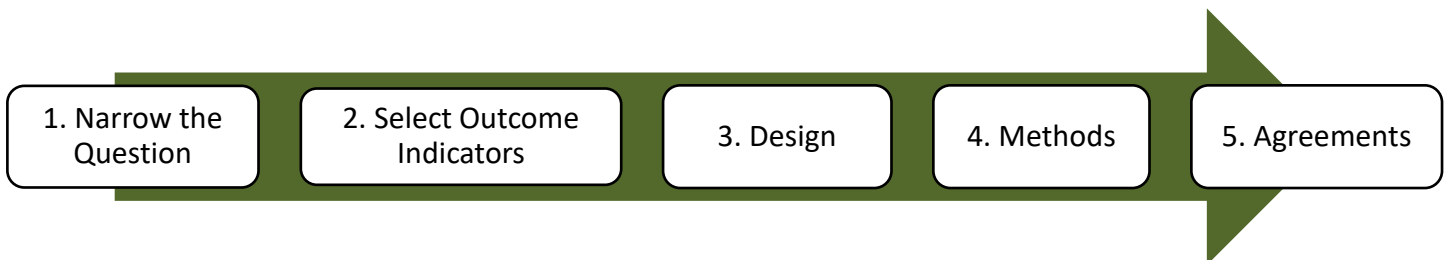
FOCUSING THE EVALUATION DESIGN MEANS:

- Carrying out advance planning about where the evaluation is headed and what Stages it will take to get there
- Developing a well-focused plan or strategy to improve the usefulness of the evaluation to intended audiences

Why is it important to focus the evaluation design?

This section involves determining the users and the uses of the evaluation. It gets at the direct purpose of the evaluation. Focusing the evaluation is based on the assumption that the entire program (i.e. all aspects described in the logic model) does not need to be evaluated at any given point in time. Rather, the “right” evaluation of the program depends on what question is being asked, who is asking the question and what will be done with the information. This Stage will require you to select the aspect of the program you wish to evaluate, develop indicators that will demonstrate whether or not the outcomes have been achieved, and design the evaluation approach.

DETERMINING THE EVALUATION FOCUS



There are several basic issues to consider when focusing an evaluation:

Narrow the question – consider users, uses and purpose

Users are the specific persons who will use evaluation findings. Because they are directly experiencing the consequences of the trade-offs that are part of any evaluation, they have a right to participate in choosing the focus for the evaluation. When users are encouraged to clarify intended uses and identify priority questions and preferred methods, the evaluation is more likely to focus on things that will inform and influence future actions. Uses describe what will be done with what is learned from the evaluation. This directly feeds into defining the purpose of the evaluation and the questions to be asked. Some examples of uses of evaluation information and purposes for evaluation include:

- To document the level of success in achieving objectives
- To identify areas of the program that need improvement
- To redistribute or expand the locations where the intervention is carried out
- To improve the content of the program’s materials
- To solicit more funds or additional partners

Based on these criteria, the evaluation team should refine the focus of the evaluation onto one or two key outcomes from their logic model, selecting those that most clearly relate to the users, uses and purpose of the evaluation.

Outcome Indicators

adapted from Performance Measurement: Getting Results

Outcome indicators are not the same as outcomes. Each outcome to be tracked needs to be translated into one or more outcome indicator. An outcome indicator identifies a specific numerical measurement that indicates progress toward an outcome. Often, your short-term outcomes shown in your logic model can serve as a strong foundation for developing measurable, time-limited indicators.

Indicators should clearly describe who will be measured, on what and over what period of time. In addition, the indicator should explain what the data will be compared to in order to demonstrate a change.

Criteria for Selecting Outcome Indicators

- Relevance to the mission/objectives of the program and to the outcome the indicator is intended to help measure.
- Importance to the outcome. Does the indicator measure an important aspect of the outcome?
- Understandability to users of what is measured and reported.
- Program influence or control over the outcome. A program will almost always have less than full influence over most outcomes, especially long-term outcomes. As long as the program is expected to have some tangible, measurable effect on a specific outcome, an indicator of that outcome should be a candidate for inclusion – whether the effects are direct or indirect.
- Feasibility of collecting data that actually reflects the indicator (discussed in more depth in Stage 4.)
- Uniqueness. If an indicator is duplicated by, or overlaps with, other indicators, it becomes less important.
- Manipulability. Do not select indicators that program personnel can either purposefully manipulate to their advantage or misunderstand.

Example: For the outcome “reduced child hunger in school” you may choose the following short-term outcomes as indicators of progress: “participants consuming daily meals/snacks,” and “participants experiencing decreased signs of hunger.”

In order to turn these into clear, specific indicators, they should:

- Be expressed as both the number and the percent (proportion or rate) of something
- Be clearly articulate which participants will be included in the counts (i.e. the denominator)
 - Will any child who has ever taken a meal be included or will “participants” be defined as those who have taken 10 or more meals?
- Have a specified timeframe for measurement the indicator.

An indicator might read “number and percent of Kids Cafe participants (defined as children who have attended a distribution at least 10 times over the course of a school year) who demonstrate decreased signs of hunger between starting the program and the end of the school year.”

At this point, it is important to note that indicators cannot be finalized until the program has also considered the data collection procedure that will be used. In the above example, you will note that the indicator suggests that the data will need to be collected upon each child’s enrollment in the program and again at the end of the school year.

It also indicates that the data will need to be collected through contact with an observer of the child, presumably on some measures that reflect “signs of hunger.” Evaluation design is discussed more next, and data collection procedures are discussed in Stage 4. Stages 3 and 4, while presented separately, are heavily dependent on one another. It is likely that your evaluation planning team will need to move back and forth between these two Stages as you finalize the evaluation plan.

Design

(adapted from [University of Wisconsin Extension Tip Sheet](#))

Design refers to when and by whom the evaluation’s data collection will be conducted. The design you choose will affect the level of confidence you can have related to how much change has occurred and how much of the change is due to the program. Some sample designs are:

- **After Only:** This is a one-time assessment conducted after the program is completed. Without a comparison or other data collection, you will not be able to be sure if the program had an effect on participants or whether other factors had an effect.
- **Before and After:** Data are collected at two points in time, providing a comparison to determine the extent of change resulting from the program. While the difference between the collections should be the effect of the program, remember that other things can happen to participants (and influence change) than just their participation in the program.
- **Case Study:** The case study design uses multiple sources of information to provide an in-depth understanding of the ‘case.’ The case may be one program, one participant, or one site, for example. Its strength lies in its comprehensiveness and exploration of reasons for observed effects relative to the particular case, but it may not be generalizable to other participants or sites.
- **Mixed Method:** A mixed method design involves the use of several data collection methods and the blending of qualitative and quantitative.

Evaluation designs can be strengthened by:

- Adding points in time.
- Combining multiple methods of data collection.
- Using multiple sources of information.
- Using comparisons (people, groups, sites). Comparison groups refer to groups that are not selected at random but are from the same population (perhaps program sites or children that are on a waiting list). It is essential that the comparison be very similar to the group participating in the program.

Methods

Different evaluation questions require different kinds of data that, in turn, require different types of methods. Counting how many times an event occurs calls for *quantitative* methods, whereas *qualitative* methods might be used to develop an understanding of the social context in which an event occurs. More detail about developing the tools for data collection is found in Stage 4. Evaluation designs can require a variety of methods, including the following:

- Systematic participant observation
- Structured or semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Descriptive or analytical surveys
- Attendance or distribution records

Agreements

Agreements summarize the evaluation procedures, clarify everyone's role and responsibilities and describe how the evaluation procedures will be implemented. Elements of an agreement include statements concerning the intended users, uses, purpose, questions, design and methods as well as a summary of the deliverables, timeline and budget. An agreement might be a legal contract, a memorandum of understanding or a detailed protocol. Creating an agreement establishes a mutual understanding of the activities associated with the evaluation. It also provides a basis for modification if necessary.

Standards for Stage 3: Focus the Evaluation Design	
Questions	Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the evaluation be planned, conducted and reported so that it, in turn, encourages use by stakeholders? 	<p>Utility: Ensures that the evaluation is useful and answers questions that are directly relevant to users.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the evaluation procedures practical? Will they keep disruption of daily activities to a minimum? • Have you considered the political interests and needs of various groups in planning the evaluation? • Have you assessed the costs of technical resources and time? 	<p>Feasibility: Ensures that the evaluation makes sense, takes into consideration the interests of various groups and can be cost effective.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you addressed issues of conflict openly and honestly? • Have you planned and implemented sound, ethical and consistent procedures to ensure findings are correct? 	<p>Propriety: Ensures that the evaluation is ethical, conducted with regard for the rights and interests of those involved.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you described the purposes and procedures of the evaluation in detail? • Can the purposes and procedures be identified and assessed? 	<p>Accuracy: Ensures that the findings are considered correct.</p>

SUMMARY OF STAGE 3: FOCUS THE EVALUATION DESIGN

Stage 3 represents a process through which a design is structured to capture the information that all stakeholders within the effort agree are critical. It ensures that the evaluation design meets the needs of all users, that the process answers the questions that have been raised and that the evaluation takes into account constraints imposed by time and the availability of technical resources.

Stage 3: Focus the Evaluation Design Exercises & Resources

- Checklist: Focusing the Evaluation Design
- Reflection Exercise: Focusing the Evaluation Design
- Worksheet: Focusing the Evaluation in the Logic Model
- Worksheet: Reality Checking the Evaluation Focus

STAGE 3 CHECKLIST: FOCUSING THE EVALUATION DESIGN



Use the following checklist to keep track of your progress in focusing the evaluation design.

