



2026-2027

**DCYF Nutrition Handbook -
For Summer and Afterschool
Meals Programs**

Dear Community Partners,

The Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF) is pleased to offer another year of free summer meals and school-year meals to youth 18 years and younger.

This year, the Summer Meals Program will operate for 10 weeks, from June 08, 2026 to August 14, 2026. The Afterschool Meals Program will operate from Tuesday, September 1, 2026 to Wednesday, June 2, 2027.

Due to the City's expected budget deficit in the upcoming fiscal years, DCYF will only be able to sponsor around 40-50 sites for the summer and around 35 sites for the schoolyear. While this does not normally impact our schoolyear program, this will hinder the number of sites chosen for the summer as typically DCYF receives more applications than we are able to select.

However, DCYF is still committed to ensuring that youth have access to these meals. The availability of these child nutrition programs helps bridge the gap of food insecurity for young people and helps them be more prepared for school. Given these constraints, we recognize that this may become more challenging in the years ahead.

DCYF has developed this site distribution handbook to provide more guidance for sites applying for free meals and to provide as much clarity and transparency during the site application process as possible. Sites are encouraged to read this document carefully and in its entirety. If there are any questions that is not answered in this document, please submit them to nutrition@dcyf.org. Questions submitted through email and answered in our Q&A session will be posted online as long as questions are submitted by end of day Friday, March 6th.

The work that you do is more essential than ever and we appreciate all that you do to ensure that youth have access to services they need. Together, we will continue to make San Francisco a great place to grow up.

Sincerely,

DCYF Nutrition Team

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Section 1: Background

Since 1991, the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) administers San Francisco's Children and Youth Fund to invest in services and programs that benefit children, youth, and transitional age youth. With a deep commitment to advancing equity and healing trauma, we bring together government agencies, schools, and community-based organizations to strengthen our communities to lead full lives of opportunity and happiness. Together, we make San Francisco a great place to grow up.

DCYF's Nutrition Programs (DCYF Nutrition Initiative) are designed to ensure that young people's basic nutrition needs are met, as well as to help youth establish a healthy relationship with food. DCYF has been sponsoring free meals for more than 20 years. DCYF leverages two USDA Funds: The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) grant and Child and Adult Food Care Program At-Risk (CACFP) grant to provide free meals to youth through its programs. For funds that are not reimbursable through these grants, DCYF uses General City funds to recover the cost associated with the Nutrition Programs. Currently for the 2026 Summer Meals Program, DCYF will seek reimbursement through the SFSP grant. For the 2026-2027 Afterschool Meals Program, DCYF will seek reimbursement through the CACFP grant.

The Summer Meal Program (SFSP) and the Afterschool Meal Program (CACFP) are USDA federally-funded child nutrition programs designed to provide free meals for youth when school is not in session. DCYF is a local sponsor of this program, which means we provide financial and administrative support to ensure that FREE meals are available in all high need neighborhoods of San Francisco to any youth 18 and under. SFSP is traditionally used for summer months (breakfast or snacks, and lunch) and CACFP is traditionally used during school-year months (suppers and snacks).

Section 2: Eligibility

Per USDA regulations, a site eligible to receive meals through these nutrition programs must be located in an area where at least 50% or more youth qualify for free/reduced-price meals (FRPMs). However, determination of eligibility varies between sites participating in the Summer Meal Program and/or Afterschool Meal Program. This means that some sites can qualify for one program but not the other. In addition, eligibilities also differ among open and closed sites. DCYF may also add other eligibility criteria as allowable under USDA regulations.

DCYF can use several different ways to qualify sites.

- 1) Attendance zones: sites that are located in an elementary school attendance zone where 50% or more youth qualify for FRPMs. SFUSD no longer uses traditional attendance zones for middle schools, thus we can no longer use middle school data to qualify sites.
- 2) Census data: sites must be located in a census block or census group where 50% or more youth qualify for free/reduced price meals.
- 3) Income forms: sites that are located in an elementary school attendance zone where less than 50% of youth qualify for free/reduce meals may need to submit enrollment information.
 - i. If the majority of students are enrolled at SFUSD, sites need to submit student names, student ID number, grade and school and other identifying information to determine eligibility.
 - ii. Sites can have parents submit income forms.

For Summer programs, open sites can use option 1 or 2. Closed-enrolled sites must use option 3. For school year program (CACFP), USDA only allows sites to qualify based on attendance zones (see Option 1). Using Option 2 or Option 3 as noted above is not allowable for school-year meals.

