Abstract

The National School Lunch Program, through the Food and Nutrition Service, was established to address the recognized need of food insecurity during the school year (USDA, 2013; USDA, 2014c). The Summer Food Program was instituted to continue to provide nutritious meals during the summer through an amendment to the National School Lunch Act of 1966 (USDA, 2014b). Participation in the summer food program is lower than expected, especially among high school age students (D. Bowman, personal communication, May 29, 2013). Food insecurity in school age children has been demonstrated to negatively impact children's health outcomes with the duration of food insecurity further compounding the problem (Ryu & Bartfeld, 2012). The purpose of the proposed project was to form an understanding of the barriers and enhancers to utilization of school-based breakfast and lunch programs amongst Delaware ninth graders. A pilot study with a class of 26 students in a Delaware public high school who do or do not participate in the summer food program was invited to be survey participants. A survey geared toward each group available through the Share Our Strength (2014c) Summer Meals Evaluation Toolkit was used. Through the survey, this project identified barriers and enhancers to program participation. The findings may assist future researchers in further study of the problem of food insecurity with high school age students.

Keywords: childhood hunger, children, food access, food insecurity, hunger, nutrition, national school lunch