

# WHY MOBILE?

## HOW IT WORKS

This program serves kids and young adults in low-income households throughout the summer.

- Delivers food to kids who are unable to reach brick and mortar meal sites
- Serve multiple locations in just a few hours
- Overcomes stigma through a fun, engaging, and unique service format

## SUMMER HUNGER IN THE US

Approximately 22 million kids receive free or reduced-cost meals through the National School Lunch Program.

In the summer, only 15% of eligible kids in the U.S. utilize the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)



## A FEW REASONS WHY

### 1. Inconvenient Meal Times

Most sites only serve lunch till 1:30, but kids often sleep in past noon.

### 2. Stigma

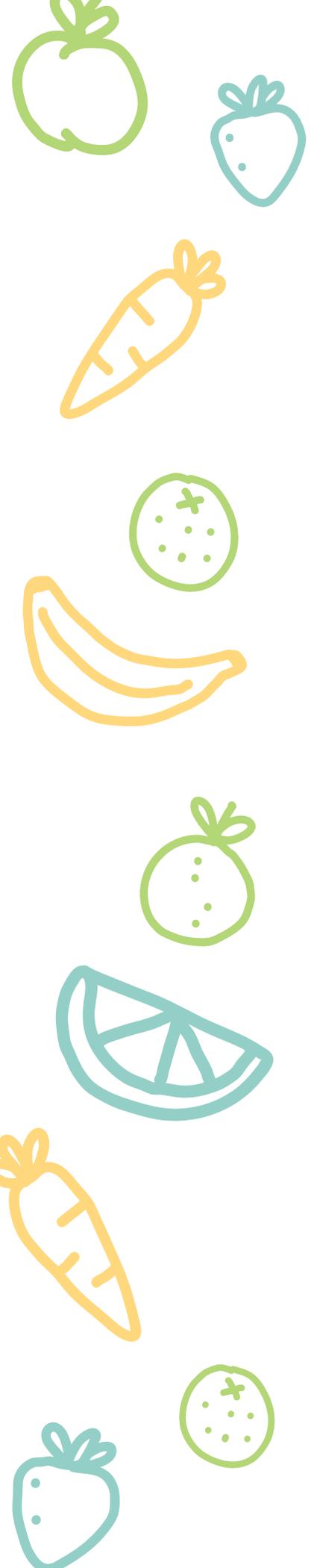
Kids are afraid of being judged, and programs that are advertised as free food makes stigma worse.

### 3. Transportation and safety issues

Without safe transportation, many kids simply can't get to meal sites.

### 4. Poor Food Choices

Kids rarely get to choose their food options, and the food quality isn't always great.



# IDENTIFY YOUR ASSETS

First things first: consider the key elements of a mobile meal program. These programs take a significant amount of resources and infrastructure so it's best if you already have some of these major pieces in place:



## VEHICLE

Whether it's a food truck or a van, consider how your meals can meet kids where they are.



## FOOD SUPPLIER

Think fast, casual, healthy. The less assembly, the better.



## INFRASTRUCTURE

Consider insurance, staff, and operations support

What assets does your organization already have? What assets could your community contribute? Partner with a business or another organization that already has a mobile meal program.

## COMPLEMENT, DON'T COMPETE

Community partners are crucial for so many reasons: they can offer outreach, promotion, location selection and more. Mobile meals are most sustainable when they're developed *with* the community, not for the community.

### **Consider:**

- What programs already provide this service?
- How will your program fill the gaps for those existing services?
- How can you build partnerships with organizations with similar missions?
- In what ways can the community have ownership in this program?

**Tip:** *Keep community dynamics in mind. How can your program empower the community? How can partners help ensure the program positively impacts the community?*

# LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Mobile meal sites allow you to go where brick & mortar meal sites can't. Your community partners can help you identify the best places to set up for the day.

### **Places to consider:**

- Apartment complexes
- Small businesses
- Parks and recreation centers

**Parking:** Research the laws in your city to make sure you have the right permits



**Tip:** *Check the schedule! Make sure your meal service doesn't conflict with existing programs.*

# THINK LIKE A BUSINESS

## COSTS

Making a budget? Here are a few costs you may not have considered:

### STARTUP COSTS

- Vehicle
- Promotional Materials
- Equipment
- Permits and Licenses

### OVERHEAD COSTS

- Labor
- Insurance
- Marketing
- Gas
- Vehicle maintenance
- Food and Supplies

## DISTRIBUTION

A mobile food program is more than delivering sandwiches out of the back of a truck. Consider:

- Where will the food come from?
- How will you transport food to the vehicle?
- Where will you store food?

## FUNDING

How will you fund this? Think beyond grants and donations. Consider:

- What data and metrics would be helpful to evaluate your success?
- How can you maximize your program's assets into a revenue stream that can support the program?

*Example: Rent out the vehicle to local businesses to cover operational costs*



# PROMOTE LIKE A PRO

How will people in the neighborhood hear about your program? Two helpful ways:

**Recruit community members** for outreach. Provide residents with tools and training to help spread the word.

**Maximize partners' networks.** Ask partners to share Facebook events and posts

**Good-looking marketing materials go a long way.** Well-designed fliers and posters add legitimacy and can attract a diverse range of customers.





## PROVIDE AN EXPERIENCE, NOT A HANDOUT

### **Consider your customer:**

What is most exciting for kids? How can you transform your program into a fun experience kids want to visit again and again?

Here are a few ways to add fun, flair and creativity to your mobile meal program:

### **MENU**

Think fresh, healthy, and fast—something easy to distribute

- Grab 'n' go items: sandwiches, fresh fruit
- Beverages (bottled water, chocolate milk)
- Ice

**Tip:** Serve food “buffet-style” so kids can choose their own foods.

### **PACKAGING**

- Colorful labels
- Fun bags and boxes

### **DECOR**

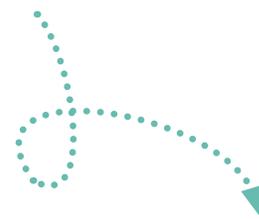
- Banners
- Balloons
- Staff t-shirts
- Menu boards
- Sandwich boards
- Car magnets

### **AMBIANCE**

- Upbeat music
- T-shirts for staff
- Tables and seating
- Tablecloths
- Pop-up tent

### **ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES**

- Sound system or wireless speakers
- Cooler
- Rope, zipties, tape
- Trash cans
- Trash bags



**Tip:** Create a fun environment, but keep it simple: the easier it is to set up and tear down, the more locations you can visit in one day.

# BACKGROUND: PILOTING THE MOBILE MODEL



## UNPACK'D PILOT DETAILS

- Launched in two neighborhoods
- Promoted through word-of-mouth, social media
- Served over 200 meals in three days

This guide was created based on a 2016 pilot program called “Unpack'd.”

Freestore Foodbank launched “Unpack'd,” a mobile meal program, in Cincinnati, Ohio in summer 2016 through a partnership with Design Impact and Sprout Insight. Unpack'd was inspired and vetted by kids, parents, and frontline workers who utilize summer meal programs

This pilot was funded by a 3-year grant from Feeding America and ConAgra Foods Foundation to identify kids' barriers to summer meal participation and develop program models to fill the summer feeding gap. In addition to testing “Unpack'd” over three days, the team also conducted multiple evaluations and feedback sessions to measure the pilot's success.

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## SPECIAL THANKS TO...



- Cincinnati Cooks
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