INDIANA DEPARTMENT *of* **EDUCATION**

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Indiana Department of Education Encourages Participation in Summer Meal Program

(INDIANAPOLIS) - The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) encourages schools and qualified community organizations to participate in the 2026 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). In addition, IDOE is looking to expand access to free meals in eligible rural areas that have no congregate summer meal service sites and could benefit from the provision of non-congregate meal service as well as service to areas with a concentration of migrant farm workers.

The SFSP reimburses local eligible sponsors that serve healthy free meals and snacks to children 18 years old and younger. Sponsorship is open to public and private nonprofit organizations, including local governments, summer camps, religious organizations, and recreation centers. Organizations are encouraged to partner with an existing sponsor, such as a school corporation, to serve students in areas where children may lack good nutrition during the summer months when school is not in session.

In 2025, close to 200 sponsors at more than 1,000 site locations served over 3.5 million meals to Indiana children during the summer months. In addition to providing free meal service in a local community, many sponsors also offered educational or physical activities at summer program sites.

Created in 1968, the SFSP is funded and operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by the states. Participating organizations must adhere to all USDA regulations. The program is funded through a set reimbursement rate based on the number of meals served to eligible participants. Any student age 18 or under is eligible to receive meals through SFSP by visiting a meal site.

The application deadline for new sponsors is Thursday, April 30. More information on program eligibility and sponsor requirements is available here.

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