FACT SHEET: ATHLETIC PROGRAMS AND AFTERSCHOOL MEAL SERVICE

This paper provides some explanation and direction for States Agencies and School Food Authorities to use in discussions on providing afterschool meals and snacks to students participating in athletic programs.

- Schools have two options for serving nutritious food to children after the bell has rung: afterschool snacks offered through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and afterschool snacks and meals offered through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

- NSLP afterschool snacks are available to schools offering an afterschool educational and enrichment program. Schools located in low-income areas provide snacks free of charge. Schools which are not located in qualifying low-income areas may also participate. In these cases, reimbursement is provided at the free, reduced price, and paid levels.

- Alternatively, schools located in low-income areas also have the option of providing snacks and meals through the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the CACFP. These programs support educational and enrichment programs for children and youth, through age 18, in low-income neighborhoods by providing free meals and snacks.

- When school is out and parents are still at work, children need a safe place to be with their friends with structured activities and supportive adults. Afterschool programs that serve meals or snacks draw children and teenagers into constructive activities that are safe, fun, and filled with opportunities for learning. The meals and snacks give them the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow.

- Eligible afterschool programs:

    - Are located in the attendance area of a public school where at least 50 percent of the enrolled students are certified as eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

    - Provide educational or enrichment activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment after the end of the school day, on weekends, or on holidays during the school year.

    - Are open to all children, and do not limit enrollment or membership on the basis of a child's ability. Programs designed to meet the special needs of enrolled children, such as programs for children with learning disabilities or children who are academically gifted, may also be eligible to participate.

- At-risk afterschool meals and snacks are ideal for programs that include supervised athletic activities, such as those typically sponsored by the Police Athletic League, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the YMCA.

- School districts are also well positioned to offer afterschool programs. There is significant flexibility in organizing such programs, and in the specific educational or enrichment activities that may be offered. For example, some programs may focus on homework and tutoring, while others offer activities including drama, chess, and physical activity.

- Programs may be targeted to specific age groups or may accommodate the needs of a wide variety of ages. Programs that provide meals to various age groups also must provide educational or enrichment activities for the various ages of the children served.

- Students who are part of school sports teams and clubs can receive afterschool snacks or meals as part of a broad, overarching educational or enrichment program offered by a school.

- Afterschool "drop in" programs are acceptable. There is no enrollment requirement, so individual student athletes who attend afterschool programs before or after team practices may receive meals and snacks.

- There is no requirement that the afterschool programs track the specific activities in which the children participate or document that the children participated in the offered activities. As long as appropriate educational or enrichment activities are provided, the site is eligible to serve meals to the children that attend the program.

- Go to these links for examples of successful afterschool programs that include service to student athletes:

    - http://www.dailymail.com/News/201209200282

    - http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-57345857/high-school-football-team-battles-malnutrition/?tag=cbsContent;cbsCarousel