

# Summer Meals Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2016

WHILE MOST ARE SETTLING IN FOR WINTER, WE KNOW YOU'RE ALL HARD AT WORK GEARING UP FOR SUMMER!



## What's New?

**2016 Handbooks** - FNS has published updated policy guides for the Summer Meal Programs available now at [www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/handbooks](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/handbooks).

- The 2016 Administrative Guide for Sponsors
- The 2016 Nutrition Guide for Sponsors
- The 2016 Sponsor Monitor's Guide

☀ Full color designed versions of the guides will be available soon!

**Capacity Builder**—The FNS Capacity Builder has been updated. Comments welcome about visibility range (how far you have to zoom in to display the layer) and symbology.

- ⇒ The USDA Rural Development layer has been updated with the November 2015 dataset <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/usda-rural-development-multi-family-housing>
- ⇒ HRSA Health Centers have been added <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/data/datadownload/hccDownload.aspx>

## Upcoming USDA and Partner Events

**February 4th, 1:00pm EST**

Food, Research, & Action Center (FRAC):  
*Partnerships to Expand your Summer Outreach Efforts*

<http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5118/p/salsa/event/common/public/>

**February 26th, 2:00pm EST**

*Share Our Strength : Serving Summer Meals at Hospitals*

<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/events/2016/february/16/serving-summer-meals-hospitals>

## Resources for Sponsors

### **Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs -**

See USDA's guide highlighting the many ways sponsors can find and buy local foods at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/procuring-local-foods>, and check out the farm to summer website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-summer>.

### **FRAC Summer Meals Vendor Guide**

- This guide, available at [http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/summer\\_meals\\_vendor\\_guide.pdf](http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/summer_meals_vendor_guide.pdf), helps sponsors ensure meal quality through a variety of mechanisms including, strengthening contract language, improving vendor communication, increasing competition.



# Improving Meal Service by Using Local Foods

With harvests at their peak in many regions across the country, summer is a perfect time to incorporate local foods at meal service sites. FNS highly encourages utilizing local foods as a way to improve the quality and appeal of summer meals. Local foods and related activities can help children understand where their food comes from, and encourage them to make healthy choices.



Sponsors can incorporate local foods into summer meal programs by:

- Purchasing local foods for meals and snacks
- Growing or visiting edible gardens
- Promoting nutrition lessons focused on local foods
- Offering agriculture-based, hands-on activities
- Organizing farm field trips or producer visits
- Teaching children how to cook or prepare locally grown food
- Conducting taste tests with local foods

Local foods add variety to meals, connect the community with local agriculture producers, and provide hands-on enrichment activities. For more information on [local foods and related activities](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SMT-Local_Foods_Sponsors.pdf), check out the FNS toolkit page *How Sponsors Can Use Local Foods in Summer Meals* available at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SMT-Local\\_Foods\\_Sponsors.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SMT-Local_Foods_Sponsors.pdf)

## Tips for Procuring Local Foods



**WHERE?** Local products can be purchased from a variety of sources: direct from farmers, through produce or full service distributors or Food Service Management Companies (FSMC)'s, from food hubs, farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and school or community gardens.

**HOW?** There are many ways to target local foods through fair, open, and competitive procurements. A good starting point is asking about the source of the food currently purchases. You may already be using local foods and not yet know it! Sponsors can also communicate to current vendors and potential vendors a preference for local products. Solicitations may be written with characteristics of products from local sources in mind. For instance, you can specify a particular variety of apple native to your region, or that a product be delivered within 24 or 48 hours of harvest. The desire for local products must be expressed as a *preference*, and may not be *required* as a product specification. See our Local Procurement Guide for more tips, check out <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/procuring-local-foods>.