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Idaho Department of Education Seeks Community Sponsors for 2024 Summer Food Service Program

The program provides meals to children in areas of need during summer months

(BOISE) – The Idaho Department of Education is seeking sponsors for this year’s Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SFSP provides free meals and snacks to children 18 years and younger by operating sites located in low-income areas during the summer months.

According to Feeding America’s 2021 Map the Meal Gap, about 8.6 percent of Idaho’s children have experienced food insecurity. During the summer months, the challenge of reaching children and families in need of nutritional support grows. The SFSP is designed to help address the need by providing children with nutritious meals while school is not in session.

The Idaho Department of Education collaborates with community partners to provide meals to children during this summer gap. Sponsors are reimbursed for each qualifying breakfast, lunch, snack and/or supper they serve at approved sites.

For the 2024 program year, sponsors may be, but are not limited to:

- Public or private nonprofit schools;
- public or private nonprofit residential camps;
- local, municipal, county, tribal or state governments;
- public or private nonprofit colleges or universities that participate in the National Youth Sports Program; and
- Upward Bound programs, religious organizations, libraries and private nonprofit organizations.

“This is an indispensable service for Idaho’s children, especially those who have a harder time accessing regular, healthy meals while school is out,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield said. “We’re looking for organizations in our communities to step up to help Idaho kids this summer.”

Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Sponsors are sought all across the state, **especially in rural areas** where coverage gaps exist. The department is partnering with the Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force to increase awareness and recruitment. Needs include:

Region 1:

- The SFSP lacks adequate coverage in the communities of St. Maries, Boundary County, Kootenai, Kellogg and Wallace.

Region 2:

- The only SFSP sponsors in Region 2 are in Lewiston, Lapwai, Moscow and Grangeville.

Region 3:

- Only the Boise and West Ada school districts, as well as the Boys and Girls Club of Ada County currently cover Ada County.

Region 6:

- SFSP does not have sponsors in Custer and Teton counties and only one in Lemhi County.

All sponsors, new and returning, are required to attend training at a location most convenient for them and must complete the application process. The 2024 training schedule for new sponsors is as follows:

- Boise – Friday, March 1
- Pocatello – Wednesday, March 6
- Coeur D'Alene – Tuesday, March 12

Application information will be provided to eligible sponsors and is due to the Idaho Department of Education by April 26. Department approval is required prior to program operation.

For more information on becoming a Summer Food sponsor or a feeding site, call (208) 332-6828 or visit <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/cnp/sfsp/>.

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