

Unaffiliated SFSP Site Agreements: What Sponsors Need to Know

What is an unaffiliated site?

An *unaffiliated site* means a site that is legally distinct from the sponsor. These sites may include community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, parks, or other local partners that operate meal service sites under a sponsor's oversight.

Why is a written agreement required?

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) regulations require sponsors to carry out specific administrative and operational responsibility for all sites they operate, including unaffiliated sites. A written Sponsor/Site Agreement helps document:

- Roles and responsibilities of the sponsor and the site
- Expectations for meal service operations
- Oversight, monitoring, and compliance requirements

Using a written agreement supports consistent program operations and helps sponsors demonstrate compliance with SFSP requirements.

When should a written agreement be used?

Sponsors should use a Sponsor/Site Agreement when they choose to partner with an unaffiliated organization to operate an SFSP site. The agreement should be completed before meal service begins and maintained in accordance with SFSP recordkeeping requirements under 7 CFR Part 225.

Who completes the written agreement?

The agreement is completed jointly by:

- **The Sponsor**, who retains full responsibility for SFSP compliance, claims for reimbursement, monitoring, training, and oversight
- **The Site Representative**, who is responsible for coordinating day-to-day site operations. In some cases, site operations may be staffed or supported by the Sponsor. The site representative must be an individual with the authority to sign agreements on behalf of the site.

Sponsors are responsible for ensuring all applicable sections of the agreement are completed accurately, including meal service details, service times, and authorized representatives, before meal service begins.



How does this fit into the SFSP process?

1. A potential site may contact an SFSP sponsor directly to express interest in operating a site, or may be referred to a sponsor. Sponsors determine whether to partner with interested sites. The sponsor reviews the information related to the site's proposed location, service type, and ability to operate in compliance with SFSP requirements, and determines whether to partner with the site.
2. The sponsor initiates the [Unaffiliated Site Agreement](#) and ensures it is completed and signed by both parties before meal service begins.
3. The site operates under the sponsor's oversight for the duration of the program.

What are important reminders for sponsors?

- Sponsors are not required to take on unaffiliated sites; however, partnering with legally distinct community organizations may help expand summer meal access and better serve children in the community.
- Sponsors retain full administrative and operational responsibility for all SFSP sites they operate, regardless of the site affiliation, including:
 - Meal pattern compliance
 - Site operations, including ensuring that sponsor or site staff operating the site are properly trained and following SFSP requirements
 - Site monitoring
 - Claims for reimbursement
 - Recordkeeping and documentation

The Unaffiliated Site Agreement must be completed before meal service begins and maintained as part of the sponsor's required SFSP records. The agreement does not transfer or reduce the sponsor's administrative or operational responsibility under SFSP regulations.

Roles and responsibilities of sponsors and sites

While site staff may support day-to-day meal service operations, the sponsor retains full administrative and operational responsibility for SFSP compliance at all sites they operate, including unaffiliated sites. Sponsors are responsible for providing training, oversight, monitoring, and ensuring program requirements are met.

Regulatory references

- [7 CFR 225.2](#) – Definitions (Unaffiliated Site)
- [7 CFR 225.15](#) – Sponsor Responsibilities and Monitoring
- [USDA SFSP Administrative Guide](#)