



Summer Meals Act (H.R. 783)

Vision Statement: Every young person should have access to healthy, affordable meals and snacks and be equipped to make healthy decisions resulting in positive social, emotional and physical well-being.

Background

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) are meal and snack programs managed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Boys & Girls Clubs across the country serve as sites and sponsors for USDA programs, providing healthy meals and snacks to children during out-of-school time, while also supporting educational and enrichment programs that keep children learning, engaged and safe. Boys & Girls Clubs are trusted organizations in communities and fulfill a critical need when children are not in school.



Every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs **returns \$9.60** in current and future earnings and cost-savings to their communities.



In 2019, 92% of Clubs reported serving more than 95 million meals and snacks at no cost to members.

These programs provide a valuable resource to individuals with the greatest need. 57% of Club members qualify for free or reduced-price school meals, compared to 52% of public-school students nationally. For many children, these may be the only nutritious meals they get on a normal day. Especially during summer, these site-based meal programs serve a critical need in communities. In addition to providing healthy meals, they stop summer learning loss through educational programs, keep kids active and provide safety check-ins during the summer.

An estimated **14% of American households are food insecure**, which means about 15.3 million children are living in food insecure households. ¹

Improving Youth Food Security

The reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act is an opportunity to expand and further support meal and snack programs provided at Boys & Girls Clubs across the country. In order to ensure increased access to these programs, policy changes must include:



- **Streamlined Application Process** – **Reduce red tape** by allowing Clubs to complete one application in order to provide children meals year-round through one program after the school day ends and over the summer months.

- **Improved Area Eligibility** – Allow communities to participate if **40% of area youth** are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals which would be consistent with area eligibility requirements of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program. The current requirement is 50%.
- **Third Meal During Summer** – Currently, Clubs can be reimbursed for a maximum of two meals and a snack per day per child. By allowing sites **to serve a third meal per day** would eliminate the need to skip a meal and encourage full day or evening programming, to further support working families.
- **Transportation Grants** – Improve nutrition in rural, underserved and hard-to-reach areas. This would provide grants to help **increase transportation** for these underserved regions. Transportation is one of the biggest barriers to meal participation for kids in these communities.

Success Stories

Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka, Kansas operate a feeding program year-round using USDA funds. During the summer months, Club members are offered breakfast, lunch and a snack, while in the school year they receive dinner and a snack, serving more than 70,000 meals each year. Since implementing this program, there has been a demonstrable increase in average daily attendance. The Club was able to hire a full-time Nutrition Director, who oversees a culinary program for teens. The teen center also operates a food pantry that is open twice weekly, serving more than 700 families.



Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Dubuque, Iowa has distributed over 100,000 free meals since March 2020. Club staff started offering hot meals every weekday at locations throughout the city to help families impacted by COVID-19. The program was an extension of the organization's regular meal program which began in the 1990s which offers meals during the school year and in summer. The Clubs serve about 400 meals a day across five locations.



Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix, Arizona serves over 273,700 meals and 197,300 snacks at no-cost to youth annually with the help of the At-Risk Afterschool CACFP and SFSP. 93% of Club parents agree that access to hot meals and snacks during out-of-school times is important to them and their families. Through a collaboration with G Road, a nonprofit organization established by a former Club member, kids at the Club established and maintain a garden where they learn healthy habits, sustainability and service by growing and donating fruits and vegetables to be used in food boxes provided to community members in need.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska partnered with schools to implement CACFP at school-based sites. While the Club administers the grant, schools allow the Club to use their kitchens to prepare hot meals as well as storage space.

¹ Summer Food Service Program, USDA, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/serving-summer-meals> (January 22, 2020)