



News Release

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Meet Up and Eat Up -- Summer Meals for Kids Three Easy Ways to Find the Nearest Summer Food Service Program Site in Michigan

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The Michigan departments of Education (MDE); Health & Human Services (DHHS); and Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) – along with their local partners – announce the availability of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for children across the state.

This program is crucial for the hundreds of thousands of Michigan students who rely on the federal school meals program during the school year. Once the final school bell rings, over 700 SFSP sites across Michigan help to bridge that gap until the start of school next fall.

Last year, 563,000 low-income Michigan children received meals during the school year, but less than 100,000 of those children (17.5%) ate meals or snacks at approved summer meal sites in their neighborhoods.

“Too many families across Michigan are struggling, and we can’t have children going hungry in the summer when programs like this are available,” said State Superintendent Mike Flanagan, in stressing the importance of these crucial summer food programs for children. “Making families aware and informed is vital to keeping kids fed and healthy.”

MDE provides the SFSP Site Locator Map, which allows families to identify the nearest *Meet Up and Eat Up*[™] site, including information about locations, meal types, times, and driving directions. The map can be found at www.michigan.gov/meetupeatup.

In partnership with Michigan No Kid Hungry and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, people at any location in Michigan can also locate the *Meet Up and Eat Up*[™] site nearest them by dialing 2-1-1 from any landline or mobile phone. Call centers across the state access the MDE Site Locator Map to provide callers with the most up-to-date information.

Additionally, Michigan No Kid Hungry is again sponsoring a text message resource. Mobile phone users can text “Food” to 877-877 and receive the most up-to-date site location information. Standard text messaging rates apply.

“Hunger and poverty are often seen as problems primarily in our state’s cities, but hunger doesn’t stop at our city borders; it is a statewide issue - a rural problem as well as an urban problem,” said MDARD Director Jamie Clover Adams. “Michigan is fortunate to have a strong partnership with USDA that enables us to provide *Meet Up and Eat Up*™ sites to children from all areas of our state.”

This program spans nearly every county in Michigan and, to date, is being offered by 229 sponsors at 749 *Meet Up and Eat Up*™ sites.

People and organizations interested in more information about getting involved as a site, an activity provider, or a volunteer this summer, can contact MDE’s Office of School Support Services, Summer Food Service Program, 608 West Allegan Street, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909, 517-373-3347; or on the MDE website at www.michigan.gov/sfsp. Additional information and *Meet Up and Eat Up* resources are available at www.michigannokidhungry.org.

The Summer Food Service Program serves nutritious meals to children up to age 18 living in low-income areas (where 50 percent or more of the students qualify for no-cost or reduced price school meals). The program can operate in schools, public housing centers, playgrounds, camps, parks, and faith-based facilities. Meals are served at no cost and no registration is required

“By supporting programs that provide balanced meals throughout the summer, we are helping to keep Michigan children on the path to success,” said Nick Lyon, director of the MDHHS. “Proper nutrition promotes optimal growth and development in children and therefore plays an important role in improving education outcomes.”

Research shows a direct relationship between good nutrition and learning. The Summer Food Service Program is a key building block in Michigan communities to develop healthy, happy kids who are ready to learn.

The Summer Food Service Program, administered by MDE through funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is available to children 18 and under regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

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