

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner

For Immediate Release:



Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Contact: Tom Murphy 860.713.6525

FOOD THAT'S IN WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT!

HARTFORD, Conn. (February 25, 2009) –This summer, approximately 33,000 Connecticut children will be able to receive free meals through the 2009 federal Summer Food Service Program for Children but qualified local sponsoring organizations must be found. Last year, more than 31,364 eligible children were served at 443 locations statewide through 35 locally sponsored programs. If children are to receive a nutritious meal during the summer break, local organizations' assistance is critical.

The Summer Food Service Program for Children is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and serves as the summer extension of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, which provide meals for students during the school year. Local Summer Food Service Program activities are coordinated by each state's department of education. The Connecticut State Department of Education is now accepting applications for its 2009 summer program.

Local Summer Food Service Program sponsors may include public or private nonprofit school food authorities; state, local, municipal or county governments; residential public or private nonprofit summer camps; public or private nonprofit colleges or universities participating in the National Youth Sports Program; and private nonprofit organizations. Any one of these groups or organizations that are able to verify that at least half the children in their potential service area qualify for free or reduced-price school meals may apply to be a sponsor. A child's eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals or free summer meals is based on his or her parent's income.

In 2008, only 23 percent of the children who met the program eligibility criteria were served. The Connecticut State Department of Education has identified several communities with neighborhoods eligible to host a Summer Food Service Program site. Eligible neighborhoods are those where at least 50 percent or more of the family income levels in the area are at or below 185 percent of the poverty guidelines. Eligible organizations in these municipalities are encouraged to apply: Bloomfield, East Haven, Enfield, Hamden, Naugatuck, Shelton and West Hartford.

All sponsors must agree to serve meals to any eligible child regardless of his or her race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Summer Food Service Program sponsors are reimbursed for each meal served, according to predetermined U.S. Department of Agriculture reimbursement rates.

Summer Food Service Program applications and further information are available through the State Department of Education's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457-1543.

Contact: Susan Bohuslaw, 860-807-2073 or Public Information, 860-713-6525.

The Summer Food Service Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 or 202-720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.