Special notes regarding eligibility:

- For school-year sites, sites must maintain an active health and fire safety permit and may need to pay for these permits prior to receiving meals, unless exempt from CDE/CDSS.
- Sites generally cannot be within ¼ mile of another program, including SFUSD schools and other DCYF sponsored sites. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis (as approved by the State). If a site is determined too close to another program, sites may need to submit additional paperwork or develop additional policies so that meals are

only served to youth enrolled in program (operate as a “closed” site, developing a hand stamping system, etc.).

- For sites that are co-located or sharing a space with another program, USDA regulations state that programs located at the same address must work with other programs located at their sites to ensure that meals come from only one sponsor. All program staff that receive meals at one location must follow the same regulations and must coordinate with each other regarding delivery, ordering of meals and submission of paperwork/ETS data. Sites may need to communicate more closely so paperwork/ETS data shows the separation between the two groups in order to streamline the different funding sources used to pay for meals served at locations where multiple programs provide services. Our vendor can separate the delivery packaging but sites are still required to coordinate with each other so the two groups may not accidentally consume the other group’s meals. Each program must apply separately.

Section 3: Priority

DCYF estimates that we are only able to sponsor around 40-50 summer sites and 35 school-year sites this year. To maximize the availability of meals to as many youth that are eligible for FRPMs while also minimizing the administrative burden with running a meal program, we have developed these list of priorities. The priority list is as follows:

1. DCYF Grantee
2. Open Sites
3. Closed-enrolled Sites

*Notes:

- DCYF grantees will be ranked higher
- School year sites that also participant in summer will receive priority.
- Rec and Park facilities that are open will have a higher priority than non-grantees that are open; however, non-grantees that are “open” will receive a higher priority than Rec and Park facilities that are only “closed-enrolled”
- Sites serving more meal types, particularly breakfast and lunch for summer program and supper and snack for afterschool meals
- Sites serving more youth or which have the ability to serve more youth in their facility will be ranked higher
- Sites located in attendance area where there is a higher % of youth who qualify for free/reduced priced meals will be ranked higher
- Sites with past performance issues will be ranked lower on the priority list
- Sites who are operating a youth program with enrolled youth will be ranked higher than programs who do not offer any youth programming or operate a drop-in type program. However, exceptions include sites who have shown success in their drop-in youth programs will rank higher than newer programs or programs that show records of low attendance/enrollment.
- Sites located at SFUSD Campus will not be considered as SFUSD will provide meal services to these sites. For more information, please contact SFUSD’s Student Nutrition Services at SchoolLunch@sfusd.edu

Section 4: Rules and Regulations

There are a number of federal, state, and local regulations and expectations that are required of selected distribution sites. This program is NOT designed to simply provide free food for summer and afterschool programs. General expectations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The site serves meals only to youth 18 and under during the days and times the site commits to serve the meals (breakfast, lunches, suppers, and/or snacks).
2. Serve the exact menu items and serving sizes provided by DCYF's food vendor, including milk. Additional food may be served, but not substituted.
3. Provide adequate space and supervision during the meal service to accommodate youth. All food must be eaten on-site unless it is a documented field trip with prior approval.
4. Sites must be located in San Francisco. Sites must regularly serve meals at the serving location listed on file. Daily field trips that hinder DCYF, DPH, USDA and CDE/CDSS ability to conduct monitoring visits may not be considered for the program.
5. Serve meals during approved windows that meet USDA's serving time requirements.
6. Complete all required forms DCYF requests (including but not limited to documenting meal counts at point of service using our electronic tally system (ETS), submission of delivery receipts, and if applicable, attendance forms and responsible principals list) and submitting them on set deadlines as determined by DCYF.
7. Regularly report to DCYF any changes in meal service times, staffing, numbers of meals needed, dates food will not be served, closures, etc.
8. Follow all Dept. of Public Health guidelines to ensure that food is safe and serving areas are sanitary, such as ensuring sites have enough refrigeration space. Sites will receive a permit to operate a food program.
 - a. Sites will need to have a working refrigerator prior to start date.
9. Site must be available for inspections conducted by DPH, USDA/CDE/CDSS, and site visits conducted by DCYF staff.
10. School Year sites must have an active health and fire safety permit.
11. Ensure that staff will be on site prior to meal service time to receive deliveries during designated meal delivery windows.
12. Serve all youth on a first-come, first-served basis without discrimination of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.
13. Attend MANDATORY site training sessions, even if the site has participated in the past.

