

April 12, 2021

SFSP Sponsor Spotlight

It Takes A Village Community Foundation serves and empowers the at-risk youth community in Georgia

Spring is here. With summer right around the corner, thousands of children throughout Georgia are at risk for going hungry when schools close for vacation.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Sponsor **It Takes A Village Community Foundation, Inc. (ITAV)** will help fill the hunger gap this summer by serving free meals to kids in Clayton, Dekalb and Gwinnett Counties.

Program Director **Sparkle Swann** became interested in SFSP after volunteering for an



A sign at an ITAV meal site announcing free breakfast & lunch.

organization that served summer meals. She saw firsthand the need to provide more access to meals in certain areas of the community. This experience influenced her decision to become a sponsor four years ago.

During FY20, ITAV served approximately 140,000 meals at 12 meal sites in Clayton and Dekalb Counties. This summer, they plan to hire more staff, so they can further expand their meal service in Clayton County and begin serving meals in Gwinnett.

Sparkle says the keys to operating a successful meal service is to be organized and to be engaged with the children. "Being that a lot of paperwork is involved, it is important to stay organized and to stay engaged with the children to help them feel secure."



Children waiting to receive free meals at an ITAV meal site.

While there are many benefits to participating in the SFSP, Sparkle feels rewarded when she sees smiles on the children's faces as they receive their meals. "It gives us pure joy to see them receive their meals and actually enjoy the nutritious meals we provide." She adds, "I truly believe that we all have a purpose in life, and I know mine is serving and assisting my community."

For more information on It Takes A Village Community Foundation, Inc., visit their **website**.

Deadline to Submit SFSP Application - June 15 Submit your application by June 15 to participate this summer

If you have not submitted your Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) application, please make sure to do so by the federal deadline on **Tuesday**, **June 15**, **2021**. Applications not submitted by the deadline date will not be reviewed, and therefore, cannot be approved.

If your organization still has plans to participate this summer, you are strongly encouraged to complete and submit the application by the deadline date. For detailed instructions on completing the application, you may refer to the **FY 2021 SFSP Application Instruction Booklet**.

Application Specialists or Business Operations Specialist	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Paula Lawrence	o (zero)-G,	Paula.Lawrence@decal.ga.gov	(404) 463-2111
Shericka Blount	H-P	Shericka. Blount@decal.ga.gov	(404)656-6411
Temika Moore	Q-Z	Temika.Moore@decal.ga.gov	(404) 463-1494

More SFSP Sites Needed Across GA

Does your organization have the capacity to expand meal service?

SFSP Need by County



Feeding America: 2020 Proposed Child County Food Insecurity rates in Georgia

Last year, 78 Georgia Counties did not have SFSP meal sites leaving many children without access to nutritious meals when schools closed. COVID made a huge impact on child food insecurity and now there's an even greater need for additional meal sites throughout the state.

If your organization is administratively and financially capable of exanding your meal service, please consider serving additional counties thoroughout Georgia. As a reference, the counties shaded in white, on the map above, are areas where there was not a SFSP presence last summer.

There is a significant need for meals in the counties of Taliaferro, Turner, Telfair, Quitman, Stewart, Hancock, Dooly, Screven and Pulaski. They have an estimated child food insecurity

rate above 30 percent.

If you have questions or need additional information, please reach out toCindy Kicklighter.

How to File a SFSP Claim for Reimbursement *Follow these instructions to file a claim*

Institutions must submit claims for reimbursement in the **GA ATLAS** web-based system to receive reimbursement for meals served during the claiming month. A complete and substantially accurate original claim must be submitted within 30 calendar days following the end of the claiming month. After an Institution has submitted an original claim for reimbursement within 30 calendar days following the end of the claiming month, it will have up to two opportunities to revise the original claim within the 30/60-day timeframe. The revision(s) to the original claim must be submitted through the GA ATLAS web-based system within 60 calendar days following the end of the claiming month.

Click here toview instructions for Filing a SFSP Claim for Reimbursement.

USDA extends Flexibilities for Summer 2021

In response to the needs of SFSP sponsors, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has released a series of waivers to maximize flexibility and limit exposure to COVID-19 for summer 2021. These flexibilities will remain necessary to operate meal programs given the ongoing public health and economic crisis.

FNS has issued the following updated waivers through September 30, 2021:

- Allowing non-congregate feeding
- Allowing parents and guardians to pick up meals for children
- Extending area eligibility waivers
- Allowing meal service time restrictions
- Allowing area eligibility for closed enrolled sites
- Waiving first week site visits.

Refer to the **COVID-19 resource page** on **www.decal.ga.gov** for the most up-to-date information on the extension of the waivers.

