



United States
Department of
Agriculture

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DATE: June 26, 2009

Food and
Nutrition
Service

SUBJECT: Excess Summer Meals

TO: Regional Directors State Directors
Special Nutrition Programs Summer Food Service Programs (SFSP)
All Regions All States

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Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
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State Directors
School Meal Programs
All States

The purpose of this memorandum is to encourage State agencies to support efforts by SFSP sponsors to avoid food waste and make use of excess food at summer feeding sites, including by donation of leftover food to other organizations.

Sponsors should make every effort to keep food waste to a minimum. When sites experience situations of leftover food, sponsors should promptly adjust orders to more accurately reflect the actual number of meal service participants. Despite these efforts, however, on occasion, sites may have excess food. In this situation, sponsors should exhaust all alternatives permitted by State and local health and sanitation codes before discarding food. Options may include offering "sharing tables," transferring meals to other sites, and refrigerating the food for next-day use. Sponsors are also encouraged to consider donating excess food.

Food donations made by SFSP sites can provide a valuable resource to organizations working to address hunger in local communities, such as homeless shelters, food banks, and pantries. Although donated meals may not be claimed for reimbursement in the SFSP, food donation avoids unnecessary waste and can save expensive disposal and/or storage costs. Additionally, by collaborating with other hunger organizations, SFSP sponsors can expand the reach of these important programs and build networks that better serve the local communities.

As a reminder, this guidance is also applicable to institutions participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

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