14. Post outreach materials on-site that are visible from the street and engage in additional outreach to community.

In addition to the general rules and regulations as listed above, there are specific regulations around Open Sites vs. Closed-Enrolled Sites, Meal Service Times Regulations and Delivery Windows, Documentation, Mandatory training, and equipment and materials needs.

Open Sites vs. Closed-Enrolled Sites

Open sites are sites that are willing to serve youth enrolled in the program and youth not enrolled in the program (youth from the community).

Open sites will be required to:

- Adhere a banner (that says Summer Meals Program) to the building that is viewable from the street.
- Post posters so that the meal times listed are visible to from the street.
- Provide staff and space to accommodate serving additional youth. All youth are required to eat together.
- Develop a communication plan to notify families in the event of closure due to emergency.
- Sites should have staff available to serve families on site if majority of youth are going on a fieldtrip and have a communication plan to notify families in the event of closure due to fieldtrip.

Closed enrolled sites are sites that only serve youth enrolled in their program. Some sites may have to be “closed-enrolled” if they are operating in an area with less than .25 miles from a SFUSD school or from another “open site”.

Closed-enrolled sites will be required to provide appropriate documentation reasons for being a closed-enrolled site. Some “valid” reasons may include:

- Site location is within a quarter mile of a school that is open for the summer or another open site (which DCYF will determine if this is the case)
- Community safety concerns.
 - Documentation includes a police report, a news article describing safety concerns in the same neighborhood or zip code.
- All Documentation must be submitted before site is able to receive meals.

During the school-year, all sites are considered “open sites” as their information is posted online at CDE/CDSS websites and phone applications. Sites can opt in as an “open site – enrollment required” or “open site – drop in available”. Open site enrollment required means that youth need to be enrolled to receive meals. Open site drop in available means that youth do not need to be enrolled but can participate in meal service.

Meal Service Times Regulations and Delivery Windows

Sites must have established meal service times and serve during those reported service times. For the Summer and Afterschool Meal Program, the serving time requirements are listed as below:

1. If serving 2 meals during the school-year, the beginning of meal services must be 2 hours apart. For summer, a minimum of one hour must elapse between the end of one meal service and the beginning of another. For example, for summer program– if breakfast is served between 9am-9:30 am then lunch must begin after 10:30am. For afterschool program, if snack is served between 3-4pm, then supper can begin at 5pm.
2. Lunch and Supper service cannot exceed 2 hours. For example, for the summer program, lunch can be from 12-2pm. For afterschool program, supper can be from 4-6pm.
3. Breakfast and PM snack cannot exceed 1 hour. For example, breakfast can be from 9am-10am and PM snack can be from 2-3pm.
4. All meals must be served between 8am and 6pm.

Sites should have staff available on site as early as possible with at least a 2 hour delivery window, preferably with an end time before 1pm. For example, the latest delivery window will be from 11am-1pm. Site staff must be available on site for the duration of the delivery window. This may vary depending on a site’s proximity to other sites. Sites are also required to list hours of operations (i.e. providing the time in which the site is open and providing the widest window as possible). Specifically, sites applying for the Summer Meal Program, please note that if your site has a breakfast or AM snack prior to lunch, deliveries will arrive the day before consumption. For example, Monday breakfast is delivered on Friday the week before, Tuesday breakfast is delivered on Monday, etc.

For afterschool programs, our vendor may be able to accommodate for bulk delivery (once a week delivery), but it is not guaranteed and is at the discretion of DCYF.

Required Equipment, Materials and Internet

All sites are required to have their own refrigerator. DCYF will provide fridge thermometers and probe thermometers to ensure that food is maintained at a safe temperature. Sites who have their own oven, retherm, or other heating equipment like a microwave can have access to hot food. All other sites will receive cold food. There will be no other equipment for rent.

DCYF will also provide Open-Site Posters and Banners for Open Sites. DCYF will also provide “And Justice for All” Liberty posters to all sites. These materials can be picked up at the Mandatory Training.

Sites will be responsible for updating and uploading meal service documentation into our Electronic Tally System (ETS). ETS is DCYF’s data management system that allows sites to tally meals at point of service and submit required service documents electronically. **All sites are required to use this system.** ETS is a web-based system and to access ETS, sites will need an electronic device such as an iPad or laptop that has reliable access to the internet and a web browser. Sites are expected to use ETS at point of service (tallying meals as youth take them). More details will be discussed at DCYF’s mandatory training.

In addition, sites will need access to a phone line as we may need to call in the event of a delivery issue.

