

Dear Colleagues:

Across the country, millions of children are on summer vacation. While this break should be a time of fun and friends, too many children in need will face a summer without access to the healthy meals they rely on during the school year.

Childhood hunger is a serious crisis in our country and has lasting impacts on children's health, education outcomes, and future competitiveness in the workforce. Children who struggle with hunger experience higher rates of hospitalizations and fall behind their peers in school.

This issue is amplified in the summer months, when only 1 in 6 children in need receives meals through the summer meals program. Without access to good nutrition, food insecurity goes up and children are more likely to gain weight.

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is available in many communities, offering healthy meals and often programming for children throughout the summer. However, many low-income families aren't aware of the program or how to access it. There are actions all of us can take this summer to ensure children in our districts are able to access the healthy meals they need.

1. **Ensure your district offices have information about the summer meals program in your state:** State agencies and non-profit organizations serving children will have resources and materials to share with families. These include flyers, locations of summer meals sites, and general information about the program. Outreach information can be found on USDA's website [here](#).
2. **Visit a summer meals site:** Seeing the summer meals program firsthand is a great way to learn more about its importance in your community. Community organizations, food banks, and faith-based organizations are resources for setting up a site visit for you or your staff.
3. **Support strong investments in the summer meals program:** Congress is currently considering Child Nutrition Reauthorization and there is an important opportunity to make improvements to the summer meals program. Proposals with proven effectiveness and bipartisan support, such as allowing states and communities more options to reach children in hard to reach communities, providing low-income families with additional grocery credits through the Summer EBT program, and streamlining out-of-school time programs, would allow the summer meals program to work more effectively across the country and reach more vulnerable children. Congress should work towards a strong a reauthorization that protects and strengthens these vital programs.

Thank you for your support of and attention to this important issue facing millions of children across the country.

Sincerely,