

## Host Organization

- **Operation Food Search:** anti-hunger non profit in St. Louis and one of the leading providers of summer meals in Missouri
- Internship site placement facilitated through the **Zero Hunger Internship** of the Congressional Hunger Center



## Intern Responsibilities

- Student intern (AA) served as **site supervisor** for SFSP at 6 sites
- Managed a team of 5 volunteers
- Facilitated outreach with over 50 external organizations and 6 school districts across St. Louis County

## Background

The **USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** is a federally-funded, state-administered program that reimburses programs providing free, nutritious meals to children under 18 when school is not in session.

- COVID-19 influenced an **unprecedented use of the SFSP**<sup>1</sup>
- Need to adapt distribution model to accommodate **public health protocols**<sup>1</sup>

## Methods: Policy Mechanisms

*Drive-thru, contactless distribution model employed by Operation Food Search was strengthened by federal policy enacting **nationwide waivers**:*



## Implications

1. Potential to continue **nationwide summer meal waivers**
2. Evaluation of COVID-19 flexibilities on **program participation** and **nutrition outcomes**
3. Integration of **summer EBT** (Electronic Benefits Transfer) **with SFSP**



## Results: COVID-19 Distribution Model

*The current SFSP distribution model (Fig. 1 and Table 1) depicts an overall **increase** in children's meals served from summer 2019 to summer 2021*

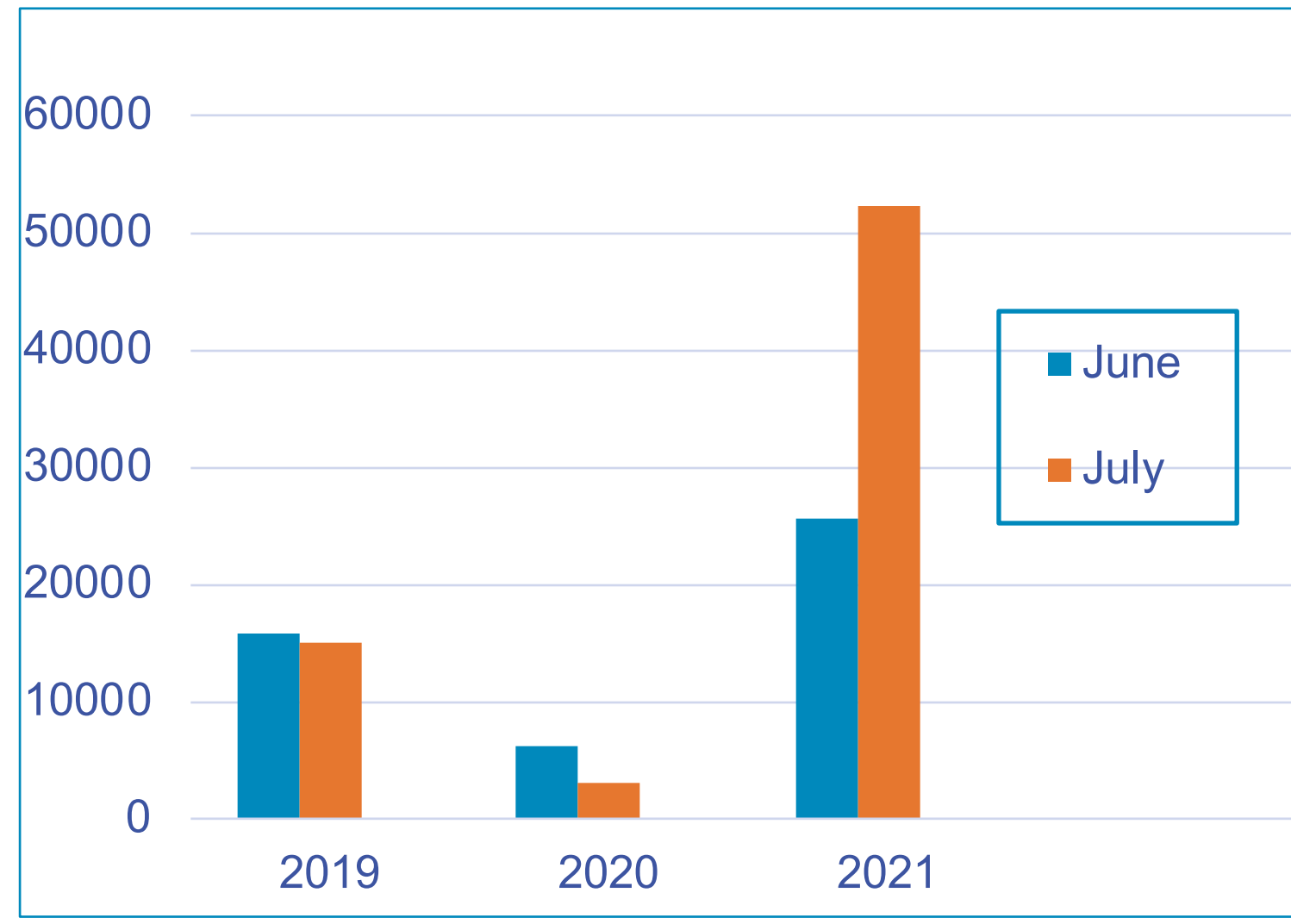


Figure 1. June and July Mobile Meal Distribution

	June	July
2019	15,774	15,039
2020	6,228	3,032
2021	25,627	52,252

Table 1. Total Meals Served

## Acknowledgements

**HER NOPREN Student Internship**  
**Melissa Weissler**, Child and Nutrition Program Manager at Operation Food Search.  
**Samantha Stevens**, Manager, Policy & Strategic Initiatives at the Congressional Hunger Center

## References

1. Soldavini J, Franckle RL, Dunn C, Turner L, Fleischhacker S. (2021). Strengthening the Impact of USDA's Child Nutrition Summer Feeding Programs During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Health Eating Research*. <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HER-Summer-Feeding-final-1>