Process for Submitting New Waiver Requests

To better streamline the process for receiving waiver requests, a module was incorporated into **GA ATLAS** that allows SFSP sponsors to electronically request, track, and monitor each waiver request within their program application.

As of March 15, 2021, **new** requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under **COVID-19 Resources**; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process.

A Memo Monday recording on how to use this new feature can be found at the bottom of the **Training and Technical Assistance webpage** in the **Recorded Training Webinars/Videos folder>Memo Monday Webinars>Memo March 2021**. Register to view the recording.

The **GA ATLAS Waiver Guide** can be found under **COVID-19 Resources** in the *Nutrition Waivers – Waiver Request Forms* section.

NOTE: If you have already submitted and have been approved to utilize a waiver, you do not have to submit the request again.

For general questions about the waiver, please contact **Tammie Baldwin** or call 404-656-6332. You may also contact your assigned Technical Assistance Coordinator or the **Nutrition TA Mailbox**.

Budgeting for SFSP

Pursuant to recent USDA guidance, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors are permitted to extend their operations until **June 30**, **2021**. Sponsors currently under the extension were required to have completed a traditional application by April 1, 2021 to continue serving meals in FY2021. The completed application should have an updated budget which includes the months January - June 30, 2021. If sponsors are certain their institution will continue operations beyond June 30, the sponsor can include the remainder of FY2021 (July - August) SFSP's reimbursement and costs in the budget. Please contact **Shonda Franklin**, Budget Compliance Supervisor with any questions or concerns.

In accordance with the budget guidance provided above, sponsors with food costs exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold of \$250,000 must proceed with formal procurement procedures. Food costs will not be approved in excess of \$250,000 until a contract has been executed. For further instruction on how to complete the formal procurement process, please contact **LaMonika Jones**, Procurement and Purchasing Compliance Officer.

SFSP Reimbursement Rates for Summer 2021

Meal Type	Rural or Self Prep	Other Types of Sites
Breakfast	\$2.4625	\$2.4150
Lunch/Supper	\$4.3175	\$4.2500
Snack	\$1.0200	\$0.9975

Get Informed: Upcoming Training Opportunities

Upcoming Training and Technical Assistance Monday, April 19, 2021 - *Memo Monday!*

This webinar will provide an overview of the following new and/or revised policy memorandums for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). **Registration is now open.**

- Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations during School Year 2020-2021 – Q&As #4 dated January 5, 2021
- Guidance on Approved Sponsors Extending SFSP Operations during
 Program Year 2020-2021
- Nationwide Waiver of Food Service Management Contract Duration in the National School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service Program Extension dated January 6, 2021
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Meal Delivery Using Existing Authority

April 28 & 29, 2021 - New SFSP Sponsor Orientation and Program Training Do you plan to serve summer meals during the FY 2020-2021 program year?

If so, please plan to participate in the upcoming*SFSP Orientation and Program Training* session on April 28 & 29. This training is offered virtually.**This is the last planned training session this year. Registration is now open.**

OPENING SOON!

May 6, 2021 – Budget Readiness Webinar

Do you know the budget basics? Join this webinar session to learn:

- the purpose of the budget package,
- the purpose of all the budget line items in GA ATLAS, and
- how to prepare & develop a complete GA ATLAS budget package.

In Case You Missed It: Memo Monday!

Memo Monday webinars provide an overview of new and/or revised policy memorandums for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

If you missed a*Memo Monday*, please visit the **Training and Technical Assistance** webpage for previously recorded webinars.

It's Never too Early to Start Planning for Summer 2021

Providing summer meals is a year-round effort. At any point throughout the year, there are things you can do to prepare for next summer! Click **here** for more information on proactive planning for sponsors.

April

- Review sites and ensure you are aware of their locations, operational hours, staff, and dates for monitoring.
- Think about how meals will be delivered to the sites and how many will be served.
- Complete pre-operational site visits.
- Ensure administrative staff are trained.
- Finish application and renewal forms.
- Contract with a food service management company, if necessary.
- Check with DECAL to determine if there are any potential sites lacking sponsors or areas lacking sites and sponsors and consider extending service to those areas.

Register for the Georgia Farm to School and Early Care Education Virtual Summit

Tuesday, April 27 - Saturday, May 1

Registration is now open for the eighth annual Georgia Farm to School and Early Care and Education Summit to be held virtually from **Tuesday**, **April 27** through **Saturday**, **May 1**.

The Summit features dynamic education sessions highlighting gardening, cooking with kids, local procurement, curriculum integration, and more!

This event is hosted by **Georgia Organics** and the **Georgia Department of Early Care** and Learning. For more information on the virtual summit, click here.

