How to be a Sponsor in the Meet Up and Eat Up Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally-funded, state administered program. The SFSP reimburses sponsors who serve free healthy meals to children and teens in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session.

Who Can Be a Sponsor?

• Public or private non-profit school food authority (SFA)
• Public or private non-profit college or university
• Public or private non-profit residential summer camp
• Unit of local, county, municipal, State, or Federal Government
• Any other type of private non-profit organization

All sponsors must also be tax exempt and must demonstrate the administrative and financial ability to manage a food service effectively. Sponsors must provide a year-round public service to the area in which they intend to provide the SFSP.

Sponsor Responsibilities

SFSP sponsors must be able to assume responsibility for the entire administration of the Program. As a sponsor, an organization at a minimum will:

• Attend the State agency’s training
• Locate and recruit eligible sites
• Competitively procure food to be prepared or a vendor for meals to be delivered
• Monitor all sites
• Prepare claims for reimbursement
• Ensure that the sites are sustainable
• Hire, train, and supervise staff and volunteers
• Maintain all program documents for 3 years, plus the current year

For organizations not yet ready to take on the responsibilities required of a sponsor, participation as a site under an existing sponsor is the best option. This is the most effective way to prepare an organization to become a sponsor in future years.

To Be Deemed Eligible, Sponsors Must:

Demonstrate Financial and Administrative Capability: Potential and returning sponsors are required to demonstrate that they have the necessary financial and administrative capability to comply with Program requirements. They must accept final financial and administrative responsibility for all sites.

Not Be Seriously Deficient: To be approved, applicants must not have been declared seriously deficient or terminated from the SFSP or any other Federal Child Nutrition Program in previous years. However, such an applicant may be approved if MDE determines that it has taken appropriate corrective actions to prevent recurrence of the deficiencies and has repaid any outstanding debts.
Serve Low-Income Children: Sponsors must agree to provide regularly scheduled meal service for children in eligible areas (called “areas in which poor economic conditions exist”) or they must agree to serve low-income children. Camps do not need to meet this criterion.

Conduct a Non-profit Food Service: Sponsors must conduct food services through SFSP that are not for profit. A sponsor is operating a non-profit food service if the food service operations are principally for the benefit of participating children and all of the Program reimbursement funds are used solely for the operation or improvement of such food service. This does not mean the Program must break even or operate at a loss, but that all income must be used for the sole purpose of operating a non-profit food service.

Provide Year-Round Service: Sponsors must provide a year-round public service to the area in which they intend to provide the SFSP. MDE may grant exceptions to this year-round service requirement for sponsors of residential camps, migrant sites and in certain other limited circumstances.

Exercise Management Control Over Sites: New applicants and returning sponsors must demonstrate in their applications that they will exercise management control over the meal service at all of their sites. Management control of the meal service means that the sponsor is responsible for maintaining contact with meal service staff, ensuring that there is adequately trained meal service staff on site, and monitoring site operations throughout the period of program participation. This management responsibility cannot be delegated below the sponsor level. The quality of the meal service, the conduct of site personnel, and the adequacy of recordkeeping reflect directly upon the sponsor’s performance. This performance is subject to audit by MDE, by the USDA Office of the Inspector General, and by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Conduct Pre-Operational Visits: Prior to approval, sponsors must visit new sites and any sites that had operational problems in the previous year. When a sponsor applies for the SFSP, they must certify that the required pre-operational site visits have been conducted and that sites are capable of providing meal service for the number of children as planned.

Sign Written Agreements: Approved sponsors must agree to a permanent agreement with MDE.

**I am ready to be a Sponsor**

If you do not participate in any other Child Nutrition Programs, contact mde-sfsp@michigan.gov to get the most current version of the Non-School Sponsor Pre-qualification Packet. Follow the steps on the [Steps to Apply for New Non-School Sponsors](#) document.