

Nebraska Rural Noncongregate Summer Meal

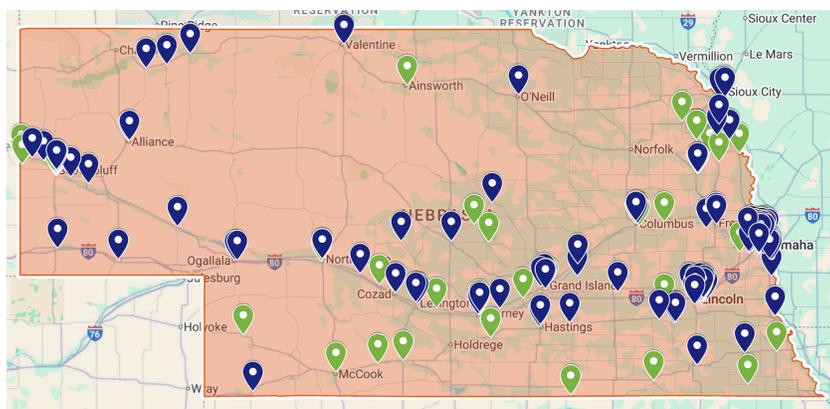
SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES



Summer meals, like those served through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), are a great way to make sure kids get the food they need when school is closed. The Rural Non-Congregate (RNC) option makes meal service and participation easier than ever! Sign up for next summer!

Find program options and Nebraska trends that can help you make the decision to serve RNC below!

Nebraska SFSP Sites by Service Option, 2025



RNC Site

Traditional Site

Growth of RNC in Nebraska

	2023	2024	2025
Sponsors	9	25	35
Sites	10	36	47

RNC Distribution Dates

Most common start date: 6/2/25

Most common end date: 7/31/25

RNC is Flexible and Beneficial

Eligible sites can serve meals in ways that work for the sponsor and the community. Do what works for you!

- With NDE approval, RNC sites can:
 - Send up to 5 days worth of meals home with kids at one time (or 10 meals in one distribution).
 - Operate congregate and non-congregate at the same location, but not for the same meal.
 - Serve meals through grab-and-go, drive thru, walk up, parent pick up, delivery to a central location or delivery to homes.

Successful Sites Remember

- **Start with your community**
 - Survey families to see if and how they would like to participate!
 - Choose distribution times that work for your families. Extended hours beyond the work day.
 - Many sites send weekly RSVP surveys so that they can have accurate counts for meals and never waste food.
- **Communication is key**
 - Promote before school is out and through news media and in multiple languages.
 - Post clear time, location, menu, guidance on special dietary needs, and logistics to make it easy on participants.
 - Use social media, webpages, or other digital options.
 - Post clear signage at the site.
- **Logistics**
 - Outdoor sites need to be ready for weather - consider tents for sun or rain, backup indoor options.
 - Use carts to move big things, use hot and cold storage near the pickup area or vehicle.
 - Assess freezer space - use coolers, thermal bags, and Cambros to maintain food temperature.
- **Staffing options**
 - If you don't have staff available, seek folks outside of the food department, hire young adults or high school students, or work to recruit volunteers.

NEBRASKA SUCCESS STORIES: KEARNEY & CRETE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Well we have 4 kids that we adopted out of foster care. We go to therapy and OT and doctors appointments a lot so it's just helpful to have a grab and go lunch for time. It saves us on time and energy. It's good food - I've seen a lot of good healthy options in the lunches and that's been very helpful for us as well.

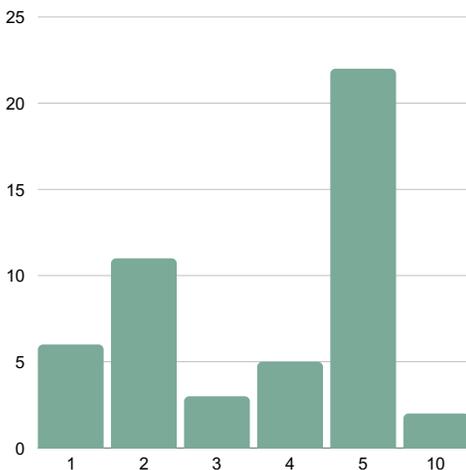
- Shari, Parent, Kearney



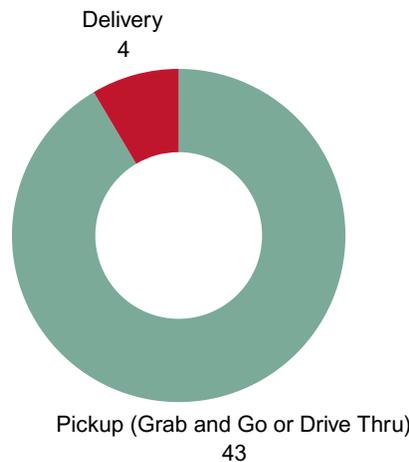
Kearney served SFSP RNC meals for the first time in 2025. Serving lunch 5 days a week, they get around 200-215 participants per day through a drive thru or walk up model. Their outreach in English and Spanish reaches as many people as possible. [Learn more about Kearney here!](#) Crete serves drive up grab-and-go on Wednesdays from 4-5 pm. Each distribution is 4 breakfasts and 4 lunches, so 8 total. Their weekly Google form RSVP helps them prepare the right number of meals. With around 80 participants each week, they distribute around 640 meals in about 1 hour. [Read more here!](#)

Nebraska RNC by the Numbers

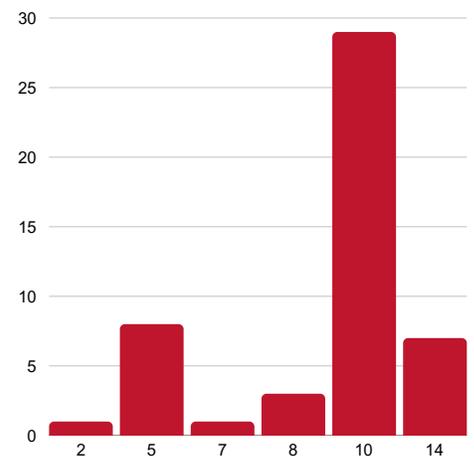
Number of Weekly Distributions at RNC Sites



2025 RNC Site Types



Frequency of Meals Provider Per Distribution at RNC Sites



Learn More!

Reach out to the Nebraska Department of Education Nutrition Services:
 (P) 402-471-2488 or 800-731-2233
 (Email) nde.nsweb@nebraska.gov
 - or -
 Nebraska Appleseed at
esavaiano@neappleseed or below

Resource Bank

- [Nebraska RNC Fact Sheet for Potential Sponsors](#)
- [How to Become a Nebraska SFSP Sponsor](#)
- [No Kid Hungry Successful Non-Congregate Meal Service Models for Rural Areas: Implementation Guide](#)
- [USDA Sun Meals to Go \(RNC\) Webpage](#)

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