Register here.



National Gardening Month: *Dig In! Gardening Guide*

April is National Gardening Month, and the USDA has great resources on introducing children to vegetables through gardening in its Dig In! Nutrition Education curriculum.

If you're new to planting a garden, check out this**guide** that will help you in every step from knowing what type of garden you want to plant to every phase of cultivating and harvesting your delicious fresh produce.

Preparing for a Disaster

Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods, can be devastating to communities and require a quick response. Sponsors who operate the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) can help minimize meal disruptions for families who have been impacted by disasters.



To help your organization prepare, DECAL provides guidance on Disaster Preparedness applicable to organizations participating in SFSP.

DECAL's disaster policy memorandum can be found on our website and accessedhere.

Procurement Updates

Food Service Management Company Waiver Extended

As a reminder, USDA released a policy memo dated April 24, 2020, which allowed Summer Food Service Sponsors with a Food Service Management Company contract expiring on or around June 30, 2020, to execute a one-year noncompetitive, non-renewable agreement. The agreement helps prevent a delay in meal service while having to execute a new contract. The April 2020 policy memo has been extended as of January 6, 2021, for SY2021-2022. Therefore, if you are a sponsor with a contract expiring on or around June 30, 2021, and will be participating in the Summer Food Service Program, you may apply for this waiver. The waiver is only valid for sponsors with a food service management company contract. The waiver is not applicable for sponsors purchasing bulk or pre-packaged food items and/or for sponsors utilizing informal procurement procedures.

Suspension and Debarment Certification Requirement

USDA/FNS requires verification that persons with whom child nutrition program providers intend to do business have not been excluded or disqualified when entering into a transaction covered by this section. The certification requirement applies equally for procurement transactions across all Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Programs.

This verification may be done by:

- Checking the System for Award Management (SAM) or the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS); or
- Collecting a certification from that person; or
- Adding a clause or condition to the covered transaction with that person.

If using the certification method to meet the verification requirements the **Suspension and Debarment Certification Form AD1048** must be used and cannot be deviated from in any way. This form is located on the **Procurement Web Page.**

Update: Procurement Templates (Formal and Informal Documents)

All procurement documents have been updated as of February 2021. Please be sure to use the most recent version of all formal and informal agreements, Invitation for Bid and Request for Proposal templates as well as the Procurement Policy Template. Updated documents are located on the **DECAL Procurement Web Page**.

Virtual Vendor Summit Replay

If you were unable to attend our Virtual Vendor Summit, no worries! Please click the link to watch the Virtual Vendor Summit replay. The presentation is also available on the DECAL Procurement Page under the Resource section.

Local Sourcing Spotlight

Savor the sweetness of strawberries!



Strawberry season is finally here! Known as the world's most popular berry, springtime is peak season for strawberry farms in Georgia. According to **Georgia Grown**, over 130 farms, mainly in South Georgia, make up an estimated 143 acres of farm land for growing strawberries. This sweet, healthy fruit is perfect for picking, adding to smoothies or snacking!

Located in McDonough, Southern Belle

Farm is one of many producers of locally grown strawberries. With 12 acres of strawberry fields, this is an ideal spot for U-pick strawberries or purchasing via their onsite market. Click the link above for picking and market hours.

Bonus: Georgia Chicken

Locally sourced products not only consist of purchasing fruits and vegetables, they also include buying protein such as a chicken, beef and pork. Of the 159 counties in Georgia, **two-thirds produce at least \$1M in poultry**. Georgia is a top provider of certified organic chicken in the United States as well as a top producer of eggs with hens laying 250-300 eggs per year.

If you are interested in purchasing locally grown eggs, try **Country Charm Eggs**. Located in Northeast GA (Gillsville), this farm is a local producer, packer and distributor of eggs.



Nutrition Ed Nook Seasonal strawberries for springtime daylight!



Happy Spring! Do you know what springtime brings? Vibrant blooms, active pollinators, and freshly picked strawberries – April's Harvest of the Month (English and Spanish) spotlight! Strawberries are not only delicious, but they are also nutritious as they are an excellent source of vitamin C.

Did you know that vitamin C helps your body heal cuts and wounds as well as fights infections and sickness? Educate the participants in your care on how fruits and vegetables benefit their growing and developing bodies while serving this fruit component in your meal program.

