

2017 SFSP Grant Program Report

2017 Summer Grant Overview

From June to August of 2017, Full Plates Full Potential supported 11 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors by funding initiatives to increase the number of federally reimbursed meals served to food insecure children in their communities during summer vacation. An additional \$2,500 was invested in incentivizing five Maine Sponsors to host mid-summer 'Spike Events', with the goal of preventing mid-program participation drop-off. Funding was administered by Good Shepherd Food Bank.

Funded initiatives included:

- Equipment costs needed to support opening new sites
- Transportation costs (mileage and staff time to transport meals from a central kitchen to satellite sites, mobile meal programs, providing busing for participants, etc.)
- Staffing and enrichment costs necessary to provide regular activities to attract and engage participating children
- Costs associated with improving meal services (allowing adults to eat with their children, table and tableware needs for family style dining, equipment needs for hot meals, etc.)



During the summer, grant recipients successfully increased the number of meals served in their communities by 15% over 2016, compared to the flat-growth the state saw across all sponsors during the same time frame. All five sponsors receiving our pilot mid-summer Spike Event awards avoided the common August participation dip, with 40% reporting an *increase* in participation.

Investment Results By Sponsor

Sponsor	Town(s)/Region	Initiatives Funded	Funding Received	Meals Served 2016	Meals Served 2017	Percentage Increase
Alfond Youth Center	Waterville	Taste tests, family style meals, and outreach	\$1,800	9,263	15,881	71%
AOS 92	Waterville/Winslow	Adult meals and enrichment activity supplies	\$1,000	21,392	21,092	-1%
Augusta Boys & Girls Club*	Augusta	Outreach, transportation, and staffing	\$3,100	0	1,732	N/A
Caswell Public Schools*	Caswell	Transportation	\$500	638	1,753	175%
Downeast YMCA	Ellsworth	Equipment and outreach	\$2,000	8,164	8,542	5%
Greenville School Department*	Greenville	Equipment, transportation, and outreach	\$2,000	712	1,031	45%
Healthy Lincoln County*	Lincoln County	Transportation and outreach	\$1,100	12,363	9,793	-21%
Lubec Community Center	Lubec	Transportation	\$1,000	1,795	2,607	45%
RSU 3*	Unity	Transportation and staffing	\$1,500	4,641	4,842	4%
RSU 74*	North Anson	Transportation, outreach, and food	\$1,200	4,670	4,594	-2%
SeDoMoCha School*	Dover-Foxcroft	Equipment, transportation, and outreach	\$2,450	2,809	4,675	66%
TOTALS			\$17,650	66,447	76,542	15%

Return on Investment

Our 2017 investment of \$17,650 contributed to the distribution of an additional 10,095 meals, or an investment of \$1.75 for every new meal served. These 10,095 new meals resulted in an additional \$38,112.70 in federal reimbursements entering the Maine economy. Our investment of \$2,500 in Spike Events supported three of the five participating sponsors serving the same number of children on average in the second half of the summer as the first. Two sponsors that received Spike Event awards actually saw even more children on average during the second half of the summer. Additionally, more than 50% of sponsors from the 2016 grant cycle grew by 9% or more during 2017, continuing their expansion momentum even without a new investment from the grant program.

Beyond the increase in meals served, our 2017 investment also resulted in the launching of nine new meal sites in six counties. Average daily participation across all supported sponsors was 2,858 children.

Program Reflections

Many of our most successful investments during 2017, as in past years, were those that supported the growth of strategically-placed satellite sites with meals prepared and vended from central kitchen locations. Caswell Public School in Aroostook County increased their meals distributed by 175% with just a \$500 investment in transportation expenses to cover mileage and staff time associated with delivering meals from their largest meal site at the school to smaller sites located at key places where children congregate within their district. Greenville Public Schools in Piscataquis County grew by 45% using a similar hub and spoke site model, relying on one central location serving multiple smaller sites to increase access points while adding only minimal labor costs. These results are not surprising, as research conducted by Pan Atlantic Research on behalf of the Maine Department of Education during summer 2016 showed 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. Multiple sites in a community at crucial access points remains the most successful best practice for increasing meals served.

"One thing that worked really well was involving youth in the whole planning process. We had them think of trips in terms of the budget we had and involved them in running the programs. The teens really enjoyed the involvement. Having seen how well this worked, we will definitely be doing it more in the future."

– Charles Huerth, Auqusta Teen Center

This year, we were pleased to join the national movement to increase mid-summer Spike Events. Participating sponsors found these events to be very effective at sustaining excitement for the program and warding off midsummer attendance dip. Based on this success, we recommend offering a Spike Event funding opportunity for mid-summer 2018 as well. Other success stories to note include increasing service days, and engaging teenagers as leaders in planning and program design as a strategy to increase participation amongst

this notoriously underserved demographic. While AOS 92's pilot of offering adult meals for half of their service period did not result in an increase in reimbursable meals, they did report that it improved community relationships and helped them engage with more parents while funds were available. We recommend further study of this technique to determine effectiveness, as the Waterville/Winslow program could only offer meals to adults for half the summer. It may prove to be an especially useful technique for sites that struggle with having enough adult volunteers as it appeared to correlate to more parents engaging with the program.

Key challenges experienced by grantees this year included implementing new initiatives that depended on volunteers for their success and major construction projects impacting the accessibility of pivotal long-term sites in a community. The challenge of volunteer reliability was echoed amongst SFSP sponsors at this year's Department of Education fall meet-up. We recommend training for summer sponsors on recruiting and retaining volunteers as well as funding innovative volunteer outreach and recognition programs as priorities for Full Plates Full Potential's Summer Subcommittee in 2018.

**Indicates sponsors that launched new sites as part of their funded projects.*