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Sponsors needed for summer food programs

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Child Nutrition Services is looking for community sponsors to run summer food programs to prevent children in low-income areas of Alaska from going hungry when school lunchrooms close for the summer.

For many of these children, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program could fill the summer hunger gap if enough sponsors are signed up to run the food program. Last year sponsors served an average of 1,408 low-income Alaskan children each day and served a total of 105,890 free meals or snacks through the Alaska Summer Food Service Program. These numbers can be increased significantly with more feeding sites in unserved areas of the state.

Child Nutrition Services is asking school districts, parks and recreation departments, non-profit organizations, tribal organizations, and churches to consider operating a Summer Food Service Program for children and youth.

The Summer Food Service Program is targeted to children up to age 18 living in low-income areas. The program operates in schools, public housing centers, playgrounds, camps, parks, churches, and even rural town cafes. Sponsors can be public or nonprofit private schools or school districts; public or private nonprofit organizations, day or residential summer camps; local government agencies or tribal organizations.

Federal payments are based on the number of meals served by a sponsor and are paid to the sponsor after paperwork is submitted to the state agency. All sponsors receive training and technical assistance from Alaska Child Nutrition Services prior to starting their Summer Food Service Program and throughout the duration of their program.

To sponsor the program this summer, organizations must contact the Child Nutrition Services SFSP Specialist at (907) 465-4788. Applications and sponsor information will be sent to potential sponsors upon inquiry.

The Summer Food Service Program is available to children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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