



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

No: R-17-084

June 15, 2017

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KENTUCKY SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM KICKS OFF WITH RECOGNITION

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky Summer Food Service Program is once again making sure students' stomachs are full even when classrooms are empty.

Today, U.S. Department of Agriculture National Office and Southeast Regional Office staff joined Kentucky Department of Education Division of School and Community Nutrition staff members to kick off the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) at the Village Branch Library in Lexington. During the event, Miss Kentucky, Laura Jones, read a gubernatorial proclamation declaring June 15, as Summer Food Service Program Day in Kentucky.

Also during the event, the USDA recognized Kentucky as having the nation's highest percentage increase in SFSP participation in the last year. During 2016, a total of 2,489,347 meals including breakfast, lunch, supper, and snacks, were served to Kentucky children – a 15 percent increase over 2015.

"The increase is a direct result of the hard work by the sponsoring organizations which operate the program along with our SFSP team. They are the ones who are working to provide nutritious meals to the children who may otherwise not have these opportunities during the summer," said Mike Sullivan, who manages the program for KDE's Division of School and Community Nutrition.

During the school year, more than half a million Kentucky students eat breakfast, lunch or both meals at school often for free or at a reduced price. They count on these meals to keep their stomachs full and their minds active. When school is out for the summer, many children do not have access to healthy, nutritious meals. Lack of nutrition during the summer months may set up a cycle for poor performance once school begins again and make children more prone to illness and other health issues. The Summer Food Service Program is designed to fill that nutrition gap and make sure children get the nutritious meals they need.

This summer, more than 2,000 sites across Kentucky will provide more than two million breakfasts, lunches and snacks to about 30,000 of Kentucky's neediest children. Children 18 years old and younger are eligible for the free, nutritious meals.

(more)

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“Just as learning doesn’t end when the school year ends, neither does a child’s need for good nutrition,” Sullivan said. “Without the Summer Food Service Program and all the wonderful sponsors, thousands of children would not get the nutrition they need during the summer months. The development of these children depends in large part on making sure they get nutritious meals all year long.”

More than 150 SFSP sponsors, including school districts, private non-profit organizations, local government agencies, churches and community organizations, sponsor feeding sites in support of the Summer Food Service Program in Kentucky. The U.S. Department of Agriculture funds the program. It is administered by the Kentucky Department of Education, Division of School and Community Nutrition.

To locate an SFSP feeding site, call the National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3HUNGRY or 1-866-348-6479. Meals also can be located by texting "Food" to 877-877.

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