Documentation Requirements

In addition to submitting meal service documentation, there are other paperwork that sites are required to submit. Sites are required to also submit site agency agreements, work plan documentation and other communication plans in order to receive meals. More information will be shared at the DCYF mandatory training but documentation includes but is not limited to:

- **Meal Service Documentation, via ETS** – this includes delivery receipts, attendance (school-year only), and point of service documentation (ETS)

- **Site Agency Agreement** – all sites must meet agree to certain rules and regulations in order to receive meals. This will be sent to program managers and executive directors
- **Responsible Principal's List (RPL) (school-year only)** – CACFP requires that all sites participating in the Afterschool Meal Program fill out this form annually (this form is not applicable for summer). USDA requires this form to ensure that executive leadership from programs have not misused federal programs in the past. This information requires executive leadership's (such as an executive director or superintendent) name, birthdate, home address and email. More information will be available after sites have been selected.
- **Food handler's certificate** – all sites must have at least one staff certified in food handling. DCYF will ask for a copy and sites need to submit at least one staff food handler certificate before meal service begins. This person should be at the site to answer any questions from the health department. If staff is constantly in rotation, it is recommended that sites have more than one staff certified in food handling. Information about how to obtain one will be shared at the training.
- **Site Supplemental Information** – sites should have a workplan or assignment documentation that lists which staff will be responsible for what items in the meal service. More information will be shared at the training.
- **Site Training Checklist** – site staff will be required to train all staff involved in the meal program
- **Attendance forms (school-year sites only)** – sites need to submit attendance records during the school-year.
- **Closed-enrolled validation** – for sites choosing to be closed-enrolled, we will need supporting documentation
- **Open site communication plan** – for sites that are open, they will need to have a communication plan to notify families when there is a closure
- **Allergen forms if needed** – for students who may need alternate meals due to an allergy or medication condition, they will need to have a parent or guardian sign a form. Depending on the situation, a physician may also need to submit verifying documentation.
- **List of closures/fieldtrips** – DCYF is able to provide fieldtrip meals but USDA requires this information to be submitted in advance
 - June fieldtrips – May 15
 - July fieldtrips – June 15
 - August fieldtrips – July 14

Policies and other logistics

As part of our meal programs, distribution sites also have to follow certain operational policies, including but not limited to:

Allergen Meals policy – sites may need to submit a parent note and/or doctor’s note in order to request meal substitutions related to an allergen or other medical condition

Late cancellation or unclaimable meals policy – sites that cancel more than twice in a program session or have multiple concurrent days in which their meals are 100% not reimbursable will stop receiving meals

Late submission of paperwork – sites that miss more than 2 weeks of paperwork will stop receiving meals until paperwork is submitted

Site visit policy – sites that require more than 2 follow-ups for issues may be removed from the program

In addition to these general rules and regulations, DCYF has policies in place to ensure that distribution sites maintain compliance with USDA/CDE/CDSS regulations so that DCYF is not in a position to be in jeopardy of losing our sponsorship. In addition, these policies are subject to change and additional policies may be implemented but will be updated with sites in weekly communication with staff and in our monthly newsletter.

Sites that do not follow certain rules, regulations and policies jeopardize DCYF’s sponsorship status. Sites that continue to have compliance issues may be removed from the program or may be charged for meals that are not reimbursable.

Scheduling/Ordering Process

DCYF will follow City and County of San Francisco holiday schedule and may provide optional meal service during certain holiday breaks based on SFUSD calendar. More details be announced closer to service. Meals are ordered on a weekly basis. In an effort to reduce food waste, DCYF reserves the right to lower meal counts based on previous meal service history.

DCYF is required to report meals taken on fieldtrips (or off-site from reported address of meal service) to vendors, DPH, and USDA/CDE in advance. Sites are encouraged to enter their fieldtrip meal request early and will have specific deadlines for when this information is required to be on file. Sites can fill out preliminary information in the site application. DCYF will have “grab n go” ready meals for sites that prefer this option if sites choose to participate in

field trips and take meals off site. However, sites are not allowed to take daily fieldtrips that interfere with regular site monitoring. More information regarding fieldtrip meals will be discussed at the mandatory site trainings.

Mandatory Training

In-person (need to attend at least 1 – not all training dates) – tentatively scheduled

Location: Human Services Agency, 170 Otis St – Born Auditorium

- Tuesday, May 19th from 9:30am-3:00pm (with 1 hour break)
- Wednesday, May 20th from 9:30am-3:00pm (with 1 hour break)

Refresher training

Location: TBD - Thursday, August 6

DCYF's Mandatory Training will go over more of the rules and regulations in detail. DCYF annual training in May will include program service information for both Summer Meals and Afterschool Meals. A refresher CACFP training will be hosted in August and will be mandatory for sites that may have issues in the summer (and/or for sites that may only participating in the Afterschool Meal Program).

