

## 2016 Summer Lunch Mini-Grant Program Report

### 2016 Mini Grant Overview

From June to August of 2016, Full Plates Full Potential supported 13 Summer Food Service Program Sponsors by funding initiatives to increase the amount of USDA reimbursable meals served to food insecure children in their communities during summer vacation. Funding was administered by Good Shepherd Food Bank.

Funded initiatives included:

- Food costs associated with providing higher quality, more kid-friendly meals with an emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables
- Equipment costs needed to support opening new sites
- Transportation costs associated with serving multiple or mobile sites and/or providing busing options for participants
- Staffing and enrichment costs necessary to provide regular activities to attract and engage participating children



During the summer, 10 out of the 13 supported sponsors successfully increased the amount of meals served in their communities. Participating sponsors increased meals served by a record breaking 38% over 2015, compared to the 8% growth the state saw across all sponsors during the same time frame.

### Pilot Participant Breakdown

Sponsor	Town(s)/Region	Initiatives Funded	Funding Received	Meals Served 2015	Meals Served 2016	Percentage Increase
AOS 92	Waterville/Winslow	Equipment costs for new meal site	\$1,000	11,971	13,502	13%
MSAD 72	Fryeburg	Transportation costs associated with bringing children in other local programs to meal site for lunch time	\$1,250	1053	2038	94%
Westbrook Schools	Windham	Equipment and meal transportation needs for new meal site	\$650	0	423	N/A
MSAD 15	Gray/New Gloucester	Equipment costs for new sites and support for enrichment activities	\$1,500	4,722	5,326	13%
Healthy Lincoln County	Lincoln County	Transportation and outreach costs to support new site	\$2,000	10,270	12,363	20%
RSU 3	Unity	Staffing and transportation of meals to new meal site	\$2,000	6,468	4,641	-15%
Skowhegan Rec & School Sponsors	Skowhegan	Equipment, outreach, & transportation for new sites and sites changing sponsors	\$1,100	10,183	8,777	-14%

Trinity Jubilee Center	Lewiston	Enrichment activities & incentives for new site	\$1,000	0	1,213	N/A
RSU 34	Old Town	Enrichment supplies for new site	\$300	9,013	7,885	-13%
Bath YMCA	Bath	Equipment & enrichment supplies for new site	\$2,000	3,620	5,271	46%
Saco Schools	Saco	Equipment, meal transportation, and outreach costs for new sites	\$1,200	8,292	25,173	204%
MSAD 61	Lakes Region	Equipment, meal transportation, staffing, and enrichment activities for sites	\$2,000	5,946	11,755	98%
Totals			\$16,000	71475	98367	38%

### Return on Investment

Our 2016 investment of \$16,000 contributed to the distribution of an additional 26,892 meals served, or 1.7 new meals for every \$1.00 invested. Additionally, 50% of sponsors that participated during the 2015 program grew by an additional 13% or greater during 2016, continuing their expansion momentum even after initial funding.

Beyond additional meals served, our 2016 investment also resulted in the launching of ten new meal sites in 8 counties.

### Program Reflections

Our most successful investments during 2016, as in past years, were those that supported the launching of new sites in strategic locations easily accessible by low income families. Bath YMCA, MSAD 72, and Saco Schools sponsors saw particularly strong new site launches from choosing locations at or near where children were already congregating. New site locations selected included a church in a low income neighborhood that provided space for a Sweetser Daycare program for preschoolers and hosted a Vacation Bible School, multiple parks and recreation sites offering both structured day camps and unstructured utilization of their playgrounds and basketball courts, and the community center of a low income housing complex.

A notable exception to the likely success of sponsors adding meal sites occurred when reductions were made to the overall length of time they operated the program. When sponsors successfully launched more sites than they had operated the previous year without growing meals served, it consistently tied back to programs being open for shorter windows of time. In the case of RSU, adding a new site did not increase meals served because a last-minute construction project impacted their highest traffic site.

Our findings echo research conducted by Pan Atlantic Research on behalf of the Maine Department of Education during summer 2016 that shows about half of potential SFSP participants had a willingness to travel 2-3 miles for their children to participate and more than a quarter needed the site to be within an easily walkable half mile for it to be accessible. Pan Atlantic's findings also showed that 75% of eligible families in Maine are aware of the program. Of those, 60% are interested in participating but only 33% have done so – showing decidedly that awareness is not the biggest barrier. This is also echoed in our program reflections as efforts to help families get to sites yield consistently better results than efforts to educate families about existence of sites or reduce stigma.