

Department of Education Seeks to Expand the Summer Meals Program

INDIANAPOLIS--The Indiana Department of Education encourages all eligible local schools and community organizations to sponsor a summer meals program. Local organizations may also consider partnering with an existing sponsor such as a school corporation to open a meal service site in areas where children may lack good nutrition when school is not in session. In 2016, more than 250 Indiana sponsors served nearly three million meals. However, fewer than 20 percent of all low-income Hoosier children who receive free or reduced lunch during the school year received free meals during the summer months.

“We encourage schools and community organizations to partner on this important initiative,” said Dr. Jennifer McCormick, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. “With your help, we can make a big difference in all of our communities and keep Indiana students healthy and ready to learn.”

The Summer Food Service Program reimburses local sponsors that serve healthy free meals and snacks to children 18 years and younger in low-income areas of the state. Sponsorship is open to public and private nonprofit groups, including local governments, religious organizations, summer camps, recreation centers, and others. In addition to providing free meal service in a local community, many sponsors offer additional educational or physical activities and may partner with other organizations to do so.

The application deadline for potential Summer Food Service Program sponsors this year is April 30, 2017. All sponsors receive training on how to plan, operate and monitor a successful program. Attendance is required for all new sponsors. For more information on becoming a sponsor or to sign up for the training workshop, visit the Department’s website at: www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/summer-food-service-program.

Since its inception over 40 years ago, the Summer Food Service Program has been funded and operated by the United States Department of Agriculture and administered by states. Participating organizations are reimbursed for meals served and must adhere to USDA regulations regarding meal service and recordkeeping.

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- (3) *Email: program.intake@usda.gov.*

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