



Are Mobile Meals Right for Your Food Service Operation?

Implementing a mobile meal service model requires significant planning, coordination, and creative problem solving to be successful. The following questions are meant to help you make a preliminary assessment to determine if you have the organizational and financial capacity to operate mobile meal service.

Organizational Questions:

- Does your organization possess staff capacity to identify potential sites, design an effective mobile meals program, run daily operations, and conduct monitoring and evaluation for program improvement?
- Has your organization previously served meals at alternative locations outside of the cafeteria, such as in the classroom or on mobile carts?
- Does your program have menus that can be adapted to a mobile operation?
- Do you have strong relationships with school leaders and organizations that could support the program, such as nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and influential community members?
- Can your school/district provide vehicles and drivers? Do the bus and school schedules allow time for a mobile meal service route?
- What is the geographic range of your community? Do you have enough vehicles, staff, and time to reach all areas?

Financial Questions:

- Is there a willingness and ability to obtain and invest the funds necessary to operate a sustainable mobile meals program?
- Would a mobile meals program increase participation enough to offset the cost of startup, or can you afford to take a loss in order to reach families in need?
- Can you recruit volunteers to keep labor costs low?
- Might the school/district be able to fund fuel costs and labor costs for the drivers?
- Can your program support a mobile route in addition to existing cafeteria/curbside service? Or combine your curbside concept with having schools be bus stops?
- If you also have cafeteria/curbside service, can you spare enough employees to work on each bus route?

Adapted from [No Kid Hungry's SFSP Mobile Meals Toolkit](#) and in partnership with the Arizona School Nutrition Programs Advisory Council.