



Nathan Deal
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

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Media Contact: Reg Griffin
404-656-0239
reg.griffin@dec.al.ga.gov



Sponsors Needed to Serve Meals to Children in Summer 2018

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) served over 5.4 million meals during Summer 2018. Sponsors especially needed in South Georgia to ensure summer meals availability to children across the state.

Atlanta, Ga., (April 2, 2018) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is looking for eligible organizations to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in their communities in 2018. The SFSP, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides access to healthy meals to children during the summer months when school is not in session. DECAL administers the SFSP in Georgia.

The SFSP reimburses non-profit, governmental, and other eligible organizations for providing free meals to children in low-income areas during the summer months. The following entities can qualify as sponsors: public or private nonprofit schools; universities, colleges or camps; units of local and state government; private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations considered tax exempt by the IRS. Sponsors can operate the program and feed children at various sites such as schools, churches, recreation centers, community and migrant centers, and other areas where children congregate. Mobile meal sites are also an option for sponsors – particularly in rural areas of the state.

“The Summer Food Service Program is a critically important in combating childhood hunger during the summer,” said DECAL’s Commissioner, Amy M. Jacobs. “Sponsoring organizations ensure children across the state have access to nutritious and well-balanced meals during the summer months when school is not in session. Without the work of these community-based organizations, many children may not receive the healthy meals they need.”

DECAL is focusing on boosting the number of sponsors participating in the program, particularly in South Georgia, where program participation has been historically lower than participation in the Metro Atlanta area. Jacobs explains, “Ensuring that children across the state of Georgia have access to the Summer Food Service Program is essential in abating childhood hunger. While participation is generally not as high in South Georgia, we are certain there are community members and organizations willing to take the charge and provide children access to nutritious summer meals.”

Sponsors receive training and support relating to the application process; setting up and operating a successful SFSP; and nutrition education. They also receive technical assistance while the program is operating. For more information about the SFSP, contact Shani Drake, Marketing & Outreach Manager, at Shani.Drake@decals.ga.gov or (404) 656-3221.

For more information on becoming an SFSP sponsor, visit DECAL’s website at <http://www.decals.ga.gov/SFSP/BecomingASponsor.aspx> or contact the SFSP team toll free at 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or via e-mail at SFSP@decals.ga.gov. In accordance with federal law and USDA policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages the voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.