- Define the purpose(s) and user(s) of your evaluation.
- Identify the use(s) of the evaluation results.
- Consider the stage of development, program intensity and logistics and resources.
- Determine the components of your logic model that should be part of the focus given the utility and feasibility considerations.
- Assess the quality and usefulness of the information currently being collected by the program, if any.
- Formulate the evaluation questions to be asked of the program components in your focus (implementation, effectiveness, efficiency, attribution questions).
- Review evaluation questions with stakeholders, program managers and program staff.
- Review options for the evaluation design, making sure that the design fits the evaluation questions.

STAGE 3 REFLECTION EXERCISE: FOCUS THE EVALUATION DESIGN



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following questions may help you approach how you think about Stage 3.

What kinds of information needs are your users likely to have?	
How could the information produced by the evaluation be used?	
What are possible evaluation questions for your program?	
What types of evidence could help you show that the program had the intended effect?	
How could you go about getting the evidence you need?	
Have you thought about who could help you with the technical and design aspects of your evaluation?	

STAGE 3 WORKSHEET: FOCUSING THE EVALUATION IN THE LOGIC MODEL



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following worksheet will help you understand how to focus your evaluation design in the logic model.

If this is the situation...	Then which are the parts of the logic model I would include in my evaluation focus? (choose short- or long-term outcomes)
<p>1 Who is asking evaluation questions of the program?</p>	
<p>2 Who will use the evaluation results and for what purpose?</p>	
<p>3 In Stage 1, did we identify interests of other stakeholders that we must consider?</p>	

STAGE 3 WORKSHEET: REALITY CHECKING THE EVALUATION FOCUS



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following worksheet will help you develop indicators that align with your program design.

**List the sections of the logic model you will be evaluating
(from prior worksheet)**

**Select one to three INDICATORS that you will use to
demonstrate completion of the outcome**

1

2

3

STAGE 4: Gather Credible Evidence

Gathering evidence means:

- Assembling the raw material of a good evaluation
- Ensuring that information collected gives a well-rounded picture of the program

Why is it Important to Gather Credible Evidence?

Stakeholders should view the information gathered as believable, trustworthy and relevant to their questions. Credibility is based on the questions asked at the beginning of the evaluation process and stakeholders' motives for asking them. In other words, standards of credibility depend on the questions asked.

Having credible evidence strengthens evaluation results as well as the recommendations that follow from them. Recognizing that all types of data have limitations, you can strengthen the credibility of an evaluation design by using multiple procedures for gathering, analyzing and interpreting data. Increased up-front participation by stakeholders also enhances credibility because they will be more likely to accept the evaluation's conclusions and act on its recommendations.

In some situations, you may need to ask evaluation specialists for advice on the most appropriate method(s) to use, given the data restrictions, resource constraints and standards of evidence set by stakeholders. This is especially important in situations where concern for data quality is high or where errors of inference would have serious consequences.

An essential part of a good evaluation is a review of what is known, what has been done before and what has been done elsewhere. Reviewing published literature and unpublished documents can help strengthen the process of designing an evaluation. Program participants and other stakeholders also can be important sources of background information. Familiarity with other evaluations or research on similar interventions (or different interventions designed to address the same problem) can help you develop criteria for judging your own program.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN GATHERING EVIDENCE?

Evidence gathering must include consideration of each of the following:

- The indicators developed in Stage 3
- Sources of evidence
- Quality
- Quantity
- Logistics
- Analysis and synthesis

Sources of Evidence

Sources of evidence in an evaluation may be people, documents or observations. More than one source may be used to gather evidence for a given indicator. In fact, selecting multiple sources of evidence provides an opportunity to include different perspectives about the program, thereby enhancing the evaluation's credibility. For instance, program documentation reflecting an internal (staff) perspective could be combined with key informant interviews with program users. Mixing perspectives provides a more comprehensive view of the program. In addition, the integration of qualitative and quantitative information can yield evidence that is more complete and useful, meeting the needs and expectations of a wider range of stakeholders.

A key decision is whether there are existing data sources – *secondary* data collection – to measure your indicators or whether you need to collect new data – *primary* data collection. Before using secondary data sources, ensure that they meet your needs. You may wish to evaluate the quality of previously submitted agency-level data to see if there are inconsistencies resulting from the data collection tools. Inconsistencies may arise from vague instructions, unclear categorizations and other types of clarity issues in forms.

The most common primary data collection methods fall into several broad categories. Among the most common are:

- Surveys, including personal interviews, telephone or instruments completed in person or vial mail or email
- Group discussions/focus groups
- Observation
- Document or agency records review

Choosing the right method from the many secondary and primary data collection choices must consider both the context in which it is asked (How much money can be devoted to collection and measurement? How soon are results needed? Are there ethical considerations?) and the content of the question (Is it a sensitive issue? Is it about a behavior that is observable? Is it something the respondent is likely to know?). Each method comes with advantages and disadvantages depending on the context and content of the data collection.

All data collection instruments that you prepare, whether they are surveys or revised agency data collection tools, should be pilot tested with several users to ensure that the instructions are clear and the responses are within the range of your expectations.

Further reading on survey design:

Though a bit dated, [A Brief Guide to Questionnaire Development](#) provides useful information.

More up-to-date, (though biased toward SurveyMonkey tools), is the [SurveyMonkey Smart Survey Design Guide](#). For books on survey design, look at [Survey Research Methods](#) (Fowler) or [How to Conduct Your Own Survey](#) (Salant and Dillman).

Quality

A quality evaluation produces data that are accurate and consistent. Well-defined indicators make it easier to collect high quality data that are informative. Other factors that affect quality include:

- Instrument design
- Data collection procedures
- Training of those involved in data collection
- Source selection
- Coding
- Data management
- Routine error checking

Obtaining quality data involves trade-offs (i.e., breadth vs. depth). Thus, stakeholders must decide at the beginning of the evaluation process what is most important. A practical evaluation should strive for a level of quality that will match stakeholders' standards for credibility.

Quantity

You will also need to determine the amount of data you want to collect during the evaluation. Evaluation stakeholders should estimate in advance the amount of information that will be required and establish criteria to decide when to stop collecting data. Quantity effects the

level of confidence or precision users can have (i.e., how sure are we that what we've learned is true?). It also partly determines whether the evaluation will be able to detect program effects. All evidence collected should have a clear, anticipated use.

Logistics

Logistics are the methods, timing and physical infrastructure for gathering and handling evidence. People and organizations have cultural preferences that dictate acceptable ways of asking questions and collecting information and influence who is perceived as an appropriate person to ask the questions (i.e., someone known within the community versus a stranger from the local food bank). The techniques used to gather evidence in the evaluation must be in keeping with a given community's cultural norms. Data collection procedures should also protect confidentiality.

SOME SOURCES OF DATA

Who might you survey or interview?

- Clients, program participants, nonparticipants
- Staff, program managers, administrators
- Partner agency staff
- General public
- Community leaders or key members of a community
- Funders
- Representatives of advocacy groups
- Elected officials, legislators, policymakers
- Local and state health officials

What might you observe?

- Meetings
- Special events or activities
- On the job performance
- Service encounters

Which documents might you analyze?

- Meeting minutes, administrative records
- Newsletters, press releases
- Strategic plans or work plans
- Registration, enrollment or intake forms
- Previous evaluation reports
- Records held by funders or collaborators
- Web pages
- Graphs, maps, charts, photographs, videotapes

In outlining procedures for collecting the evaluation data, consider these issues:

- When will you collect the data? You will need to determine when (and at what intervals) it is most appropriate to collect the information. How does this timing affect your ability to accurately measure your indicators?
- Who will be considered a participant in the evaluation? Are you targeting a specific group (African American children) or are you assessing trends among a more general population?
- Are you going to collect data from all participants or a sample? Some programs are community-based and surveying a sample of the population participating in such programs is appropriate.
- Who will collect the information? Your data collectors will need to be trained to ensure that they all collect information in the same way and without introducing bias.
- How will the security and confidentiality of the information be maintained? It is important to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the evaluation participants.
- If your examination of your program includes research as well as practical evaluation approaches: do you need approval from an institutional review board (IRB) before collecting the data?

Analysis and Synthesis

Analysis and synthesis are methods to discover and summarize evaluation findings. Though you may not yet know the results you will find, it will be important to consider how you plan to analyze the data while you are developing the data-gathering tools. If complex statistical analyses are not feasible, ensure that you are gathering data in such a way as to ensure that you are able to conduct some level of analysis with your results. In evaluations that use multiple methods, patterns and evidence are detected by:

- Isolating important findings (analysis)
- Combining different sources of information to reach a larger understanding (synthesis)

Analysis and synthesis involve deciding how to organize, classify, compare and display information. Because decisions about analysis and synthesis are guided by the questions being asked, the types of data available and by input from stakeholders and primary intended users, it will be important to consider them while preparing the data-gathering tools and processes.

Standards for Stage 4: Gather and Analyze Evidence

Questions	Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you reached an agreement on techniques to analyze and synthesize findings before data collection begins? • Will the information collected address pertinent issues about the program and is this responsive to the needs of your stakeholders? 	<p>Utility: Ensures that the evaluation is useful and answers questions that are directly relevant to users.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the sources of information used in the program described in adequate detail? • Do the information-gathering procedures ensure that the data will be gathered consistently? • Is there a system in place for identifying and correcting errors? 	<p>Accuracy: Ensures that the evaluation findings are considered correct.</p>

SUMMARY OF STAGE 4: GATHER EVIDENCE

Stage 4 represents a process through which information about the program in which you are engaged can be gathered for subsequent analysis. It ensures that the benefits of evaluation (the uses of this information) are clear to all stakeholders and that the processes followed meet everyone’s agreement.

Stage 4: Gather and Analyze Exercises & Resources

- Checklist: Gathering Credible Evidence
- Reflection Exercise: Gather and Analyze Evidence
- Worksheet: Evaluation Questions, Indicators and Data Collection Methods
- Worksheet: Data Collection Logistics

STAGE 4 CHECKLIST: GATHERING CREDIBLE EVIDENCE



Use the following checklist to keep track of your progress in gathering credible evidence.

