

## Federal funds available to serve Summer meals to children

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 02/09/2019

**BALTIMORE** – The Maryland State Department of Education is seeking public and private nonprofit organizations to serve free, nutritious meals to children and teens this summer through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program.

Over 392,000—more than 43 percent—of Maryland children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals and may not have access to safe and nutritious food during the summer when schools are closed. The SFSP fills the hunger gap between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next by offering nutritious meals in community locations across the State.

“Maryland’s free summer meals program is a valuable resource for children and families across the state. It allows households to stretch their food dollars while providing a safe place for children and teens to enjoy meals,” said Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools. “Summer is a critical time in growth and development for children. Having access to nutritious food contributes to overall wellness and prepares children to return to school ready to learn.”

The SFSP provides reimbursement to organizations for meals and snacks served to children in areas where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program, or when 50 percent of the children enrolled in a summer program qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Most organizations may be reimbursed for up to two meals or snacks per child per day. Camps and migrant programs may be reimbursed for up to three meals per child each day. All meals and snacks must meet federal nutrition standards.

The program is open to children and teens age 18 and under and to individuals over 18 who are mentally or physically disabled. Interested organizations should contact Leona Fitzgerald, Administrative Specialist, at 410-767-0219. The deadline for applications is May 31, 2019. For information about the SFSP, please visit [www.eatsmartmaryland.org](http://www.eatsmartmaryland.org).

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