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**WESTERN COLORADO
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**
Charitable Funds for Community Good



Planning for Mobile Meal Delivery

According to the USDA, nearly one in ten Coloradans struggle with hunger, facing times when there is not enough money to buy food. The Colorado Children's Campaign estimates that nearly one in six Colorado kids may not always know when or where they will get their next meal. Attending school ensures that children have access to at least one meal a day, though for many children, this option is lost during the summer months and school breaks.

The USDA has been supporting the provision of mobile meals to low-income communities (defined as living at 185% of the federal poverty level or less) for two decades. Bringing meals directly to where children live and play has helped increase access to healthy meals and takes the hassle out of needing transportation to get to a group meal site.

In summer 2015, Western Colorado Community Foundation (WCCF) partnered with Mesa County School District 51 to develop the county's first summer mobile food program for children ages 0-18. With funding from WCCF, District 51 purchased a used food truck, retrofitted it and coined it the Lunch Lizard. The program was very successful, serving over 4,000 meals over seven weeks and partnering with Kids Aid, Mesa County's backpack program, to distribute nearly 800 bags of weekend food. In 2019, the program has expanded greatly and serves about 24,000 summer mobile meals.

For an overview of Mesa County's Lunch Lizard, please see this video: <https://youtu.be/6FJsZDFb7p4>

See Mesa County School District 51's [Lunch Lizard webpage](#) for videos on how the program was designed and delivered, or visit bit.ly/lunchlizard.

If you are considering planning a mobile meals program of your own, here are items to assist you:

Consult [No Kid Hungry's Mobile Meals Toolkit](#), which includes budgeting tools, best practices and case studies.

For ideas on how to engage children in your meals programs see the [Youth Engagement Toolkit](#) created by No Kid Hungry and the Sodexo Foundation.

1. Determine what gaps exist in your community

- Hold a stakeholder meeting of engaged community members to determine what needs exist in your community. Where are communities of underserved kids? What is the community already doing to address childhood hunger? Invite stakeholders such as school district nutrition services staff, food pantries, civic groups, school principals and family liaison staff, and volunteers to learn about the problem and identify gaps.

2. Consult the USDA's website to learn more about the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

- If you want to operate a summer program and receive reimbursement from the USDA, you must have a sponsor. In Mesa County, there are two already identified sponsors: School District 51 and

Western Slope Food Bank of the Rockies. For more information on becoming a sponsor, see the Colorado Department of Education webpage at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutrisummer>

- You must also operate in eligible areas, defined as an area where at least 50% of the population of children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/areaeligibility>
- See this link for SFSP FAQs: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/frequently-asked-questions>
- Determine if you will have open sites (ability to serve all 0-18 within eligible neighborhoods) or closed sites (paperwork must be submitted to be eligible for meals)

3. Determine how meals will be prepared and delivered

- Who will prepare the food? Will it be a cold or hot meal option? Will it be served at site or will a vehicle be needed? What type of vehicle? How will the vehicle be maintained and used when program is not in session? Who will own and insure the vehicle?

4. Determine volunteer needs

- Volunteers play a critical role in keeping costs low and community engagement high. What are some volunteer groups that could assist with your program?

5. Budgeting

- For lunches, the 2019 USDA reimbursement rates were \$4.03 (rural sites) and \$3.96 (non-rural sites), per meal served. How will additional costs be covered? Who are potential funders? What are the expected incomes, expenses and in-kind line items? For more on reimbursement rates, see: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/osnsfsp2014reimbursementrates>