- Identify indicators for activities and outcomes in the evaluation focus.
- Determine whether existing indicators will suffice or whether new ones must be developed.
- Consider the range of data sources and choose the most appropriate one.
- Consider the range of data collection methods and choose those best suited to your context and content.
- Determine whether existing data-collection tools will suffice, whether modifications must be made to the existing tools, or whether entirely new ones must be developed.
- Pilot test new instruments to identify and/or control sources of error.
- Consider a mixed-method approach to data collection.
- Consider quality and quantity issues in data collection.
- Develop a detailed protocol for data collection.

STAGE 4 REFLECTION EXERCISE: FOCUS THE EVALUATION DESIGN



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following questions may help you think about how to approach Stage 4.

What expertise and resources could you draw on for help in defining your methods?	
What sources of information could you use in the evaluation (people, documents, observations)?	
What systematic processes could you use to gather information?	
How could you check for errors and make corrections as part of the data gathering process?	
What data analysis and synthesis techniques could you consider?	
Will an analysis of the data you propose to collect actually answer key stakeholder questions effectively?	

STAGE 4 WORKSHEET: EVALUATION QUESTIONS, INDICATORS AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS



Use the following worksheet to organize your evaluation questions, indicators and data collection methods.

Logic Model Components in Evaluation Focus		Indicator(s) or Evaluation Questions	Data Method(s)/Source(s)
1			
2			
3			
4			

STAGE 4 WORKSHEET: DATA COLLECTION LOGISTICS



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following worksheet will help you organize your data collection logistics.

Data collection Method/Source	From whom will these data be collected?	By whom will these data be collected, when, how often?	Security or confidentiality steps

STAGE 5: Analyze Data and Justify Conclusions

Note: this Stage can vary widely depending on the type of data collection performed and the question you are trying to answer. Below is a very general discussion of data review and simple comparisons to established benchmarks. If you need support during this phase, please do not hesitate to contact research@feedingamerica.org or consider reaching out for the support of a local researcher.

Justifying Conclusions Involves:

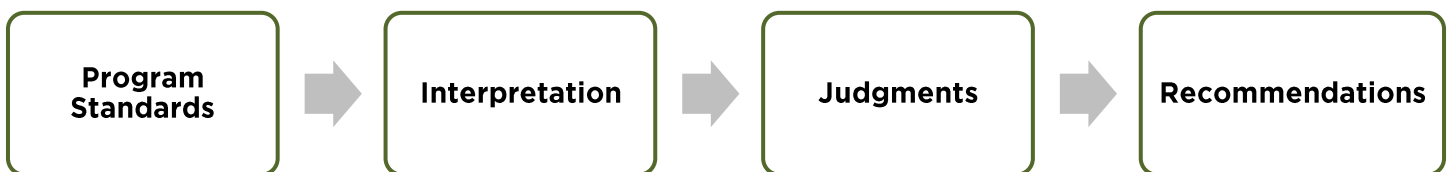
- Making claims about the program based on the evidence gathered
- Justifying the claims by comparing the evidence against stakeholder values

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO JUSTIFY CONCLUSIONS?

The evidence gathered for an evaluation does not necessarily speak for itself. To substantiate and justify conclusions, it is important to carefully consider the evidence from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. Conclusions become justified when they are linked to the gathered evidence and judged against values that stakeholders agree upon. When communities, agencies and other stakeholders agree that the conclusions are justified, they will use the evaluation results with more confidence.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN JUSTIFYING CONCLUSIONS?

Four principle elements are involved in justifying conclusions:



Program Standards

Program standards (not to be confused with *evaluation* standards discussed throughout this document) are fundamental to sound evaluation. They reflect stakeholders' values about the program. Program standards:

- Allow evaluators and stakeholders to make judgments about the program.
- Provide alternative ways to compare program results.

When stakeholders articulate and negotiate their values, these become the standards for considering a program “successful,” “adequate,” or “unsuccessful.” This threshold for each indicator, sometimes called a “benchmark” or “performance indicator,” is often based on an expected change from a known baseline. Performance indicators should be achievable but

challenging and should consider the program’s stage of development, the logic model and the stakeholders’ expectations.

Possible standards that might be used in determining these benchmarks:

- Performance in the previous period,
- Performance of similar programs or service areas,
- Outcomes for different workload or customer groups,
- Different service delivery practices within a program type or across program types,
- A recognized general standard, and/or
- Targets established at the beginning of the performance period.

Interpretation*

Interpretation is the effort to figure out what the evaluation findings mean. The following elements should be included in an interpretation phase to help transform data into useful information.

- Breakouts of the outcome data for each indicator
- Comparisons of the program’s data to benchmark data (proportion of the benchmark that was met)
- Explanations of why the data are the way they are, particularly when they do not meet expectations in terms of either raw numbers or rate/percent

Basic Types of Breakouts for Outcome Data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By organizational unit or project (this will allow you to see if one site or unit is performing more effectively – you can look deeper to see what they are doing right) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty of workload (while you must avoid manipulating data, it may be useful to acknowledge that some clients are more difficult to serve than others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload or client characteristics (this would mean looking at results by separate program components or at the clients by age, gender, race, household income, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type and amount of services provided (as long as the type/amount of service is not tailored to particular categories of clients, breakouts by these factors can be useful)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical location (this may provide perspective on the influence of other factors, such as neighborhood demographics, on the results) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for outcome or rating (if clients are asked “why” or “why not,” tabulating responses allows programs to identify prominent reasons and develop responses)

*adapted from *Performance Measurement: Getting Results*

Final decisions on which breakouts are needed should be made before final decisions on data content and procedures. This is to ensure that the data collection needed for the preferred breakouts is built into the final data collection plan. Going back after the fact and trying to reconstruct data from records, for example, is usually very inefficient and can be expensive.

Interpreting Findings: Steps and Tips

Basic Steps for Analyzing Program Outcome Data

- Examine the Aggregate Outcome Data
 - Compare the latest overall outcomes to outcomes from previous time periods.
 - Compare the latest overall outcomes to established targets.
 - Compare the program's outcomes to those of similar programs or standards.
- Examine breakout data
 - Breakout and compare outcomes by characteristics.
 - Breakout and compare outcomes by service type or amount.
 - Compare the latest outcomes for each breakout group with outcomes from previous reporting periods and to targets.
- Examine findings across indicators
- Examine consistency and relationships among inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- Examine outcome indicators together to get a more comprehensive perspective.
- Identify and Highlight Key Findings

Tips to Remember When Interpreting Your Findings

- Interpret evaluation results with the goals of your program in mind.
- Keep your audience in mind. What do they need and want to know?
- Consider the limitations of the evaluation:
 - Possible biases
 - Do the results relate directly to the research question at hand?
 - Is there evidence that the results make sense?
- Are there alternative explanations for your results?
- Have the different data collection methods used to measure your progress shown similar results?
- Are your results consistent with theories supported by previous research?
- Are your results similar to what you expected? If not, why do you think they may be different?

Judgments

Judgments are formed when findings and interpretations are compared against one or more selected program standards. In forming judgments about a program:

- Multiple program standards can be applied.
- Stakeholders may reach different or even conflicting judgments.

Conflicting claims about a program’s quality, value or importance often indicate that stakeholders are using different program standards or values in making their judgments. This type of disagreement can prompt stakeholders to clarify their values and reach consensus on how the program should be judged.

Recommendations

Recommendations are actions to consider as a result of evaluation. Recommendations require information beyond what is necessary to form program judgments. Recommendations:

- Can strengthen an evaluation when they anticipate and react to what users want to know.
- May undermine an evaluation’s credibility if they are not supported by enough evidence or are not in keeping with stakeholders’ values.

The chances that recommendations will be relevant and well received can be increased by sharing draft recommendations, soliciting reactions from multiple stakeholders and presenting options instead of directive advice.

APPLYING STANDARDS

Standards for Stage 5: Justify Conclusions	
Questions	Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you carefully described the perspectives, procedures and rationale used to interpret the findings? • Have stakeholders considered different approaches for interpreting the findings? 	<p>Utility: Ensures that the evaluation is useful and answers questions that are directly relevant to users.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you explicitly justify your conclusions? • Are the conclusions fully understandable to stakeholders? 	<p>Accuracy: Ensures that the evaluation findings are considered correct.</p>

SUMMARY OF STAGE 5: JUSTIFY CONCLUSIONS

Stage 5 involves interpreting evaluation results so that they make sense to all stakeholders’ values about what is important. Completing this Stage can help stakeholders consider what actions to take as a result of the evaluation.

Stage 5: Justify Conclusions Exercises & Resources

- Checklist: Gathering Credible Evidence
- Reflection Exercise: Justify Conclusions

STAGE 5 CHECKLIST: JUSTIFY CONCLUSIONS



Use the following checklist to keep track of your progress in justifying conclusions.

- Analyze data using appropriate techniques.
- Check data for errors.
- Consider issues of context when interpreting data.
- Assess results against available literature and results of similar programs.
- If multiple methods have been employed, compare different methods for consistency in findings.
- Consider alternative explanations.
- Use existing standards as a starting point for comparisons.
- Compare program outcomes with those of previous years.
- Compare actual with intended outcomes.
- Document potential biases.
- Examine the limitations of the evaluation.

STAGE 5 REFLECTION EXERCISE: JUSTIFY CONCLUSIONS



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following questions may help you think about how to approach Stage 5.

How could you involve stakeholders in interpreting evaluation results from your program?

If stakeholders had conflicting judgments about your program, how could you reach consensus?

What information could you use to develop recommendations for action?

How might you share recommendations with other stakeholders?

STAGE 5 WORKSHEET: JUSTIFY CONCLUSIONS



Use the space below to organize your thoughts into a plan for justifying conclusions.

Who will analyze the data (and who will coordinate this effort)?

