Commissioner Nikki Fried Activates 2-1-1 Call/Text Line for Free Children's Meals During COVID-19

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Mar 18, 2020

Tallahassee, Fla. – Today, **Agriculture Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried** and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services have partnered with 2-1-1 to activate a text line and call center open 24/7, which families can contact to find free meals for children under 18 during the current COVID-19 school closures. This follows the Department's recent activation (https://www.wkrg.com/health/coronavirus/commissioner-nikki-fried-activates-childrens-meals-website-for-covid-19-school-closures/) of the Summer BreakSpot children's meal locator website (https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/education/article241213466.html) at SummerBreakSpot.FreshFromFlorida.com (https://www.fdacs.govhttps://summerbreakspot.freshfromflorida.com/) .

NEW: Floridians can now text FLKIDSMEALS to 211-211 to find their closest participating Summer BreakSpot location, and can also call 2-1-1 to speak with a live operator 24 hours a day for additional locations.

"For so many of Florida's children, school meals are the only meals they can count on – that's why we're now providing even more ways to secure healthy, nutritious

meals for kids," said **Commissioner Nikki Fried**. "Floridians can now find Summer BreakSpot free meal locations by text, by phone, and online, with additional locations being added every day. We encourage families to take advantage of these free resources, and to check with their school districts on other meal availability."

As of March 17, there are **approximately 1,000 approved Summer BreakSpot sites** statewide. The number of locations will continue to increase as FDACS approves additional BreakSpot locations. If no Summer BreakSpot locations are listed in a county during a given week, users should contact their local school district to determine if school meals will be available. Users should also contact locations listed on the Summer BreakSpot map, or provided by 2-1-1 text or phone operator, to confirm opening dates and times.

The following counties are in operation the week of March 16: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Broward, Calhoun, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Duval, Hamilton, Indian River, Jackson, Lafayette, Levy, Liberty, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Polk, Sumter, Suwannee, and Union.

The following counties will be in operation the week of March 23: Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Charlotte, Columbia, DeSoto, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Leon, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Putnam, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwannee, Union, Volusia, Walton, and Washington.

The Summer Food Service Program, also known as Summer BreakSpot, provides free meals to children under 18 when school is out. Last weekend, Commissioner Fried also announced (https://floridapolitics.com/archives/323388-nikki-fried-opens-school-lunch-program-for-students-out-of-school) that federal waivers had been approved (https://www.theledger.com/news/20200314/coronavirus-in-florida-state-to-provide-school-meals-during-closure) giving FDACS authority to offer local school districts flexibility in providing meals to students during this closure. In the 2018-19 school year, Florida's schools served 286,734,316 school lunches, of which 245,782,422 were free or reduced lunches. These schools served 2,908,335 Florida students, of which 2,089,852 were students receiving free or reduced lunches. FDACS is the state agency that funds Florida's school lunch program, through $1.3 billion in federal funding.

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Floridians can call 2-1-1, text FLKIDSMEALS to 211-211, or visit **SummerBreakSpot.FreshFromFlorida.com** (https://www.fdacs.govhttps://summerbreakspot.freshfromflorida.com/) , enter their address, and search up to 50 miles to find participating free meal locations near them. Again, users should contact listed locations to confirm opening dates and times. For best results, users should enter their home address, and select their address from the drop-down results.

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Press Releases

2021 Press Releases (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2021-Press-Releases)

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