

Evaluation of the Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Overview

This project evaluated four statewide, multiyear demonstrations to test new innovative strategies to increase participation in the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The enhancements offered four distinct alternatives: (1) incentives to extend the duration of program operations, (2) funding for educational or recreational activities at summer sites, (3) noncongregate meal delivery in rural areas, and (4) backpack food packages for weekend and holiday use. One state was selected for each of the first two enhancement demonstrations, and three states were selected for each of the second two enhancement demonstrations. These demonstrations, collectively titled Summer Food for Children demonstrations, sought to prevent food insecurity and hunger among children during the summer months. They were mandated by the 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

Insight conducted an outcome evaluation for FNS to assess changes in characteristics of sponsors and sites, meal counts, average daily attendance, and program participation. As part of the research, Insight—

- Assisted FNS in selecting demonstration states and comparison states
- Developed meaningful outcome and output measures
- Collected, edited, and tabulated SFSP administrative information at the state, sponsor, and site level across 5 program years
- Designed and developed a sponsor-site administrative database with supporting codebook
- Prepared an annual report to assess changes in key outcomes



The results of this evaluation provided FNS with information to make decisions about potential SFSP changes by comparing these diverse mechanisms designed to increase SFSP participation.

Products

Annual report for each year of study

- Evaluation of the Summer Food Service Program Enhancement Demonstrations: 2011 Demonstration Evaluation Report, available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/evaluation-summer-food-service-program-enhancement-demonstrations-2011-demonstration-evaluation>
- Evaluation of the Impact of Enhancement Demonstrations on Participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): FY 2011, available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/evaluation-impact-enhancement-demonstrations-participation-summer-food-service-program-sfsp-fy-2011>
- Evaluation of the Impact of Wave 2 Incentives Demonstrations on Participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): FY 2012, available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/evaluation-impact-wave-2-incentives-demonstrations-participation-summer-food-service-program-sfsp-fy>