How will data be analyzed and displayed?

Against what “standards” will you compare your interpretations in forming your judgments?

Who will be involved in making interpretations and judgments and what process will be employed?

<p>How will you deal with conflicting interpretations and judgments?</p>	
<p>Are your results similar to what you expected? If not, why do you think they are different?</p>	
<p>Are there alternative explanations for your results?</p>	
<p>How do your results compare with those of similar programs?</p>	

<p>What are the limitations of your data analysis and interpretation process (e.g., potential biases, generalizability of results, accuracy)?</p>	
<p>If you used multiple indicators to answer the same evaluation question, did you get similar results?</p>	
<p>Will others interpret the findings in a different way or use the findings as justification for a different action?</p>	

STAGE 6: Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings and Share Lessons Learned

Using evaluation results appropriately means:

- Making stakeholders aware of the evaluation procedures and findings.
- Considering findings in program-related decisions or actions.
- Ensuring that those who participate in the evaluation perceive it as beneficial.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ENSURE USE AND SHARE LESSONS LEARNED?

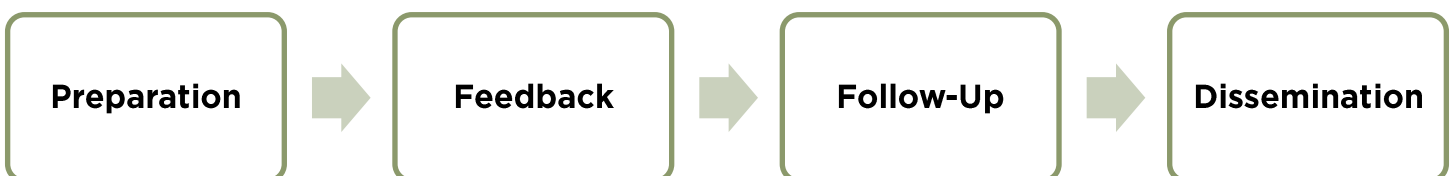
Evaluation participants must make a deliberate effort to promote use of the evaluation findings in decision-making and subsequent action. They also have a responsibility to prevent misuse of findings. Factors that influence whether results are used appropriately include evaluator credibility; disclosure of findings; report clarity, timeliness and impartiality; and changes in the program or organization context. Ensuring use requires thinking strategically from the earliest stages of the evaluation, as well as diligently looking for opportunities to communicate results and influence program decisions and/or policy makers.

The very process of doing evaluation is important. When individuals are exposed to the logic, reasoning and values that guide evaluation, their thinking and behavior may change profoundly. Participation in evaluation may:

- Encourage stakeholders to base decisions on systematic judgments instead of on unfounded assumptions.
- Prompt stakeholders to clarify their understanding of program goals, thereby improving their ability to function as a team.
- Help stakeholders clarify what is really important through the process of defining indicators.
- Make outcomes matter by changing the reinforcements connected with achieving positive results, as when funders offer “bonus grants” or “outcome dividends” to programs that show significant community change and improvement.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN ENSURING USE AND SHARING LESSONS LEARNED?

Four elements are important in making sure that the findings from an evaluation are used:



Preparation

Preparation refers to the Stages taken to get ready to eventually use the evaluation findings. Through preparation, stakeholders can:

- Strengthen their ability to translate new knowledge into appropriate action.
- Discuss how potential findings might affect decision-making.
- Explore positive and negative implications of potential results and identify different options for program improvement.

Feedback

Feedback, necessary at all stages of the evaluation process, creates an atmosphere of trust among stakeholders. Early in an evaluation, the process of giving and receiving feedback keeps an evaluation on track by keeping everyone informed about how the program is being implemented and how the evaluation is proceeding. As the evaluation progresses and preliminary results become available, feedback helps ensure that primary intended users and other stakeholders have opportunities to comment on evaluation decisions. Valuable feedback can be obtained from stakeholders by holding discussions during each Stage of the evaluation and routinely sharing interim findings, provisional interpretations and draft reports.

Follow-Up

Although follow-up refers to the support that many users need throughout the evaluation process, this Stage, in particular, refers to the support that is needed after users receive evaluation results and begin to reach and justify their conclusions. Active follow-up:

- Reminds users of the intended uses of what has been learned.
- Can help to prevent misuse of results by ensuring that evidence is applied to the questions that were the evaluation's central focus.
- Prevents lessons learned from becoming lost or ignored in the process of making complex or political decisions.

Dissemination

Dissemination is the process of communicating evaluation procedures or lessons learned to relevant audiences in a timely, unbiased and consistent manner. Regardless of how communications are structured, the goal for dissemination is to achieve full disclosure and impartial reporting. Planning effective communications requires:

- Advance discussion of the reporting strategy with intended users and other stakeholders.
- Consideration of the timing, style, tone, message source, vehicle and format of information products.

Some methods of getting the information to your audience include:

- Mailings
- Web sites
- Community forums
- Media (television, radio, newspaper)
- Personal contacts
- Organizational newsletters

If a formal evaluation report is the chosen format, the evaluation report must clearly, succinctly and impartially communicate all parts of the evaluation. It need not be lengthy or technical. An outline for a traditional evaluation report might look like this:

- **Executive Summary**
- **Background and Purpose**
 - Program background
 - Evaluation rationale
 - Stakeholder identification and engagement
 - Program description
 - Key evaluation questions/focus
- **Evaluation Methods**
 - Design
 - Sampling procedures
 - Measures or indicators
 - Data collection procedures
 - Data processing procedures
 - Analysis
 - Limitations
- **Results**
- **Discussions and Recommendations**

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR EVALUATION REPORT

- Tailor the report to your audience; you may need a different version of your report for each segment of your audience.
- Present clear and succinct ideas.
- Summarize the stakeholder roles and involvement.
- Explain the focus of the evaluation and its limitations.
- Summarize the evaluation plan and procedures.
- List the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation.
- List the advantages and disadvantages of the recommendations.
- Verify that the report is unbiased and accurate.
- Remove technical jargon.
- Use examples, illustrations, graphics and stories.
- Prepare and distribute reports on time.
- Consider tailored oral presentations to accompany the report to certain audiences.
- Distribute reports to as many stakeholders as possible.

The three standards that most direct apply to Stage 6 – Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned – are utility, propriety and accuracy. As you use your own evaluation results, the questions presented in the following table can help you to clarify and achieve these standards.

Standards for Stage 6: Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned	
Questions	Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do reports clearly describe the program, including its context and the evaluation’s purpose, procedures and findings? • Have you shared significant mid-course findings and reports with users so that the findings can be used in a timely fashion? • Have you planned, conducted and reported the evaluation in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders? 	<p>Utility: Ensures that the evaluation is useful and answers questions that are directly relevant to users.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are participants in the evaluation group trustworthy and competent? • Have you ensured that the evaluation findings (including the limitations) are made accessible to everyone affected by the evaluation and others who have the right to receive the results? 	<p>Propriety: Ensures that the evaluation is ethical, conducted with regard for the rights and interests of those involved.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the evaluation reports impartially and fairly reflect evaluation findings? • Have you tried to avoid the distortions that can be caused by personal feelings and other biases? 	<p>Accuracy: Ensures that the evaluation findings are considered correct.</p>

SUMMARY OF STAGE 6: ENSURE USE AND SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

Stage 6 emphasizes the importance of translating results into action. The benefits of evaluation become clear to stakeholders through the process of preparation, feedback, follow-up and dissemination. This Stage ensures that the lessons learned from an evaluation are shared in such a way as to influence program decisions, policy makers and community-based initiatives.

Stage 5: Justify Conclusions Exercises & Resources

- Checklist: Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned
- Reflection Exercise: Ensuring Use and Sharing Lessons Learned
- Worksheet: Communicating Results
- Worksheet: Ensuring Follow-Up

STAGE 6 CHECKLIST: ENSURE USE AND SHARE LESSONS LEARNED



Use the following checklist to keep track of your progress in ensuring use and sharing lessons learned.

- Identify strategies to increase the likelihood that evaluation findings will be used.
- Identify strategies to reduce the likelihood that information will be misinterpreted.
- Provide continuous feedback to the program.
- Prepare stakeholders for the eventual use of evaluation findings.
- Identify training and technical assistance needs.
- Use evaluation findings to support annual and long-range planning.
- Use evaluation findings as a basis on which to develop annual targets for service delivery or expansion.
- Use evaluation findings to promote your program.
- Use evaluation findings in funding requests and proposals.
- Use evaluation findings to enhance the public image of your program.
- Schedule follow-up meetings to facilitate the transfer of evaluation conclusions.
- Disseminate procedures used and lessons learned to stakeholders.
- Consider interim reports to key audiences.
- Tailor evaluation reports to audience(s).
- Revisit the purpose(s) of the evaluation when preparing recommendations.
- Present clear and succinct findings in a timely manner.
- Avoid jargon when preparing or presenting information to stakeholders.
- Disseminate evaluation findings in several ways.

STAGE 6 REFLECTION EXERCISE: ENSURE USE AND SHARE LESSONS LEARNED



Think about a practical evaluation in which you are involved. The following questions may help you think about how to approach Stage 6.

How could you ensure that stakeholders receive and provide feedback throughout the evaluation process?

How could you make sure that lessons learned are used?

What support is available to follow-up on evaluation results?

What types of communication strategies might be appropriate for your program and stakeholders?

STAGE 6 WORKSHEET: COMMUNICATING RESULTS



Use the following worksheet to document plans for communicating your evaluation results.

	I need to communicate to this audience	This format would be most appropriate	This channel(s) would be most effective
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

STAGE 6 WORKSHEET: ENSURING FOLLOW-UP



Use the following worksheet to document plans for communicating your evaluation results.

