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Establish a Summer Food Service Program in your community

PIERRE, S.D. - In an effort to fend off hunger, the South Dakota Department of Education's office of Child and Adult Nutrition Services is seeking sponsors for a federally-funded program that provides nutritious meals and snacks to children in low-income areas during the summer months. Community organizations, nonprofits, schools, tribal and local governments can apply to be sponsors if they operate in low-income areas, serve a group of mostly low-income children or operate a summer camp with a high proportion of low-income participants. Parks and recreation departments, city and county health departments, libraries and neighborhood service agencies can participate as sites or sponsors.

"The National School Lunch Program is vital for many South Dakota families. But what happens when school isn't in session? Tight food budgets still need help, and that's where the Summer Food Service Program can come in," said Julie McCord, program specialist with South Dakota's Child and Adult Nutrition Services.

When school is in session, over 61,000 South Dakota students receive free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program. The Summer Food Service Program is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by the South Dakota Department of Education. It provides meals to students when school is not in session. Children age 18 and younger may receive a meal free of charge at a participating site. In 2015, South Dakota Summer Food Service Program sponsors served 465,973 meals, which is an increase from the 428,883 meals served in 2014 and the 418,012 served in 2013.

Summer food program sites must be in the attendance area of a school where 50 percent or more of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or within the boundary of a U.S. Census block where at least 50 percent of children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals when at school. A site meeting those criteria is open to all area children under age 18 with special considerations for children from migrant households or those with a disability. To determine eligibility in your area, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/mapping-tools-summer-meal-programs>.

Organizations interested in reviewing sponsor responsibilities can watch the [Summer Food Service Program Overview](#) on the South Dakota Department of Education's Summer Food Service Program webpage. To learn more about

serving as a sponsor or site, call Child and Adult Nutrition Services at (605) 773-3413. For more information and to register for training, go to <http://doe.sd.gov/cans/sfsp.aspx>. The deadline to register for training is Feb. 18. Sponsors are often looking for partners to help provide activities and educational programs to encourage continued student participation throughout the summer.

School food authorities also have the option to utilize the Seamless Summer Option to provide meals in the summer. Information on that option can also be obtained from South Dakota's Child and Adult Nutrition Services office.

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