

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018

CONTACT: Mary Stadick Smith, South Dakota Department of Education, 605-773-7228,

mary.stadicksmith@state.sd.us or

Ruth Raveling, South Dakota Department of Education, 605-773-2593, ruth.raveling@state.sd.us

Consider starting 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.

"I commend those individuals and organizations who step forward to make summer feeding sites possible in their local communities," said Julie McCord, program specialist with South Dakota's Child and Adult Nutrition Services. "The Summer Food Service Program helps ensure that South Dakota students have access to healthy meals all summer long when they lack access to the National School Lunch Program."

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 2017, South Dakota Summer Food Service Program sponsors served 523,239 meals, which is an increase from the 477,796 meals served in 2016.

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 children under age 18 with special considerations for children from migrant households or those with a disability. It is important to note that while some areas may not qualify with school data, such areas may still be able to qualify using census data. 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 Thursday, Feb. 22. 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.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.