

# Increasing SFSP Participation

Kaiser Permanente Colorado  
Decreasing Food Insecurity

**Fourteen percent of Colorado children suffer from food insecurity, defined as lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.**

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established as a complement to the National School Lunch Program to provide meals to children over the summer. However, in Colorado, for every 100 children who participate in the National School Lunch Program, only 5 were provided lunch during the summer through SFSP (USDA Food and Nutrition Service Data, 2015).

Kaiser Permanente supported several nonprofit organizations from 2016-2018 to increase participation in SFSP. The following report summarizes key evaluation findings from this initiative.

Evaluation findings for  
Cultivando



## Grantees identified and reduced many barriers to encourage greater participation in SFSP

### **STIGMA: Grantees reduced the stigma many felt about receiving government assistance through SFSP.**

"It takes a long time to build that trust and culture of inclusiveness... People don't want to feel like they're taking a free lunch. The staff was able to say, 'No, this is about fun activities for your kids. This program is free to everyone in the entire country. This is just a fun thing for you to do with your kids during the summer' to take some of the stigma away and focus on the community-building aspect and the fun activities."

### **SUSTAINABLE: Grantees identified sustainable site locations to implement their programs.**

"It helped us build a more positive relationship with the school district. One thing that they found was that they were able to operate the summer lunch program in a more efficient manner and then operate it in the black as opposed to the red, so there was some financial gain for them with us increasing the use of the summer lunch program."

### **PARTNER: Grantees formed new partnerships with other organizations to provide SFSP.**

"The grant expanded the reach of partners we had. I created a map of the county that highlighted where we have high-need, low-access areas and brought it with me to meet with partners so they could see the areas of need and how [they] aligned with their work. One thing we did was partner with the local transit authority: They were able to add a small bus line to help families get to one of our sites. We had a lot of partnerships based on necessity and what we learned for increasing access."

### **AWARENESS: Grantees ensured families were aware of SFSP and its purpose.**

"We went out to the houses and talked to the families about what it was. There were a lot of comments like, 'I don't have my ID.' There just wasn't the understanding of what it was about, so there had to be a little education there."

### **VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF: Grantees leveraged community members and staff from other community agencies to participate in their programs, providing consistent, familiar faces.**

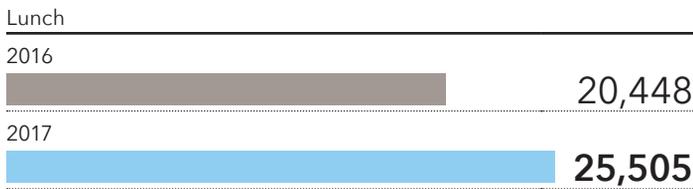
"We didn't just have the sponsor serving the food, we had additional [temporary] staff who would be there doing activities. We had school district staff, recreation staff, library staff, and our youth center staff on a regular basis, as well as volunteers. They were able to make connections and just walk around and talk to the children. That really kept the same families coming back over and over again."

### **LEARN: Grantees developed new skills related to cultural competence.**

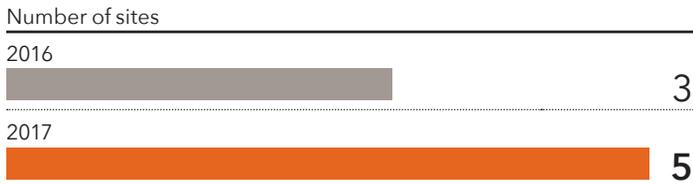
"It was really helpful for us to understand the cultural dynamics of our recreation facilities and some of the barriers different cultures have to accessing our services. We're looking at adapting our residency language: People don't feel comfortable providing the level of documentation we currently require. We're reducing it to just one question: 'Do you live or work in this city?'"

**Increasing SFSP Participation  
Cultivando**

**The total number of meals provided through SFSP increased by 25%**



**The number of sites providing summer meals increased 67% from 2016 to 2017**

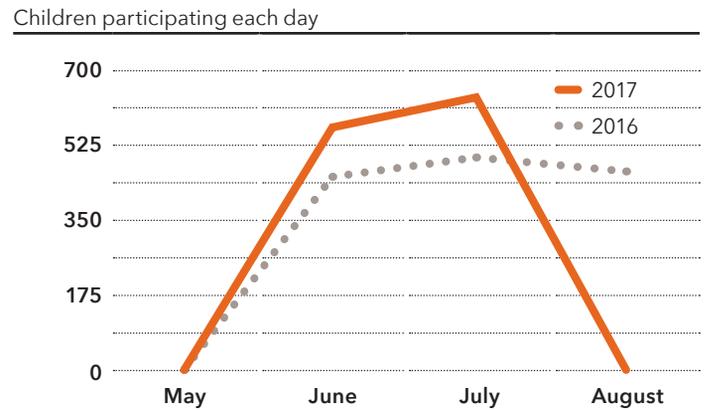


**Grantees provided a variety of enrichment activities to promote participation and draw attention to the sites**

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**EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES:**  
 Summer reading, STEM education, and project-based learning.
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**RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:**  
 On-site arts and crafts, karaoke, and dance parties.
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**SPORTS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES:**  
 Soccer, water balloons, and gardening.

Kaiser Permanente Colorado  
Decreasing Food Insecurity Initiative

**Overall participation in SFSP peaked in July**



*“We developed partnerships with our local food bank and other entities we had never worked with before... It helped us serve other children and families outside of [our target area] in more rural areas.”*

- KPCO Grantee