



## Initiatives and Interventions Addressing Health and Social Indicators in the United States

*National Association of Planning Councils Initiatives Survey Results – for [www.socialindicators.com](http://www.socialindicators.com)*

Initiative title: **Summer Food Program Outreach – Feeding More Hungry Kids**

City and state: **Sacramento, CALIFORNIA**

Indicators addressed:

Public School Students- 185% or less Poverty - Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Meals  
Children Below Poverty

Purpose, goals, and outcomes: The Sacramento Hunger Commission, a program of the Community Services Planning Council (CSPC), in collaboration with the City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department (the main local Summer Food sponsor), initiated a long-term project to increase participation in the free Summer Food Program. The project focused both on increasing Summer Food sites in underserved areas of the county and on a multilingual comprehensive outreach campaign to bring in more children. The outcome in the first four years was an increase in participation of 144%, and the City and the Hunger Commission were jointly awarded a US Department of Agriculture Pyramid of Excellence Award in 1999 for this achievement.

Description: The Hunger Commission recruited a large number of volunteers willing to open or help with new Summer Food sites. Funding was secured to have original artwork created to produce outreach materials that were “kid-friendly”. Some of the materials, which continue to be used, are in six of the major languages spoken in the Sacramento County. They are widely distributed through health fairs, schools, libraries, and food closets. “Media Day” is held annually at an actual site. For information about specific sites, outreach materials provide the phone number for CSPC’s “InfoLine,” and the Commission ensures that the InfoLine staff receive frequent updates on any changes. More recently, the Hunger Commission has solicited the support and involvement of local policymakers, by showing them large maps (created by the City Parks and Recreation Department) with the location of existing summer lunch sites. Council members and their staff often suggest possible new locations and also help publicize both the program and the need for volunteers within their districts.

When it began: 1994

Geographic area covered: Sacramento County, California

Changes in the community condition as a result of this initiative: In addition to the documented increase in overall participation (over 144% between 1994 and 1998), there is now much more awareness about the Summer Food Program and how easy it is for participants to access compared to other government-supported programs. Both the number of volunteers and sites has expanded dramatically. Children from low-income areas can get a free lunch, and often a snack, at well over 100 locations. More ethnic minority children now participate in the program, occasionally at sites where not only the children but also the adult volunteers are part of their own community.

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