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Federal Funds Available to Serve Free Summer Meals to Children and Teens

February 1, 2021

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Federal Funds Available to Serve Free Summer Meals to Children and Teens

MSDE Seeks to Expand Program's Success;
Deadline to Apply is May 31, 2021

BALTIMORE (February 1, 2021) – The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is seeking public and private nonprofit organizations to serve free, nutritious meals to children and teens this summer thorough the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program.

Rising to the challenges imposed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, SFSP participating organizations increased access to SFSP meals resulting in over 9.5 million meals served to Maryland children and teens during the summer of 2020. That represents an approximately three-fold increase compared to the summer of 2019 when partners served over 3 million meals and snacks.

"The Summer Food Service Program has always been an important program that provides nutritious meals for Maryland children and teens when schools are recessed and is even more critical now during the Covid-19 pandemic. MSDE is especially grateful for the work of our food service professionals who provided more than nine million free meals to children and teens in a welcoming and safe manner last summer as part of the program," said State Superintendent of Education, Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. "We are committed to ensuring that children continue to have access to healthy meals throughout the summer months.

The SFSP is a federally funded, State-administered program that provides reimbursement to organizations who serve nutritious meals to children in areas where at least 50 percent qualify for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program, or 50 percent of the children enrolled in a summer program qualify for free or reduced price meals. Most organizations may be reimbursed for up to two meals or snacks per child per day. Camps and migrant programs may be reimbursed for up to three meals per child each day. All meals and snacks must meet federal nutrition standards.

The Program is open to children and teens age 18 and under, and to individuals over 18 who have a mental or physical disability and participate during the school year in a public or private non-profit school.

The deadline for applications is May 31, 2021. For more information about the SFSP, please visit www.eatsmartmaryland.org. Interested organizations should contact the Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs at 410-767-0199.

The Maryland State Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are equal opportunity employers and providers.

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