



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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Sponsors Needed for Arkansas 2014 Summer Food Program

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is seeking schools, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies that are willing to provide children with nutritious meals and snacks during the summer as part of the agency's Summer Food Service Program. The program is operated by the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. It will begin accepting applications February 24.

This 100 percent federally-funded program was created to ensure low-income children who receive free or reduced lunches during the school year don't go hungry when school is not in session. Organizations that qualify as program sponsors will receive reimbursement for meals and snacks that are served to children.

"We need sponsors in every county in the state so that all children in Arkansas who are at risk of hunger have a place to go for a meal," said Buster Lackey, program administrator. "Organizations that are interested but nervous about joining this effort should know that DHS will be there to support sponsors every step of the way. We provide training and are always available to answer any questions they may have."

Last year, the Summer Food Service Program provided 3.7 million meals to children across the state, Lackey said.

Organizations eligible to serve as program sponsors include public or nonprofit private school food authorities; public or nonprofit private residential summer camp; local, municipal, county, or State governments; public or private nonprofit colleges or universities which are currently participating in the National Youth Sports Program; and private nonprofit organizations.

The Summer Food Service Program operates in areas in Arkansas where at least 50% of children are eligible for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program, or at specific service sites where at least 50% of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Children 18 years of age and under, and persons over 18 years of age who are determined by a State educational agency or a local public educational agency of a State to be mentally or physically

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handicapped and who participate in a public or nonprofit private school program established for the mentally or physically handicapped may participate.

Sponsors are needed to oversee the production and distribution of the food at sites like schools, play grounds and churches. All sponsors receive training on how to plan, operate and monitor a successful food service program. Sponsors submit claims and may be reimbursed weekly.

Sites may serve up to two meals per day and may choose from breakfast, lunch, a snack or supper. Each meal served must meet the Summer Food Service Program meal pattern.

DHS will accept applications for sponsors through April 15, 2014. Please contact the Health and Nutrition office for more information or assistance at 501-682-8869 or 1-800-482-5850 ext. 28869.

Information about the Summer Food Service program and a sponsor application form may be found at this link:

<https://dhs.arkansas.gov/DCCECE/SNP/SummerInfoM.aspx>.

Meals are available to all children regardless of age, color, sex, race, national origin, or disability.

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