# Recommendations

## Federal Policy Recommendations

- Congress and the Administration should reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and strengthen 21st Century Community Learners funding in ESEA by explicitly allowing and encouraging the use of these funds for summer programming.
- USDA should ensure SFSP meals comply with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans and strengthen the program's appeal to youth, parents, and caretakers. This process is currently underway with respect to meals served through the National School Lunch Program[1].
- USDA should further simplify administration and reduce monitoring burdens and costs of operating summer nutrition programs, particularly SFSP, by maximizing use of technology for program transactions, even at the site level.
- USDA should provide greater flexibility for sponsor-site-vendor arrangements to facilitate service of meals and snacks where and when children do *not* readily congregate, such as in remote and desert communities.
- USDA and California Department of Education should use technology to combine the application, monitoring, and claiming features of SFSP and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) so that community sponsors can easily transition to serve children and teens with the newly available Afterschool Meal Program resources when school is in session.

## State Policy Recommendations

- State Superintendent Torlakson should convene a summer learning summit to develop legislative, policy, and fiscal solutions to the summer learning and nutrition gap.
- The Legislature and Governor should enact SB 429 (DeSaulnier) to provide school districts with increased flexibility to devote existing resources to summer programs.
- The Legislature should require the state to collect and track data describing the availability of summer school and summer learning programs.

[1] Note: this process is also scheduled to occur for Child and Adult Care Food Program meals in 2012.

- As soon as the state budget permits, the Legislature and education leaders should provide adequate resources for school districts to offer robust summer programs that offer federally funded summer meals. Summer learning, summer enrichment, and summer nutrition must be a priority to close the achievement gap, combat hunger, and prevent obesity among California students.

## Local Recommendations

School boards and school districts should:

- Send information about nearby summer nutrition programs home with all students on the last day of school. If school has already closed for the summer, schools should attempt to contact families through automatic phone messaging systems or other means.
- Seek to preserve summer school programs.
- Ensure that all summer programs operate at school sites that offer federally funded nutrition programs.
- Ensure that school sites open their campuses to serve eligible children from the surrounding neighborhood in addition to students.

School nutrition services departments, municipal recreation programs, food banks, and local advocates should:

- Convene to identify gaps in the availability of summer meal sites and marketing opportunities for existing sites.
- Increase the number of children served at community sites by conducting neighborhood-level outreach and by ensuring that sites welcome participants with open gates, effective signage, and approachable staff.
- Recruit meal vendors and sponsors for new SFSP sites.
- Contact local principals to secure their support for operating open summer school sites that serve meals to children, not just students, in the neighborhoods around their schools.
- Briefly survey drop-in participants and their parents about the appeal of the meal program to identify potential adjustments in menus, service, and environment.

Please note: a list of summer meals sites should be available soon from CDE at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/summersites11.asp.