



Media Release

Contact:

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Providers Needed for Arkansas Summer Food Program

The 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 and begins accepting applications Feb. 1.

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 sponsors receive reimbursement for meals and snacks that are served to children

"We need providers in every county so that all the 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 providers every step of the way."

The Summer Food Service Program operates in regions 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 ages 18 and under (or up to age 21 if recognized by the state as being disabled) are eligible to receive meals.

Providers are needed to oversee the production and distribution of the food at sites like schools, playgrounds and churches. All sponsors receive training before starting the program that will teach them 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 U.S. Department of Agriculture's nutritional guidelines.

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

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Information about the Summer Food Service program 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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