

Summer Food Service Program Integrity Study

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

Overview

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals and snacks in congregate settings to children in areas with high concentrations of low-income households, primarily in the summer months from May to September. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SFSP at the federal level. State agencies administer the program through agreements with sponsors, including school food authorities, local government agencies, camps, and private nonprofit organizations.

SFSP presents unique challenges to ensuring program integrity. Many SFSP sites are much less structured than other meal programs, which may make training and monitoring more challenging. In response, FNS conducted the Summer Food Service Program Integrity Study to investigate how state agencies and SFSP sponsors and sites administer and provide effective oversight and identify common SFSP integrity challenges and best practices.

The main research objectives of this study were to—

- Describe how State agencies administer and provide SFSP oversight and why they believe the program is effective.
- Identify SFSP integrity challenges.
- Identify current or state-recommended resources, training, or technical assistance that would better support the effective administration and monitoring of SFSP.



The study included a web-based survey of the State Child Nutrition Directors that oversee SFSP, followed by in-depth telephone interviews with State Directors, program sponsors, and site supervisors.

As subcontractor to Westat, Insight—

- Developed interview protocols and recruitment materials
- Pretested data collection instruments
- Developed training materials and co-led training of telephone interviewers

Products

Final report and briefing, August 2021