

Monitoring Sites



IN THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Monitoring is essential to making a Program successful. Having knowledgeable trained monitors will enable Program operations to comply with Program requirements and run more smoothly.

Monitor Responsibilities

Having an efficient and capable monitoring staff is one of the first steps towards successful operations. A monitor serves as a direct link between the Sponsor's administrative office and the actual food service sites. They are the **"eyes and ears,"** providing valuable feedback about how the sites are operating by visiting sites on a regular basis and observing meal services. Establishing a proper monitoring system will help prevent problems from occurring and will make it easier to correct any problems that arise during the summer. The size of the monitoring staff will depend on the size of the sponsor's Program.

To meet Program monitoring requirements, USDA recommends no less than one monitor for every 15 to 20 sites in urban areas. The number of monitors necessary for rural sites may increase depending upon the geographic area to be covered.

The sponsor must ensure that the monitor's responsibilities and authority are clear to the monitoring staff, site supervisors and office personnel.

Visits and Reviews

Monitors are required to perform site visits and site reviews at various times throughout program operations. These reviews are an important part of the sponsor's responsibility to ensure the integrity of the Program. Site visits and reviews are defined as:

- **Site Visits:**
Requires monitor to ensure that the food service is operating smoothly and that any apparent problems are immediately resolved.
- **Site Reviews:**
Requires monitor to determine if the site is meeting all the various Program requirements. Monitors must observe a complete meal service from beginning to end, including delivery or preparation of meals, the meal service, and clean up after meals.

Sponsor Monitoring Requirements

Sponsors must ensure that the following minimum monitoring requirements are met:

Pre-operational Visits

Prior to operation, sponsors must certify that all required sites (such as new sites and sites with previous serious deficiencies) have been visited and have the capability and the facilities to provide the meal service planned for the number of children anticipated to be served.

Site Visits

Sponsors must visit each site at least once during the first week of operation to ensure the site is operating smoothly. However, the first week site visit requirement is waived for returning sites that successfully operated during the previous summer (or other most recent period of operation) and had no serious deficiency findings. Sponsors of these sites are still required to review the site within the first four weeks of operation.

Site Reviews

Sponsors must conduct a review of the food service at least once in the first four weeks of Program operations. If a site operates less than four weeks, the sponsor must still conduct a review. A monitor must observe delivery or preparation of meals, service of meals, children eating the meals; clean up after meals, and completion of site meal count paperwork. During each review the monitor should discuss any concerns or problems with the site supervisor and other site staff. The monitor must also document everything on the site visit/review form, including technical assistance and training provided.

Follow-up Visits

Sponsors must conduct follow-up visits for any serious deficiencies that were identified during a site visit or review to ensure that permanent corrective action has been implemented.

Refer to the Sponsor Monitor's Guide for detailed information on sponsor monitoring requirements.

Conducting the Review

What to know before you go:

- Site location and type of site
- Name of Site supervisor, were they trained?
- Dates of operation and approved meal service time
- Planned Menus
- Meal Delivery Schedule (if applicable)
- Meal Count history
- Planned field trips



Before Meal Service Begins:

- Arrive prior to meal delivery or during preparation
- Confirm type of site with the site supervisor
- Observe food delivery or meal prep. Are the meals held at proper temperature, delivered on time, enough prepared for anticipated number of children, meet meal pattern requirements?
- For delivered meals, is there a delivery receipt or production information, are meals being counted upon receipt?
- Check for open site posting, if applicable, as well as other required postings - "And Justice for All" poster, menu and other postings required by the sponsor.

During Meal Service:

- Observe the entire meal service... beginning to end
- Determine if meals are served within the approved meal service time and are being served in a safe and sanitary manner.
- Are children served complete meals, offer versus serve being handled appropriately, if applicable, one meal per child, eaten on site?
- If non-Program adults are being served, do the adults pay for the meals or are non-program funds used to pay for the meals? Is there a system in place for collecting and storing payment?
- Are meals counted correctly by category and at the point of service?
- Determine if meals are served to all attending children, regardless of the child's race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Assure all children have equal access to services and facilities at the site.

After Meal Service:

- Check your meal count to see if it matches the site supervisor's count.
- Review daily records kept by the site. Are they complete and accurate?
- Complete the Monitor review form. Discuss any issues with the site supervisor and the action to be taken to correct them.
- Provide technical assistance and training as needed to the site supervisor.

Monitoring Reports

All visits and reviews must be documented. Records of visits and reviews will help sponsors assess the operation of sites. Records are only useful when they are carefully reviewed by sponsor personnel and when follow-up monitoring is scheduled to ensure that any corrective actions have been taken to improve site operations.

Each sponsor should design a tracking system for handling monitor reports. Sponsors should have a system that will ensure that monitors return reports frequently – if possible every day. The reports should be immediately reviewed by a specific member of the sponsor's staff who

is responsible for following up on any problems. The staff member should:

- Review any problems found by the monitor
- Call the site supervisor, if necessary
- Document corrective action taken at the site
- Schedule a follow-up review, if necessary
- Sign and date the report
- Determine if site changes are required, report to DPI

The Sponsor review official should base the timing of follow-up reviews on the severity of the problem.