



## What You're Doing

Organizing a youth-led and adult-guided mini “think tank” on hunger to research barriers and find solutions to the summer meal gap faced by youth eligible for the program.

## Why It Matters

- During the school year, 22 million children receive free or reduced-priced meals through the National School Lunch Program. When school is out for summer, only 3.9 million receive free or reduced-price meals through the USDA Summer Food Service Program.
- This gap of 1 in 6 summer to school-time participants is the result of various barriers experienced only during the summer, including a lack of access to meal sites, insufficient program awareness, and limited resources when schools are closed.
- Children experiencing food insecurity:
  - Have more social and behavioral problems.
  - Repeat a grade in elementary school.
  - Experience developmental impairments in areas like motor or language skills.

## What You Need

- A place to hold the think tank.
- A date and time for at least 2 sessions.
- A small group of students to participant.
- An expert to help educate the group about the summer meal program.
- An organization interested in your findings.

Item	Price
Outreach materials	\$0-15
Printing	\$0-50
Space	\$0.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$0-75</b>



## Here's How You Do It!

1. Learn about the issue of summer meals in your community.
2. Contact an expert to share their knowledge with you, and the group during the think tank session.
3. Find an organization that serves summer meals in your area to learn the specifics of it in your community. Try [USDA's Food and Nutrition Service](#). They are experts in this area and should be able to connect you with a local organization providing summer meals.
4. Tell the local organization and/or USDA's Food and Nutrition Service that you'd like to help them address one or more of these problems by surveying your peers at school about the issue and potential solutions to addressing them.
5. Recruit youth to participate in the mini think tank.
6. Hold your think tank with the assistance of an expert to help the group understand the issue.
7. As a team, create a survey during the think tank session to share with your peers at school. You can create an online survey using online solutions, like [SurveyMonkey](#) or [SurveyPlanet](#) with the free service.
8. Distribute the surveys and collect the data.
9. Hold a second session to discuss the data as a group and propose 1 solution.
10. Share your data with a summer meal service organization, like USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.
11. Optional: If possible, work with your peers in the think tank to implement your solution.

## Reflection

Consider having participants write down answers to these questions and then discuss it as a group.

- How did you look at child hunger and how it affects students in your community before this think tank?
- How do you feel about childhood hunger and the gap between kids who get help during the school year and don't during the summer?
- Do you think students are a good resource for coming up with solutions to problems that affect them? If yes/no, how so?

MARCH 15 - APRIL 30