	Who will follow up with users of the evaluation findings?	In what manner?	What resources are available to support implementation of findings?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			



Section 7

Applications, Agreements & Reporting

In this section you will find information on:

- **Program Agreement**
 - **Reporting**
- **CACFP Application Requirements**

APPLICATIONS, AGREEMENTS AND REPORTING

Program Agreement

Feeding America supports network members and approved Partner Distribution Organizations (PDOs) in child hunger programs. This support includes, but is not limited to grant funding, branding and marketing, training, technical assistance, and national data collection.

We have developed the child hunger program Standards and Agreement to provide clarity and common language among all parties involved. Any member or approved PDO who wishes to receive national office support must sign an agreement and ensure that all standards are upheld.

Who needs to sign the agreement?

The Program Agreement must be signed and adhered to by each Feeding America Participant operating the program. "Participant" is defined as a Feeding America Member Food Bank or their approved Partner Distribution Organization ("PDO").

What happens if I do not want to follow the standards?

If your program is already up and running – you will continue to receive resources from the National Office such as technical assistance, but the funding opportunities for your program will be limited. If you start a new program or program site, the expectation is that the new standards will be met. If you start a new program but do not meet the standards, you will not be able to describe it as a Kids Cafe®, Backpack Program or a School Pantry.

Increase on-the-ground technical assistance available for all programs as funding becomes available, provide resources for program startup, marketing, fundraising, and promoting local sustainability for programs that meet or exceed the standards.

Facilitate communication among peers in the network through internet chats, conference calls, Yammer discussion groups, and conferences. One of the best ways to learn in this network is by visiting another Participant and observing their programs.

Resources

[Child Hunger Program Agreement](#)

[Program Agreement FAQ's](#)

[Kids Cafe Minimum Requirements Monitoring Form](#)

[Kids Cafe Advanced Monitoring Form](#)

What is the role of the feeding America participant and the program partner?

Every site is different, and it is important to make your program adaptable. It is advantageous to let the respective site know they have the ability to tailor the program to make it work best for them. Being collaborative and supportive builds better bridges than being demanding and telling the site how you want them to run the program. However, in the end the objective for this partnership should be to develop clear guidelines and expectations. Please refer to Exhibit 6 for a copy of the Partner Agreement Template. The intention is for programs to customize this agreement so that it addresses the unique components of your program partnership

Reporting

All child hunger programs shall gather the following data monthly and report it to Feeding America annually through the Network Activity Report.

Kids Cafe

- Number of children served (based on the monthly one-day high attendance method or an unduplicated count).
- Number of children that received SFSP reimbursed meals (based on the June-August one-day high attendance method or an unduplicated count).
- Number of meals and snacks served that are not reimbursed, number that are reimbursed by CACFP, and number that are reimbursed by SFSP (monthly).
- Total number of sites participating in the program, number that receive CACFP funding with the Member as the CACFP sponsor, and number that receive SFSP funding with the Member as the SFSP sponsor (annual and June-August).

BackPack

- Number of children served (based on the monthly one-day high attendance method or an unduplicated count).
- Number of pounds distributed (monthly).
- Number of carriers (e.g., backpacks) distributed (monthly).
- Number of sites participating in the program (annual and June-August).

School Pantry

- Number of children served, and number of households served (based on the monthly one-day high attendance method or an unduplicated count).
- Number of pounds distributed (monthly).
- Number of sites participating in the program (annual and June-August)

Resources

[NAR Question Guide](#)

[NAR HungerNet Page](#)

CACFP Application Requirements

If you're considering sponsoring CACFP, you should first contact your State agency, for State specific requirements, as well as to determine what resources are available from them to help you through the process. You will be required to submit an application to your State agency to participate in CACFP.

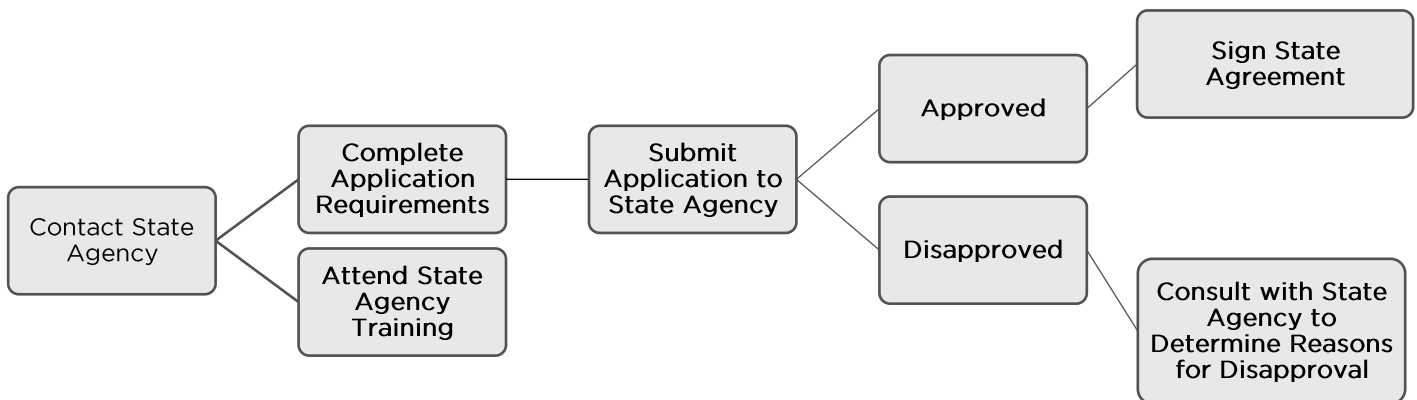
Application requirements will vary by State, but the following is a list of basic application requirements sponsors are usually asked to satisfy.

Please consult with your State Agency for their application requirements.

- Documentation of area eligibility and enrichment activities for each proposed site

- Documentation of tax-exempt status
- Depending on State requirements, documentation of childcare licensing or local health and safety inspections
- If serving suppers, sponsors must indicate preference for commodities or cash-in-lieu of commodities
- If food is vended, copy of food service contract
- Management plan that shows the sponsor can adequately manage funds in accordance with federal requirements. Documentation requirements for these plans vary by State, but typically include things such as:
 - Detailed information on organization’s management and structure
 - An administrative budget that includes projected CACFP earnings (not to exceed 15% for administrative costs)
 - The procedures that will be used to administer the program and distribute payments
 - A list of staff that will carry out the operational functions of the CACFP
- Certification that a Sponsor is not on the CACFP National Disqualified List
- Documentation indicating that organization meets State’s criteria for providing benefits to unserved facilities or participants
- Information on criminal conviction
- Outside employment policy
- Sponsors must submit a bond if required by State law
- Attend a mandatory training provided by the State Agency
- Non-discrimination statement and media release about the program

The State Agency has 30 days from the receipt of your application materials to notify you of approval or disapproval. State agencies will do a pre-approval visit of private non-profit institutions unless they already operate as SFSP sites. The following illustration outlines the basic application process for CACFP.





Section 8

Appendices & Glossary

In this section you will find information on:

- **Appendices**
 - **Appendix A: Links to Research Studies, Data Sets and Organizations**
 - **Appendix B: Useful Data and Data Sources**
 - **Appendix C: Resources for Conducting a Community Needs Assessment**
 - **Appendix D: Free Online Data Visualization and Other Useful Tools**
 - **Appendix E: Additional Resources**
- **Glossary**

Appendix A: Links to Research Studies, Data Sets and Organizations

The following is a list of resources that provide data and information on child hunger and poverty in the United States. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list but a starting point in learning about some of the major players working to address child hunger and poverty and helpful resources.

American Community Survey:

- [Main website](#)

Bread for the World:

- [Main website](#)

Brookings:

- [Main website](#)
- [Center on Children and Families](#)

2010 Census:

- [Main website](#)

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP):

- [Main website](#)
- [Food Assistance page](#)
- [Poverty and Inequality page](#)

Children's Health Watch:

- [Main website](#)
- [Children's Health Watch Food Related Publications](#)

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC):

- [Main website](#)
- [FRAC's Campaign to End Child Hunger:](#)
- [FRAC's Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report](#)
- [FRAC's Food Hardship Report](#)

Feeding America

- [Main website](#)
- [Hunger in America](#)
- [Map the Meal Gap](#)

- [HungerNet Main website](#) (suggestion: search for “needs assessment” to see what network members have done in the realm of needs assessments)
 - [Child Programs page](#)
 - [Research and Evaluation page](#)
 - [Federal Child Nutrition page](#), including SNAP

Kids Count from the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

- [Main website](#)

School Nutrition Association:

- [Main website](#)

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):

- [Main website](#)
- [Food and Nutrition Services \(FNS\)](#), *the government agency in the USDA which administers the federal nutrition assistance programs, including Summer Food Service Program, the National School Lunch Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program.*
 - [FNS studies on food security](#)
 - [FNS studies on Child Nutrition](#)
 - [FNS Summer Food page](#)
 - [FNS Child and Adult Care Food Program page](#)
 - [FNS National School Lunch Program page](#)
 - [FNS SNAP page](#)
 - [FNS Food Distribution Data page](#)
 - [FNS Team Nutrition page](#)
- [Economic Research Service \(ERS\)](#), *the major source of economic information and research in the USDA.*
 - [Child Nutrition Programs](#)

The Urban Institute:

- [Main website](#)
 - [Poverty and Safety Net](#)
 - [Children and Youth](#)

Appendix B: Useful Data and Data Sources

Useful Data

Issue	Current prevalence	Who measures it	Frequency of Publication	Definition
Emergency food assistance	As of 2014, 46.5 million people in the U.S. (14.2%) are served by the Feeding America network.	Feeding America	Every 4 years	Individuals living in households that have received emergency food assistance at a Feeding America pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter.
Food insecurity	An estimated 15 million households in the U.S. (11.8%) experience food insecurity in 2017. More than 2.9 million children in the U.S. (7.7%) lived in food insecure households in 2017.	USDA Economic Research Service	Annually in September	Individuals living in households with lack of access to enough food for an active healthy life for all household members. It is measured through an 18-question survey about behaviors and experiences associated with limited access to food that is administered annually to a nationally representative sample.
Poverty	More than 39.7 million people in the U.S. (12.3%) had incomes that placed them below the poverty threshold in 2017.	U.S. Census Bureau	Annually in September	Individuals living in households with pre-tax, cash incomes below the federal poverty threshold.

Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)	Under the SPM, in 2017, 13.9% of the U.S. population lived in poverty, 1.6% more than are represented by the official poverty measure.	U.S. Census Bureau & U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	Annually in September	Individuals living in households with incomes below an adjusted poverty threshold after accounting for taxes, in-kind benefits (non-cash assistance, e.g. SNAP, WIC), medical & work-related expenses (e.g. childcare). The SPM does not replace the official poverty measure, but is instead intended to provide additional information about the complex factors affecting quality of life in the U.S.
SNAP Participation	42.1 million people participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in FY2017.	USDA Food and Nutrition Service	Monthly/ Annually	State-level monthly participation data in SNAP
Unemployment	6.3 million people in the U.S. (3.9%) were unemployed in 2018.	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	Monthly/ Annually	Individuals who have actively looked for work in the prior four weeks, are able to work, are not actively involved in the military or incarcerated, and who do not have jobs.
Working poor	More than 6.9 million people in households with at least one worker (4.5%) fell below the federal poverty threshold in 2017.	U.S. Census Bureau	Annually in April	One definition is individuals living in households with incomes below the federal poverty threshold with at least one household member working. There is no single, authoritative definition of this concept, however.

Appendix C: Resources for Conducting a Community Needs Assessment

This list of tools and resources can assist you in conducting qualitative and quantitative research for your community needs assessment. Some of the tools are related to assessments of community food security while others are focused more broadly on conducting interviews or focus groups.

Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit

- [Main website](#)
 - [Focus group guides and materials](#)
 - [Assessment of household food security](#)
 - [Profile of community food resources](#)

The Community Tool Box: provides resources on conducting a community needs assessment.

- [Main website](#)
 - [Assessing community needs and resources](#)
 - [Conducting focus groups](#)
 - [Conducting needs assessment surveys](#)
 - [Conducting interviews](#)
 - [Qualitative methods to assess community issues](#)

[Conducting Successful Interviews with Project Stakeholders](#)

[General Guidelines for Conducting Research Interviews](#)

[Interview as a Method of Qualitative Research](#)

[Information Gathering Toolkit](#)

Books:

Foddy, William. *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires: Theory and Practice in Social Research*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.

Krueger, Richard A., and Mary Anne. Casey. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000. Print.

Kvale, Steinar. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2009. Print.

Morgan, David. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research (Qualitative Research Methods)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997. Print.

Appendix D: Free Online Data Visualization and Other Useful Tools

Data Visualization Resources

- [Creately](#) allows you to make diagrams and flowcharts for free. It's a very user-friendly, drag-and-drop interface that is way less fussy than PowerPoint and much more dynamic. You can also share the diagram you are working with other collaborators, Google Docs-style. It allows to easily publish your diagram to a webpage when you are done. A similar site is [draw.io](#) (formerly Diagramly). Experiment between the two to see which interface you like better.
- [MindMeister](#) is another diagrams tool, designed for "mind-mapping," brainstorming, and visualizing ideas/projects etc.
- [Timeline](#) creates really nice online timelines, complete with graphics and images. If you need to present the history of a piece of legislation, a movement, or of an organization, consider using an interactive timeline.
- [Wordle](#) generates word clouds for you. If you have a bunch of text, qualitative quotes, or survey responses, word clouds are a great way to visually represent the focus themes. It's not a data analysis tool, but it helps you (and your audience) quickly see the key words. Nice way to spice up a report or website.
- [Tableau Public](#) lets you can create interactive graphs, dashboards, maps and tables from virtually any data and embed them on your website or blog in minutes. A great tool to produce interactive visualizations of quantitative data.
- [Chartle](#) makes it easy to produce pie charts, line graphs, and bar graphs, as well as more dynamic visualizations. If you already have your numbers and know what type of graph you want, Chartle is a good tool. If Excel is overwhelming or intimidating, you can create simple charts in Chartle instead. If you want to put the chart or graph in a non-online document, you will have to take a screenshot and then instead it into your document.
- [Google Fusion Tables](#) allows you to visualize and publish your data as maps, timelines, and charts and then export them to websites or to other programs like Google Earth. A lot of academics are using Google Fusion Tables for spatial mapping and analysis. Other benefits-- Your data tables are hosted online, and you can easily combine data from multiple people. If you already use Google Docs, it is convenient because all of the tables that you create will be stored with your other docs. The tutorials are very useful, and you can learn how to navigate and effectively use the tool fairly quickly.
- [Prezi](#) is an online presentation program that lets you make highly dynamic presentations as an alternative to PowerPoint. A word of caution: it's a fun program but don't get carried away with all the special effects and zooming in/out. Just as with PowerPoint or any other presentation tool, the content and structure matter much more than the presentation style. Keep it simple.

Other Useful Resources:

- [Google Public Data](#) has commonly used data sets like the US Census readily on hand and lets you easily manipulate it into different types of interactive graphs and charts. This is useful because you don't have to worry about formatting an Excel spreadsheet to upload to a site. However, familiarity with how to make and read graphs in Excel is useful when

using Google Public Data so that you know what type of graph makes sense for what type of data and which variables you want to graph.

- [DataKind](#) (formerly Data Without Borders) seeks to match non-profits in need of data analysis with freelance and pro bono data scientists who can work to help them with data collection, analysis, visualization, or decision support. If your organization has data but doesn't know what to do with it or how to rigorously analyze, visualize, or make sense of it, you can submit your needs through DWB's website and they will try to link you up with a data nerd. [Statistics Without Borders](#) is a similar organization, if you have stats-heavy analysis that you need help with.

Appendix E: Additional Resources

BackPack Program

- [BackPack Program HungerNet Section](#)
- [BackPack Resource Documents](#)

Kids Cafe

- [Kids Cafe HungerNet Section](#)
- [Kids Cafe Resource Documents](#)
- [USDA At-Risk Afterschool Meal Handbook](#)
- [USDA CACFP Website](#)

School Pantry Program

- [School Pantry Program HungerNet Section](#)
- [School Pantry Resource Documents](#)

Summer Feeding

- [Summer Feeding Program HungerNet Section](#)
- [Summer Feeding Program Tool](#)
- [USDA Summer Food Service Guides](#)
- [Summer Food Service Program Memoranda Rescission: SFSP 01-2007 and SFSP 06-2015](#)

SNAP Application Assistance Program

- [SNAP Application Assistance Resource Library](#)
- [SNAP Digital Outreach HungerNet Section](#)
- [SNAP Outreach Materials](#)

General Resources

- [Background Check Vendors](#)
- [Background Checks and Staff Screening Toolkit](#)
- [Capacity Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Feeding America's National Programs Team

The National Programs team that can serve as a resource to the network regarding senior and child programs. We provide technical assistance, training materials and consultation services and can assist with marketing and outreach efforts. You can find the specialist for each program [here on HungerNet](#). If you have general program related questions or do not know how to direct your question, please email the team at programsteam@feedingamerica.org.

Resources from this Document

[2015-2020 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
[Advocacy & Public Policy HungerNet Section](#)
[American Evaluation Association](#)
[Background Check Vendors](#)
[BackPack Program HungerNet Section](#)
[BackPack Resource Documents](#)
[CACFP Child Meal Pattern Guidelines](#)
[Nutrition.gov Meal Planning Resources](#)
[CACFP Meal Pattern Guidelines](#)
[Campaign Resource Center](#)
[Capacity Self-Assessment Tool](#)
[CBPP.org: A Quick Guide to SNAP Eligibility and Benefits](#)
[CBPP.org: SNAP basics](#)
[CBPP.org: SNAP Helps Millions of Children](#)
[Child Hunger Program Agreement](#)
[Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2019 Legislative Priorities](#)
[Child Nutrition Reauthorization Summer Priorities Program Agreement FAQ's](#)
[Chronicle of Philanthropy](#)
[Collaborating for Clients HungerNet Page](#)
[Community Healthy and Nutrition Resources on Hunger Net](#)
[Community Tool Box- Providing Support for Staff and Volunteers](#)
[Community Tool Box: Creating and Maintaining Partnerships Toolkit](#)
[Community Toolbox: Training Volunteers](#)
[Council on Foundations](#)
[Federal Child Nutrition Programs](#)
[Feeding America External Opportunities](#)
[Feeding America Food Safety Resources](#)
[Feeding America Government Programs Resource Guide](#)
[Feeding America Member Grants](#)
[Feeding America SNAP Resource Center](#)
[Feeding America Summer Food Manual](#)
[Feeding America Summer Feeding Hungernet Page](#)
[Foundation Center](#)
[FRAC: 2019 Summer Nutrition Status Report](#)
[GrantSpace](#)
[GuideStar](#)
[Healthy Food Bank Hub](#)
[HungerNet SNAP Application Assistance Toolkit](#)
[Kids Cafe Advanced Monitoring Form](#)
[Kids Cafe HungerNet Section](#)
[Kids Cafe Minimum Requirements Monitoring Form](#)
[Kids Cafe Resource Documents](#)
[Kids Cafe, Backpack, and School Pantry Resource Documents](#)
[Latest from the Government Relations Team](#)
[Map the Meal Gap](#)
[Marketing & Communication HungerNet Section](#)
[Master Case Statements](#)
[NAR Question Guide](#)
[NAR HungerNet Page](#)
[Partner Agreement Template](#)
[Press Release Template](#)
[Child Hunger One Pager](#)
[Marketing and Communication HungerNet Section](#)
[Product Sourcing HungerNet Section](#)
[Food and Grocery Purchasing HungerNet Section](#)
[Program Evaluation 101](#)
[Program Evaluation HungerNet Page](#)
[Sample Member Site Training and Orientation Materials](#)
[Sample Monitoring Form](#)
[School Pantry Program HungerNet Section](#)
[School Pantry Resource Documents](#)
[SFSP Meal Pattern Guidelines](#)
[ChooseMyPlate.gov Daily Food Plan Resources](#)
[SFSP USDA Website](#)
[2-1-1 Call Center](#)
[SNAP Application Assistance Resource Library](#)
[SNAP Digital Outreach HungerNet Section](#)
[SNAP Outreach Materials](#)
[Summer Hunger Documents](#)
[SNAP Program Outreach](#)
[State Agency Contact List](#)
[Summer Feeding Learning Yammer Community](#)
[Summer Food Program Resource Documents](#)
[TGCI, The Grantsmanship Center](#)
[The Foundation Center's Foundation Directory](#)
[The USDA's Economic Research Service Food Environment Atlas](#)
[Tufts University's "Exploring Food Production, Access, Health, and Equity with GIS"](#)
[Urban Institute's "Volunteer Management: Practices and Retention of Volunteers"](#)
[USDA At-Risk Afterschool Meal Handbook](#)
[USDA CACFP Website](#)
[USDA CACFP Website](#)
[USDA Federal Nutrition Programs: Afterschool](#)
[USDA Federal Nutrition Programs: Summer](#)
[USDA MyPlate Materials](#)
[USDA Team Nutrition Materials](#)
[American Dietetic Association: Eat Right](#)
[American Heart Association Nutrition](#)
[USDA-FNS Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) Fact Sheets](#)
[USDA-FNS Summer Food Service Program Website](#)
[USDA-FNS Summer Meals Toolkit](#)
[USDA SNAP Outreach Materials](#)
[USDA Summer Food Service Guides](#)
[USDA: Nutrition Education Resources](#)
[Point-of-Service Nutrition Education Resources](#)
[Volunteer Retention and Feelings of Connections](#)

