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Idaho’s Summer Food Service Program Feeds Record Number of Children

(BOISE) – Kids in Idaho were served a record number of healthy meals during the Idaho Department of Education’s annual Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) this year.

The SFSP provides free meals and snacks to children between the ages of 1 and 18 by operating sites located in low-income areas during the summer months. Sponsors are reimbursed with USDA funds for each breakfast, lunch, snack or supper they serve. There are no income requirements, and children can receive healthy, balanced meals at no cost to them.

This year, with the USDA’s establishment of non-congregate meal services in rural communities allowing for meals to be picked up and consumed offsite, more than 920,000 meals were served. This is up from approximately 740,000 meals served in 2023.

Statewide, 72 sponsors served meals at 262 feeding sites this year. There were 70 sponsors in 2023, meaning the average number of meals per sponsor jumped significantly. The number of lunches served increased by 11 percent year-to-year, snacks were up 8 percent and suppers were up by 22 percent. The number of breakfasts increased by 94 percent, due in part to sponsors choosing to serve lunch for the day and breakfast for the next morning, allowing kids to take two meals home.

“Thanks to dedicated sponsors across the state, Idaho students received nearly one million healthy, nutritious meals and snacks that they otherwise might not have access to,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield. “The added flexibility around where students could eat their meals and snacks meant more families could access the program, which led to more kids being better prepared for another year of learning.”

The call for 2025 SFSP sponsors will come from the department this winter. Potential sponsors who would like to get started on their support early can learn more about the program by contacting the SFSP Coordinator Mary Ann Liby at mliby@sde.idaho.gov or 208-332-6828.

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