Department of Education Announces Application Dates for 2025 Summer Food Service Program

The Health and Nutrition Unit within the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) operates the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for Arkansas.

According to officials from ADE, applications for the 2025 SFSP will be processed in two phases, beginning in January. Phase One application submission will open for schools and government sponsors on January 14, 2025. Phase Two application submission will open for all other providers on February 14, 2025. The deadline for all applications to be submitted is April 30, 2025. You are encouraged to submit your application as soon as possible to avoid any delays.

The SFSP provides food services to children from needy areas during periods when area schools are closed. The program ensures that these children have nutritious meals when school is out. It's estimated that 64 percent of the eligible children in Arkansas did not receive meals during the summer months. Almost every county in Arkansas has geographical areas defined by the most recent Census, as 185 percent of the poverty level for children less than 19 years old. In Arkansas, there are 36 counties listed as having underserved areas as designated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Youth ages 18 and younger, or people over 18, determined by the State Educational Agency or a Local Public Educational Agency; who are deemed either mentally or physically handicapped, and who participate in a public or private non-profit school established for mentally or physically handicapped, are eligible to receive meals at approved summer feeding sites.

Providers of the SFSP may be a sponsoring organization of a public or private non-profit School Food Authority (SFA); a public or private non-profit college or university; public or private non-profit residential summer camp; unit of local, county, municipal, State, or Federal Government; or any other type of private non-profit organization. Sponsors must provide their tax-exempt status and must demonstrate the administrative and financial ability to manage a food service program effectively. Sponsors must provide a year-round public service to the area in which they intend to provide the SFSP.

SFSP sponsors must be able to assume responsibility for the entire administration of the program. As a sponsor, an organization at a minimum will:

-Attend the State Agency's training
-Locate and recruit eligible sites
-Hire, train, and supervise staff and volunteers
-Competitively procure food to be prepared or delivered
-Monitor all sites
-Prepare claims for reimbursement
-Ensure the sites are sustainable
-Maintain all program documents for 3 years, plus the current year

*Certified Food Manager (CFM) Certification must be completed by all SFSP sponsors.

Any SFSP or NSLP program that has not met the Arkansas Department of Health's requirement for obtaining a Certified Food Managers Certification, your application will not be approved.

If you have further questions regarding the Certified Food Managers Certification, please contact Sharon Hagen - Sharon.Hagen@ade.arkansas.gov

The deadline for all SFSP applications is Wednesday, April 30, 2025. Please call 501-682-8869 to receive program technical assistance to submit an SFSP application or visit https://snp.ade.arkansas.gov/SummerInfoM.aspx. To find sites across the state to help children and adults in need of free food, Arkansans can visit www.whyhunger.org, Call 1-800-5HUNGRY, or text their ZIP code to 1-800-548-6479.

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
   U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. **fax:**
   (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. **email:**
   Program.Intake@usda.gov

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