Integration:

- Fruit Salsa
- Strawberry Pops
- Fun Fruit Breakfast Pizza
- Strawberry Yogurt Parfait
- Strawberry Smoothie Bowl

Education:

- *Grow* strawberries. We recommend growing strawberries in an area that receives full sun and has well drained soil. Need assistance in growing practice? Contact your local UGA Extension Agent!
- *Taste* strawberries as a taste test. What adjectives can the participants in your care use to describe strawberries? Sweet



care use to describe strawberries? Sweet, juicy, and smooth are what we think of! *Read* different strawberry-themed books. Examples include *The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear* by Audrey and Don Wood and *The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story* by Joseph Bruchac. Explore more strawberry-themed book recommendations here!

Conversation:

- How do you like to eat your strawberries?
- What color are strawberries? What other red fruits and veggies have you eaten?
- How many seeds do you think are on the outside of a strawberry? (Answer: There are an average of 200 seeds on every strawberry!)



As April's Harvest of the Month Bonus Item, chicken is a nourishing lean-protein served as a meat component in your meal program. In Georgia, poultry and eggs are the two largest agricultural commodities, making up nearly 40% of the state's production value.

Talk to your distributor or local poultry farmer to source local chicken for your meal program! Enjoy adding these delicious recipes to enhance the meal appeal of your program:

- BBQ Chicken,
- Chicken Curry Casserole,
- Chicken Tacos,
- Chicken Tamale Pie, and
- Chicken Stir Fry.



Share your springtime Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of strawberries and chicken with Nutrition Health Educator, **Diana Myers**, **MS**, **RD**, **LD**!

Nutrition Division Employee Spotlight *Tammie Baldwin - Policy and Adverse Action Specialist*



Meet **Tammie Baldwin**, Policy and Adverse Action Specialist for DECAL's Nutrition Services.

In her role, Tammie processes USDA waivers and manages Serious Deficiency (SD) communications for Summer Food Sponsors and CACFP Sponsors and Institutions. She has served in this capacity since 2019.

Tammie joined the DECAL team in 2010 as a Business Operations Specialist where she reviewed and determined eligibility for CACFP and SFSP meal sites.

Tammie earned an associate's degree in Office Administration and a bachelor's degree in Business Management from Clayton State University. She is from Abilene, Texas.

One thing that Tammie loves about working in DECAL's Nutrition Services is that there is always something new to learn. She says, "I am passionate about learning new things, and I consider myself very fortunate to work for Nutrition Services."

A fun fact about Tammie is that she loves to dance! She is a dance fitness instructor for Zumba Fitness.

Waiver to Claim Meals Prior to SFSP Approval *Can SFSP Sponsors claim meals prior to approval?*

The answer is, yes. On September 11, 2020, FNS issued a nationwide waiver to allow state agencies to reimburse Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors for meals served prior to the sponsor receiving notification that the sponsor or site was approved for participation in the program.

Click here to access the notification. Sponsors who would like to utilize this waiver must update their FY 2021 SFSP site application(s) in **GA ATLAS** to reflect changes (e.g., new operating dates, meal times). Once changes are made, Sponsors must complete Attachment

Q-Site Update Form, and send the completed form to their assigned Business Operations Specialist. Click here to access Attachment Q-Site Update Form.

Note: Sponsors are only eligible for reimbursement for meals served. Supporting documentation for all meals served must be maintained on file.

Updated SFSP Sponsor Monitoring Guidance during COVID-19

New Guidance and Fact Sheets regarding Off-Site Monitoring in Child Nutrition Programs During the Pandemic

On November 13, 2020, USDA issued guidance and fact sheets regarding Program monitoring in the CACFP, SFSP and the National School Lunch Programs. Each correspondence reiterates monitoring requirements as well as flexibilities for State agencies and Program operators as a result of the pandemic. The flexibilities mentioned in the guidance are extended through September 30, 2021. To review copies of the guidance, click **here** and see *Nationwide Waivers – Policy Guidance*.

A **Sponsor Monitoring Guide** was created to provide guidance on monitoring during COVID-19, monitoring waiver options, and conducting virtual/desk reviews. Due to the continuation of the Summer Food Service Program operations in FY2021, this guidance has been developed to ensure sponsors are in compliance with SFSP monitoring requirements per 7 CFR 225.15 (d)(2)(3) and to provide additional guidance regarding on-going site monitoring after the first and fourth week visit/review.

Effective January 4, 2021, DECAL recommends that, in addition to the first and fourth week visit/review, all sponsoring organizations conduct on-going quarterly monitoring reviews for all sites in operation in FY2021. Refer to the guidance below:

- SFSP Sponsor Monitoring Guidance during COVID-19
- Record Request Checklist Template

The documents can also be found at DECAL's website under COVID-19 Resources>Resources.

