



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

**Nathan Deal**  
*Governor*

**Bobby Cagle, MSW**  
*Commissioner*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Sponsors needed to serve meals to children next summer**

***Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) served 3.6 million meals during Summer, 2013***

**ATLANTA, Ga., (December 11, 2013)** – The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is looking for eligible sponsors to serve nutritious meals to children throughout Georgia next summer. The SFSP, administered by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

“Providing nutritious summer meals to children who would normally receive free breakfast or lunch during the school year is part of DECAL’s commitment to keeping Georgia’s children healthy,” said DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. “The Summer Food Service Program has a significant impact across our state thanks to the 90 sponsoring organizations that step up each year to provide this important service in their communities.”

Falita Flowers, DECAL’s Interim Director of Nutrition Services, said the SFSP provides reimbursement to non-profit and government organizations that provide free meals to eligible children especially in low-income areas during the summer months when students are out of school where they would normally receive breakfast and/or lunch. “Approximately 3.6 million meals were served through the SFSP during the summer of 2013,” said Flowers. “Bright from the Start is always looking for additional sponsors to serve even more meals to children who receive free and reduced price lunches during the school year. Sponsors are especially needed in rural areas of the state.”

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Flowers said the following entities can qualify as sponsors: public or private nonprofit schools; universities, colleges, or camps; units of local government; private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations considered tax exempt by the IRS. “Sponsors can operate the program and feed children at sites such as schools, churches, recreation centers, community and migrant centers, and other local community areas where children congregate and play,” said Flowers. “They can also get creative and serve meals through mobile sites.”

Sponsors are reimbursed according to federal guidelines for the meals they serve. They can prepare and serve meals themselves, receive bulk items from a vendor or contract with a food service management company to prepare meals for the program.

Sponsors receive training regarding the application process; setting up and operating a successful SFSP; nutrition education; and they receive technical assistance during the time the program is operating. Bright from the Start ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination in any activity of the Summer Food Service Program.

For more information on becoming an SFSP sponsor, visit Bright from the Start’s website at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/SFSPBecomingASponsor.aspx> or contact the Summer Food Service Program team at Bright from the Start toll free at 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or via e-mail, [SFSP@decal.ga.gov](mailto:SFSP@decal.ga.gov). In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at [\(800\) 877-8339](tel:(800)877-8339); or [\(800\) 845-6136](tel:(800)845-6136) (in Spanish).

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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 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](http://www.decal.ga.gov).