



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

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Only 14% of low-income school kids get summer meals *Need greatest in high-poverty rural areas of Washington*

Summer vacation has a dark side for thousands of Washington school children: hunger.

Only 14 percent of low-income school children who get free and reduced-price meals during the school year also receive free meals during the summer months, according to a report released today by the Washington, D.C.-based Food Research and Action Center (available on July 13 at www.frac.org).

Despite years of efforts to counter summer hunger, Washington's summer meal participation rate lags behind the national rate of 18 percent, according to the Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) 2006 summer food report "Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation."

The summer time is a particularly acute time for childhood hunger. Many low income families rely on the breakfasts and lunches served at school to ensure the family doesn't go hungry.

"We can't leave our children hungry just because school is out for the summer," states Linda Stone of the Children's Alliance. "School districts or other community organizations around the state have to step up and take advantage of the federal Summer Feeding Programs to ensure that children get the nutrition they need to learn and grow."

Local data show that an average of 35,136 Washington children a day got free meals through the summer feeding programs in 2005. That leaves out nearly 230,000 children who eat school meals during the school year.

Most summer meal sites located in school buildings or other locations in areas where more than half of the students qualify for free or reduced-price meals during the school year are "open sites" where

meals could be available to any child who needs one. In Washington, 679 schools (35 percent of all schools) met this criteria (50 percent low-income). A list of high-need school districts that don't run a summer feeding program is attached.

The summer feeding programs, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), reimburse schools, non-profit organizations, Indian tribes, residential camps and public agencies for nutritious meals served to children in low-income communities nationwide.

This summer 141 school districts, non-profits, public agencies and tribes are offering free meals at 645 sites across the state.

There are several initiatives underway aimed at countering summer hunger by boosting participation in the USDA-funded programs. This year Washington will participate in a national program aimed at simplifying the administration requirements of providing summer food. In other states, participation in this simplified summer food program boosted participation by 41 percent over the course of the last five summers.

Additionally, for six years now rural communities in Washington State have been able to apply for "Feed Your Brain" grants, which are designed to encourage more high-need communities to make free food and academic activities available to children during the summer months. In total, 76 communities have used these grants to start up summer food and enrichment programs of their own. This year, 15 rural communities received \$4,000 "Feed Your Brain" grants (see list below).

The Children's Alliance, in partnership with School's Out Washington and the Discuren Charitable Foundation, created the project to provide communities with funds for summer learning and nutrition.

Despite these efforts, though, the report released today by the Food Research and Action Center shows that Washington's summer food participation rates have remained virtually stagnant, while participation in summer feeding programs nationally has declined over the last seven consecutive years.

"We know there are many barriers that make it difficult for sponsors to offer summer feeding programs," states Donna Parsons, Summer Food Programs Supervisor with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. "Program funding has been cut at the local level, we don't have as many summer school programs as in previous years, and transportation is limited in the summer months. If children are transported to summer school on the bus then they will have access to meals; however, for those children not enrolled in summer school, it is difficult for them to get to a meal site, as the site may be located too far away, the parents may be at work so no one is available to take the children to a site, or the family may have no form of transportation. We continue to work with sponsors to help them maximize potential reimbursement by increasing participation in their programs and we continue to try to increase the general public awareness of the program."

2006 "Feed Your Brain" Grant Recipients:

- Auburn School District and the City of Pacific (Pacific, WA)
2. J. West Elementary (Aberdeen, WA)
 3. Children's Home Society (College Place, WA)
 4. Entiat School District (Entiat, WA)
 5. Northwest Learning & Achievement Group (Manson, WA)
 6. Oakville School District (Oakville, WA)
 7. Quillayute Valley School District (Forks, WA)
 8. Rosalia Early Learning Center (Rosalia, WA)
 9. SHARP Kids (Grand Coulee, WA)
 10. Skykomish School District (Skykomish, WA)
 11. Stratton Elementary School (Newport, WA)
 12. Tekoa School District (Tekoa, WA)
 13. Touchet School District (Touchet, WA)
 14. WSU Extension Mason County 4H (Shelton, WA)
 15. Yakama Christian Mission (White Swan, WA)

For more information on Feed Your Brain grants contact Lauren Rachel with School's Out Washington at 206-323-2396, x25 or Shelley Curtis with Children's Alliance 1-800-854-KIDS, x17.

High Need Communities without Summer Meal Programs

The US Department of Agriculture provides reimbursement to school districts, non-profits, local governments, churches camps and tribes for nutritious meals served to kids in low-income areas during the summer. The [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#) administers the program at the state level.

Hunger doesn't take a vacation. Free summer meals provide kids with nutritious food during the summer months when school meals are not available. This program ensures that kids are ready to learn when school starts in September.

The Children's Alliance works in partnership with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to promote and expand the Summer Food Service Program. There are many communities in Washington that are eligible but do not run the program and many children who need free meals in the summer. We work

with communities to identify organizations that can run the program and provide technical assistance to get programs up and running. We also provide resources to those who run the program, such as milk coolers, posters and banners.

The following is a list of school districts in the state that are eligible to run a Summer Food Program but do not. Districts are eligible if at least one school has 50% or more low-income students. The communities below also lack a year-round National School Lunch Program or a summer meals program operated by a community organization other than the school district. Eligibility data is from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. For more information about the Summer Food Program, call Donna Parsons at OSPI at 360-725-6200.

County	Non-participating School District	Number of children in target schools eligible for free and reduced-price lunches
Chelan	Cashmere	532
Clark	Washougal	226
Douglas	Eastmont	1,017
	Mansfield	61
	Waterville	176
Ferry	Keller	35
	Orient	78
	Curlew	120
	Inchelium	170
Franklin	Kahlotas	28
Grant	Quincy	1,687
	Royal	1,161
Jefferson	Queets-Clearwater	24
	Port Townsend	151
Klickitat	Wishram	48
	Klickitat	101
	Lyle	257
Lewis	Chehalis	161
Mason	Pioneer	408
	Mary M. Knight	41
Okanogan	Pateros	104
	Methow Valley	13
Okanogan, cont.	Okanogan	432

	Oroville	423
Pend Oreille	Selkirk	38
Pierce	Peninsula	168
Skamania	Mill A	45
Snohomish	Index	18
	Snohomish	182
	Granite Falls	20
Spokane	Cheney	282
	Riverside	172
	Mead	292
Stevens	Onion Creek	28
	Valley	169
	Colville	561
	Evergreen	12
	Columbia	174
	Kettle Falls	326
	Northport	155
Whitman	Garfield	30
	Endicott	26
	Lamont	24
Yakima	Highland	842
	Zillah	232
	Wapato	3,088

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For more than twenty years, the Children's Alliance has advocated for children, youth and families in Washington.

The Alliance has 128 organizational members, and more than 7,000 individual members.

For a [list of member organizations](#) and to learn more about the Children's Alliance, go to:

www.childrensalliance.org