COVID-19 Resources for Sponsors

FAQs: Serving Meals during Unanticipated School Closures Answers to frequently asked questions regarding serving meals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SFSP: Providing Multiple Meals at a Time for Children During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Nationwide Waivers:

SFSP

For full details on the SFSP waivers below, please click on the links to read the actual waiver memo.

DECAL Participation of Nationwide Waivers Due to COVID-19

For full details, please click on the links to read the actual waiver memo, or **click here** for a complete list of the Nationwide Waivers due to COVID-19.

Nationwide Waiver to Allow Reimbursement for Meals Served Prior to Notification of Approval and Provide Flexibility for Pre-Approval Visits in the SFSP

FNS waives the requirement that reimbursement shall not be paid for meals served at a site before the sponsor has received written notification of approval for participation in the

Program. **Waiver in effect until June 30, 2021**

Nationwide Waiver to Allow SFSP & SSO Operations through June 2021 This waiver allows the SFSP & SSO to continue to operate through June 2021. **Waiver is effective until June 30, 2021**

Area Eligibility

Allows Program operators to locate Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) open sites in areas that do not meet area eligibility requirements. ****Waiver extended until September 30**, **2021****

Closed Enrolled Eligibility

Under this waiver, for all States, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) closed enrolled sites during the COVID-19 public health emergency may determine site eligibility through area eligibility without collecting income eligibility applications. ****Waiver extended until September 30**, **2021****

First Week Site Visits

FNS waives, for all States, the requirement that Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors are required to visit each of their sites at least once during the first week of operation. (2) This waiver applies to State agencies administering and local organizations that have operated the SFSP successfully in the previous year, and SFSP sponsors in good standing that have successfully participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). ****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021****

Meal Pattern Flexibilities

The requirement to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements is waived during the public health emergency. ****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021****

Meal Times Waiver

This waiver allows program operators the flexibility to adjust the times meals and snacks are provided in order to streamline operations. ****Waiver extended until September 30**, **2021****

Non-Congregate Feeding

The requirement that meals be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants on site is waived during the public health emergency. ****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021****

Parent Pick-Up

Under this waiver, program operators in a state with an approved waiver allowing noncongregate meal distribution during COVID-19-related operations may distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their eligible children. ****Waiver extended until September 30, 2021****

Onsite Monitoring Waiver for Sponsors

For sponsors only - FNS waives that SFSP monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 225.15(d) be conducted on site. ****Waiver extended until June 30, 2021****

Important Reminders:

If you were previously approved for a SFSP only waiver, but would like to continue utilizing the waiver in your CACFP operations, please submit a request to utilize the waiver for the CACFP. Similarly, if you were previously approved for a CACFP only waiver but wish to utilize the waiver in your SFSP operations, a SFSP waiver request is required.

New requests for waivers must be completed through an online Waiver Participation Form in the new **USDA Waivers Module** in GA ATLAS. Operators will still be required to complete the applicable Waiver Request Form located on DECAL's website under **COVID-19 Resources**; however, these forms must now be uploaded to the USDA Waivers Module as part of the new process.

For any waiver-related questions, please contact Kate Alexander.

SFSP Meal Sites throughout Georgia



Georgia's children still have access to free, healthy meals through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Click **here** to find a meal site location near you.



NEW DECAL Download Update on COVID Vaccines for Pre-K and Child Care



On the next ...

Pam Stevens Deputy Commissioner of Child Care Services



Dr. Georgina Peacock Georgia Department of Public Health/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

This Week's Topic: Update on COVID-19 Vaccines for Pre-K and Child Care

DECAL

Download

New Episodes Every Wednesday!

We have a special edition of **#DECALDownload**, tackling some of the frequently asked questions we are hearing from the child care workforce regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. On March 8, all Georgia Pre-K teachers, child care teachers, and child care staff in programs with a license or exemption from DECAL became eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. Since then, teachers and staff have been flocking to nine mass vaccination sites from Clarksville to Savannah as well as local health departments and pharmacies to get vaccinated.

Joining us to talk about COVID-19 vaccines for early education teachers and staff is **Pam Stevens**, Deputy Commissioner of

Child Care Services, and **Dr. Georgina Peacock** who currently serves as the Georgia Department of Health Chief Medical Officer as a Center for Disease Control Assignee. She also oversees the CDC Vaccine Implementation Unit.

Stay tuned for this week's water cooler question and the DECAL Download Quiz for your chance to win a nice prize!

Have an idea for a future topic?E-mail us.

You can find DECAL Download**here** or on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Spotify, Stitcher, TuneIn, Overcast, and more!



Nutrition Division Marketing & Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter Gaby Garza

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Nondiscrimination Statement: English Nondiscrimination Statement: Spanish

FOLLOW US