GLOSSARY

More Terms: The following list of terms and definitions is a pared down version of the Feeding America Glossary found on [HungerNet](#).

Word or Phrase	Definition
Agency (Member)	The charitable organization that provides the food supplied by a food bank or food-rescue organization directly to participants in need through various types of programs.
Area Eligibility	Determined using census or school data that captures the percentage of children qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches at the neighborhood elementary school; based on the percentage of children in families with income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level in a given area. Within the child nutrition programs, all children in schools and childcare settings in an eligible area qualify for free or reduced-price meals; also, childcare providers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) qualify for the highest reimbursement level per meal.
Backpack Carriers	Refers to the backpack or other carrier that is used to distribute food to the program participant. Examples include: backpacks, plastic grocery bags, two-gallon Ziploc bags, or other carriers that can be placed directly in the participants' backpacks or carried separately by the child.
BackPack Program	A national program of Feeding America that is designed to meet the needs of hungry children at times when other resources are not available, such as during weekends and school vacations. Through this program, children are given backpacks filled with food to take home.
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	A federal program that provides meals and snacks to children in public or private nonprofit childcare centers and Head Start programs; and also to adults in nonresidential adult day care centers. CACFP also provides meals to children residing in homeless shelters, as well as snacks and suppers through after school care programs. Visit the CACFP website .

Word or Phrase	Definition
Child Nutrition Programs	The primary U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) domestic food assistance programs that primarily serve the nutritional needs of children. These programs include the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Special Milk Program.
Children	0 - 18 years of age.
Closed Backpack Site	When utilizing the Child Nutrition Questionnaire, a closed site has ceased operations forever under current management.
Closed Enrolled Site	A site that is open only to enrolled children, as opposed to the community at large, and where at least 50% of the enrolled children at the site are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP).
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	A federal program that targets specific at-risk populations. CSFP works to improve the health of people at least 60 years of age, by providing supplementary U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity foods containing nutrients typically lacking in the diets of the target populations. Administered by CSFP state agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) that receive commodity foods and funds for administrative costs from the USDA. Visit the CSFP website .
Community Capacity	The commitment, resources, and skills that a community can mobilize and use to address community issues and problems and strengthen community assets; the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify and address social and economic health issues; the cultivation and use of transferable knowledge, skills, systems, and other resources to affect community—and individual—level change.

Word or Phrase	Definition
Congregate Meal Program	A program that serves meals at a community location, such as a senior center or a soup kitchen. Congregate meal programs are often supported by nutrition programs for the elderly, and some states also use funds from the Social Services Block Grant to support congregate meal programs.
Congregate Site	A facility that serves meals on its premises. Includes senior meal sites, day care centers, group homes and soup kitchens.
Data	Information produced by and used in evaluation—includes numbers, words, pictures, or any type of information used.
Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)	The method by which food stamps and other benefits are distributed via an electronic debit card. Some states also use EBT to distribute benefits under Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and other programs.
Emergency Kitchen	A program that provides prepared meals on-site to people in need who do not reside on the agency’s premises.
Emergency Shelter	A program that provides shelter services and serves one or more meals a day, on a short-term basis, to low-income people in need.
Evaluation Design	A blueprint, strategy, or outline to answer questions about a program. Includes a clear statement about the purpose and plans for gathering, processing, and interpreting the information needed.
Evaluation Methods	Data collection options and strategies selected to match or fit the overall design and answer the evaluation questions. Methods depend on knowing who the information is for, how it will be used, what types of information are needed and when, and the resources available.

Word or Phrase	Definition
Farm Bill	<p>The U.S. Farm Bill is the primary agricultural and food policy tool of the U.S. federal government. The comprehensive omnibus bill is passed every several years by Congress and deals with agriculture and all other affairs under the purview of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The current farm bill, known as the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, replaced the last farm bill in 2014. Farms bills can be highly controversial and can impact international trade, environmental preservation, food safety, and the well-being of rural communities. The agricultural subsidy programs mandated by the farm bills are the subject of intense debate both within the U.S. and internationally. Visit the Farm Bill website.</p>
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	<p>An agency of the U.S. Government, the FDA oversees the safe handling of all food products in the United States except for meat, poultry and egg products, which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety Inspection Service. Visit the FDA website.</p>
Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)	<p>A division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), FNS increases food security and reduces hunger, in partnership with other organizations, by providing low-income people access to food and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture. Visit the FNS website.</p>
Food Bank (FB)	<p>A charitable nonprofit organization that solicits, receives, inventories, stores and distributes donated food and grocery products to charitable agencies that directly serve clients in need. These agencies include churches and qualifying nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organizations.</p>

Word or Phrase	Definition															
Food Insecurity	<p>The availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain.</p> <p>USDA’s revised labels describe ranges of food security</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="589 394 1482 1054"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="589 394 751 478">Old label</th> <th data-bbox="751 394 914 478">New label</th> <th data-bbox="914 394 1482 478">Description of conditions in the household</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="589 478 751 562"></td> <td data-bbox="751 478 914 562">High food security</td> <td data-bbox="914 478 1482 562">No reported indications of food-access problems or limitations</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="589 562 751 751">Food security</td> <td data-bbox="751 562 914 751">Marginal food security</td> <td data-bbox="914 562 1482 751">One or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="589 751 751 909">Food insecurity without hunger</td> <td data-bbox="751 751 914 909">Low food security</td> <td data-bbox="914 751 1482 909">Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="589 909 751 1054">Food insecurity with hunger</td> <td data-bbox="751 909 914 1054">Very low food security</td> <td data-bbox="914 909 1482 1054">Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Old label	New label	Description of conditions in the household		High food security	No reported indications of food-access problems or limitations	Food security	Marginal food security	One or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake	Food insecurity without hunger	Low food security	Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake	Food insecurity with hunger	Very low food security	Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake
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Food insecurity with hunger	Very low food security	Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake														
Food Pantry	A program that distributes groceries (non-prepared foods) and other basic supplies for off-site use, usually for preparation in the client’s residence.															
Food Security	Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.															
Food Service Frequency	Backpacks must be provided a minimum of once a month during the school year.															
Food Shelf	A program that distributes groceries (non-prepared foods) and other basic supplies for off-site use, usually for preparation in the client’s residence. Also known as a food pantry.															

Word or Phrase	Definition
Formative Evaluation	A subset of process evaluation. Information collected for a specific period of time, often during the start-up or pilot phase of a project, to refine and improve implementation and solve unanticipated problems. This can include program monitoring efforts to provide ongoing feedback and assess intermediate outcomes.
Free of Charge	Program resources must be provided at no cost to participating children.
Free Meal Certification	A classification within the child nutrition programs indicating that a child is able to receive meals and snacks at no cost to his or her family. Children from families with income at or below 130% of the federal poverty level qualify to receive free meals.
Good Samaritan Laws	<p>The federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, signed into law in 1996 (Public Law 104-210), provides uniform, blanket liability protection in all 50 states for donors who donate apparently fit and wholesome food in good faith for distribution to needy people.</p> <p>Many states also have their own “good Samaritan” laws, but the federal Good Samaritan Act preempts the various state Good Samaritan statutes with a single, federal standard of criminal and civil liability in the donation of food and grocery products.</p>
Google SNAP (GSNAP)	An online SNAP referral program that directly connects those who are looking for SNAP information online to food banks in their area conducting benefits outreach and application assistance.
Healthy, Nutritious Food	Backpacks should contain a variety of foods from each food group, including items that can be used together to create complete meals. Special attention should be paid to include a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy products, and items low in sodium, sugar, saturated fat and trans fat.

