

The Summer Hunger Solution

Connecting kids to the nutrition they need during the summer months is a critical step in ending childhood hunger in the United States.

Overview

For many kids, summer is the hungriest time of year. When schools close for the summer, school meals disappear as well. As a result, families can struggle to put enough food on the table. This has a devastating impact on kids and their ability to grow up strong.

This is, however, a problem with a solution. The national summer meals program provides children with the nutrition they need during the summer.

Funded by the USDA, administered by state agencies and served by organizations families trust, like schools, libraries, faith-based organizations and community groups, these meals make sure kids have access to healthy food when school is out of session.

Text To Find Meals

Summer meals only reach a fraction of children who may need them. One of the biggest barriers? **Public awareness.** Many families simply do not know these meals are available, or they have trouble finding information about sites.

That's where the No Kid Hungry texting program comes into play. Families and community leaders can text 'FOOD' or 'COMIDA' to 877-877 and provide their zip code. Upon doing so, they are given information for the nearest summer meals sites in their area.

How It Works: No Kid Hungry receives site information directly from the USDA and uses geolocation technology to pinpoint the closest sites based on the address provided by users. The sites are updated weekly, as area sites open or close.



KEY FINDINGS

\$316

The additional amount of money low-income families spend on groceries each month during the summer.

69%

Percent of low-income families who report choosing between food and utilities in the summer.

66%

Percent of low-income families who report choosing between food and medical care in the summer.

Nationwide, summer meals are only meeting 12% of the need faced by hungry kids in the summer months.

The Summer Hunger Impact

The Education Impact

Studies show hunger exacerbates learning loss, known as the “summer slide.” Low-income students who do not get enough nutrition over the summer months are more likely to fall behind their peers once the school year starts. Summer nutrition can protect against cognitive decline and summer learning loss.

The Health Impact

Students who do not get enough nutrition over the summer months are more likely to experience long-term health consequences. The food insecurity many kids face is directly linked to iron deficiency, obesity, anemia, asthma, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.



Bottom Line

When children get the food they need each day, they feel better, learn more and grow up stronger. This is good for the nation; healthier, smarter kids are **more likely break the cycle of poverty** and build a **stronger, more competitive economy**.

We can close the gap between the kids who have enough to eat and those who don't. With coordinated efforts between government programs, nonprofits, corporations, the faith-based community and local leaders, **this is a solvable problem**.

Summer meals are critical to this success.

ABOUT NO KID HUNGRY

No child should go hungry in America. But 1 in 6 kids will face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger through effective programs that provide kids with the food they need. This is a problem we know how to solve. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization working to end hunger and poverty. Join us at NoKidHungry.org.

SOURCES & RESOURCES:

- Deloitte, “[Summer Nutrition Program Social Impact Analysis](#),” 2015
- No Kid Hungry, “[Summer Meals Texting Overview](#),” 2018
- No Kid Hungry, [Summer Outreach Flyers](#)