Only one person is required to attend from each serving location, but more may attend if desired. At least one person who has received training must be present at each meal service and the person attending the training should be those who will be serving the meals directly. If the person is not hired yet, then this person will be responsible for training site staff once they are hired. CDE/CDSS requires that each location serving meals has had at least one staff person trained by DCYF. Because of this, each serving location is required to have a different person trained for each address that food is being served since folks who oversee multiple service areas cannot be at two places at once.

All approved sites will have to submit a form verifying that all staff from that site who will be serving food, supervising meal service, or completing paperwork for this program have been appropriately trained by whomever attends the DCYF training by the end of the first week of service.

Trainings will be **in-person**. Once a site is confirmed, a link will be sent out to register for training. Training dates are currently scheduled for the following days:

Section 5: Information about Our Vendor

DCYF is excited to announce that we will be partnering with Chefables for the duration of the 2026-2027 Nutrition Program Year. They offer amazing quality, nutrient dense meals with fresh fruit and vegetables daily that are largely organic or from small farms. They make most of their whole grain breads and entrees from scratch. In addition, they have an in-house creamery where they make their own A2 Organic Yogurts from scratch. Their goal is to create healthy choices that are extremely tasty and meet USDA child nutrition program minimum standards of nutrition. Chefables offers daily vegetarian options. In addition, our vendor has their own allergen program that makes providing substituted meals easy.

For more information, please check out their website at www.chefables.com and www.tastetopia.com. Menus and other details will be discussed at the mandatory site trainings.

Section 6: Application Process

To apply for Summer Meals, please [click here](#).

To apply for School Year Meals, please [click here](#):

Both applications are due Friday, March 13th

This year, the Summer Meals Program will operate for 10 weeks, from June 08, 2026 to August 14, 2026. The Afterschool Meals Program will operate from Tuesday, September 1, 2026 to Wednesday, June 2, 2027.

For summer programs, DCYF will provide breakfast, lunch and/or an AM snack or PM snack. Sites can choose any of the following combinations:

- Breakfast and Lunch
- Lunch and AM or PM snack
- Breakfast and PM Snack
- Lunch only
- Breakfast only
- AM or PM Snack only (for weekly deliveries - may have to meet certain criteria based on need and proximity to other sites)

For afterschool meal programs, DCYF will provide a combination of the following meals:

- Supper
- Supper and PM snack
- PM Snack only sites (for weekly deliveries - may have to meet certain criteria based on need and proximity to other sites)

Terms and conditions while applying:

All sites must apply through our online application via Microsoft Forms. The online application should verify the application was submitted once the last page is complete. DCYF will not accept incomplete applications or applications that was not submitted via Microsoft Forms. Notices of application (whether sites are accepted, waitlisted, or pending) will be send out no later than Friday, April 3rd.

Missing information or inaccurate information on site application will cause further delay in approving sites or starting meal service on time. Sites should try their best to fill out site applications. Sites can finalize logistical information, including meal counts, during the week of training. Application details are subjected to verification and DCYF may also need to schedule a pre-approval visit in order to finalize site's acceptance.

Section 7: Other Resources

Sites that qualify but are not selected will be on the waitlist. In the meantime, sites can sign up to be a partner at the SF Marin Food Bank where they can register to have a shop account to purchase low-cost snacks and access free fruit. The process takes about 2-3 weeks, so sites are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. To create a shop account, please see the following link: <https://www.sfmfoodbank.org/partner-interest/>. Sites that are not able to be a food bank shopper are still encouraged to apply to DCYF nutrition programs so if other food resources become available, DCYF may refer your site elsewhere.

Section 8: Information and Q&A Session

To provide as much transparency and clarity as possible, DCYF Nutrition Team is hosting a virtual Information and Q&A Session for our Nutrition Program. Attendance is not required in order to apply for the meal program but may be useful for sites to hear directly from staff regarding information in this handbook. In addition, sites can ask questions not answered in this handbook and DCYF will post them on the website in case folks are not able to attend. In addition, the training may be recorded.

This Information session is scheduled for Friday, March 6th from 10:00am-11:00am. The meeting will be hosted virtually on TEAMS:

To register for the event, [please click here.](#)

Thank you for your consideration in providing free meals to youth.

For general questions not met in this application, please submit to nutrition@dcyf.org.