Word or Phrase	Definition
Hunger	The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food or the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food. Hunger may produce malnutrition over time. Hunger is a potential, although not necessary, consequence of food insecurity. Unlike food insecurity, which is a household-level concept, hunger is an individual-level concept.
HungerNet	Feeding America's corporate intranet. The internal, online communication hub for Feeding America and its member food banks. Visit the HungerNet site .
Impact Evaluation	Assesses whether a program has achieved desired intermediate changes in individuals, population groups, or organizations.
Inactive Backpack Program Site	When utilizing the Child Nutrition Questionnaire, an inactive site is temporarily not operating during a defined period such as the summer or holidays.
Income Eligibility	<p>Individuals and households qualify for the federal nutrition programs by providing information about the household's income. In general, in order to be eligible for the Food Stamp Program, household income cannot exceed 130% of the federal poverty level.</p> <p>Children from households with an income below 130% of poverty can receive Free Meal Certification. Children from households with an income between 130% and 185% of the poverty level can receive Reduced-price Meal Certification.</p>
Indicators	Benchmarks used to measure or test changes. Indicators can be at the level of individuals (e.g., behavioral changes), organizations (e.g., service delivery hours), or communities (e.g., unemployment rates, quality of life variables).
Input	A resource required to provide a program intervention. <i>What you need in order to provide a program.</i>

Word or Phrase	Definition
Kids Cafe Program	A national program of the Feeding America network and one of the largest charitable meal service programs in the U.S., providing free, prepared, nutritious food to needy children.
Map the Meal Gap	Feeding America first published the Map the Meal Gap project in early 2011, with the generous support of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and The Nielsen Company , to learn more about the face of hunger at the local level. In August 2011, with the support of the ConAgra Foods Foundation , child food insecurity data was added to the project. The map is updated annually with new data. Select a year and your state and start learning more about the residents struggling with hunger in your community and the food banks that serve them. Visit the Map the Meal Gap website .
Mobile Food Pantry	A method of distributing dry and/or refrigerated products via vehicles to clients. Food banks or member agency representatives manage the direct client distribution. Utilizing mobile food pantries provides food banks and agencies with expanded capacity, removes barriers to access while increasing distribution in un-served/underserved areas, builds community, and adds flexibility in the delivery of food and grocery products.
Monitoring	A formal inspection of a Backpack Program site by a representative of a FA Participant to ensure that recordkeeping, sanitation, distribution and other requirements are being met. The minimum for Backpack Program monitoring is once annually.
National Background Search	National background searches are done on volunteers and staff in direct repetitive contact with children at Backpack Program sites to ensure the children's safety. This database search provides information on who have been convicted or have been under the supervision of states' Department of Corrections.

Word or Phrase	Definition
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	A federal program that provides free or reduced-price lunches to low-income children in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child-care institutions each school day. The Food and Nutrition Service administers the program at the federal level. At the state level, the NSLP is usually administered by state education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities. Visit the NSLP website .
Network Activity Report (NAR)	A group of informative reports compiled and published annually, based on members' responses to a computerized questionnaire. The reports cover operational statistics, compensation and benefits, member profiles, performance measures, and more. The data is available on HungerNet through the Network Activity Data Center.
Nonperishable/shelf stable food	Food that does not require refrigeration.
Nutritious Meals	Nutritious meals include a variety of foods from the five food groups of the recommended USDA MyPlate (fruit, vegetable, grain, protein, and dairy). Note: Based on available resources, programs should do their best to develop menus in accordance with the 2015 USDA Dietary Guidelines, paying particular attention to provide a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean protein and dairy products that are often available in limited supply in food insecure households. (Complete dietary guidelines can be found here)
Open Site	A site at which meals are made available to all children in the area and where at least 50% of the children are from households that would be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP).
Outcome	A change to the client that is the result of the program. <i>Why you provided the program.</i>
Output	A deliverable produced as a result of the work of the inputs. <i>What you provided in the program.</i>

Word or Phrase	Definition
Partner Distribution Organization (PDO)	A 501(c)(3) organization or a wholly owned subsidiary of a 501(c)(3) organization that does not have direct membership in the Network but fulfills primary Member functions (Product Distribution Management, Agency Relations Management, Food Solicitation, Fundraising for hunger related activities, Media and Community Relations for hunger related activities) on behalf of the Member through a defined portion of a Member’s Service Area.
Practical Evaluation	The systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming. Utilization-focused practical evaluation is done for and with specific, intended primary users for specific, intended uses.
Process Evaluation	Addresses questions related to how a program is implemented. Compares what was supposed to happen with what actually happened. Answers questions about why the program succeeded, failed, or requires revising.
Program	A series of activities supported by a group of resources intended to achieve specific outcomes among particular groups.
Program or Project Umbrella’d by the FA Participant	This instance applies when a FA Participant takes on an activity under its 501(c)(3) status and is responsible for the provision and direct distribution of food. Examples of utilizing a distributing agent include: a school acting as the distributing agent for the Participant in a Backpack Program or serving as a host site for a Kids Cafe; and housing projects where food is delivered for direct distribution to low income individuals. Under this model the Participant retains sole title and responsibility for the food and any liability that may result. At no time may the program or project pay shared maintenance or any other type of fee for donated food.
Program Participant	Feeding America Member Food Bank or their approved Partner Distribution Organization (“PDO”) that is coordinating a Backpack Program.

Word or Phrase	Definition
Program Partner	A nonprofit organization that a member partners with to operate a Feeding America national program, such as Kids Cafe or the Backpack Program.
Program Sponsor	An organization that sponsors one or more programs, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), provides meals or snacks to qualified sites, and receives USDA reimbursement for the meals or snacks served.
Purchase Program	Purchase of food and nonfood products by a member to supplement the products available through donations
Qualitative Data	Information gathered from interviews, observations, or documents. May include detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviors, and people's own thoughts about their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. Other data sources are excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records and case histories.
Quantitative Data	Information from questionnaires, tests, standardized (fixed, unchanging) observation instruments, and program records. Focuses on things that can be counted, categorized, and subjected to statistical analysis.
Reduced-Price Meal Certification	A classification within the child nutrition programs indicating that a child is able to receive reduced-price meals and snacks. Children from families with income between 130% and 185% of the Federal Poverty Level are certified for reduced-price meals.
Repetitive Contact	The amount of repeated interaction that results in the potential for a person to develop a relationship with a child outside of the program.
Safe Environment	This includes physical safety of the building; safety in food handling, preparation, distribution, and storage; and supervision by adults that have passed national criminal background checks.

Word or Phrase	Definition
Sample Size	A subset of cases (e.g., individuals, records, communities) selected from a population. In quantitative research, large samples generally enhance confidence in survey results. A minimum total number in a sample is important for some statistical tests.
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	A federally assisted meal program that operates in the same manner as the National School Lunch Program to provide low-cost or free breakfasts to children each school day. Visit the SBP website .
Sex Offender Registries	All states have established sex offender registries. These databases are lists of individuals who have been convicted of criminal sexual conduct ranging from child molestation to rape. While the scope of offenses included in sex offender registries is limited, such registries offer an advantage that state criminal history record checks do not—they list sex offenders living in the state irrespective of where their convictions occurred. According to the law, individuals who have been convicted of specific sexual crimes are required to register when they move into a new state.
Social Security History	A social security history tells you that the social security number is assigned to the proper person.
Soup Kitchen	A program that provides prepared meals on-site to clients in need who do not reside at the agency's premises. Also known as an emergency kitchen
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	A federal grant program administered by state health departments or comparable agencies that provides nutritious foods, nutrition counseling, and referrals to health and other social services. WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. Visit the WIC website .
Stakeholders	People who care about what will be learned from the evaluation and about what will be done with the knowledge gained.

Word or Phrase	Definition
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	A program of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides meals to children in low-income areas during school vacations, when children do not have access to school breakfast or lunch. This is the single largest federal resource available for local sponsors who want to combine a feeding program with a summer activity program. Visit the SFSP website .
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	The new name of the federal Food Stamp Program since October 1, 2008. SNAP is a federal program that enables low-income people to buy nutritious food with coupons and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Recipients spend their benefits to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores. Visit the SNAP website .
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	Federal block grant that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1996. TANF provides short-term, transitional assistance to needy families with the goal of promoting work and moving families to self-sufficiency. Visit the TANF website .
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	A program of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides food commodities at no cost to low-income Americans in need of short-term hunger relief. TEFAP serves the agricultural community by distributing surplus commodities purchased by the USDA from farmers and other producers. The majority of network food banks distribute TEFAP commodities. Visit the TEFAP website .
Thrifty Food Plan	A food plan based upon a food quantity/selection that people of a specific age and gender could consume at home to maintain a healthful diet meeting current dietary standards. The Thrifty Food Plan is the most economical of four food plans calculated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is one factor used to determine the amount of a household's SNAP benefit allotments.

Word or Phrase	Definition
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	<p>This federal agency is responsible for, among other things, ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products and administering federal nutrition programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) • The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) • The School Breakfast Program (SBP) • The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) • The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) • The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) <p>Visit the USDA website.</p>
Units of Analysis	<p>The primary focus of data collection and analysis. Can be individuals, groups of people (e.g., classrooms), neighborhoods, cities, states, or countries. Units may also be events or incidents (e.g., service delivery failures). Each unit may require different kinds of data. The focus of analysis also varies and affects what can be said (e.g., if the unit of analysis is a city, one cannot make a statement about the impact of the program on an individual).</p>

ACRONYMS AT A GLANCE

Federal Programs and Terms

- CACFP: Child and Adult Care Food Program
- CSFP: Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- FNS: Food and Nutrition Services
- FPL: Federal Poverty Line
- NSLP: National School Lunch Program
- SBP: School Breakfast Program
- SFSP: Summer Food Service Program
- SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps)
- TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- TEFAP: The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- USDA: United States Department of Agriculture
- WIC: Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, & Children

Feeding America Terms

- ACPN: Agency Capacity, Programs and Nutrition Conference
- NAC: National Affiliate Council
- NAR: Network Activity Report