



NEWS RELEASE
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Iowa Department of Education Seeks to Increase Availability of Healthy Meals for Children *Iowa's Summer Food Program Available to Eligible Local Sponsors*

DES MOINES, Iowa – The Iowa Department of Education is seeking to increase the number of communities throughout the state that provide healthy meals to Iowa's children during the summer months. Iowa's Summer Food Service Program is available to potential local sponsors who want to provide meals at designated sites during the summer as well as offer potential social/economic benefits to the community.

This past summer, 66 sponsors served a total of 530,000 summer meals and snacks to a daily average of 10,600 Iowa children from birth through 18 years of age. It is estimated that 30 additional public school systems and countless other private nonprofit organizations may be also be eligible to sponsor a Summer Food Service Program.

Sponsors eligible to run the program include public or private nonprofit schools participating in the National School Lunch Program or residential summer camps; and local, municipal, county, or state government units and public or private nonprofit colleges operating a National Youth Sports Program or Upward Bound Program. In addition, private nonprofit organizations are also eligible to operate the Summer Food Service Program in areas that are not currently served by another sponsor.

The program operates during the summer or during any school vacation that is at least three weeks long for schools that have a continuous school year calendar. Rules require that at least 50 percent of the children residing in an area served by an open site, or enrolled in the site, be eligible for free or reduced price meals under National School Lunch Program guidelines.

Organizations that want more details about Summer Food Service Program site eligibility and other program information should contact the Bureau of Nutrition, Health and School Transportation Services, Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 East 14 Street, Des

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Moines, Iowa 50319-0246 or call 515-281-4760. Information is also available at the state website at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/fn/index.html> or visit the USDA website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/>.

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The Iowa Department of Education works with the State of Iowa Board of Education to provide oversight, supervision and support for the state education system, which includes public elementary and secondary schools, nonpublic schools that receive state accreditation, area education agencies, community colleges and teacher preparation programs. The department is committed to high levels of learning, achievement and performance for all students, so they will become successful members of their community and the workforce.