



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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## **Sponsors Needed to Feed Minnesota Children When School is Out for Summer**

ROSEVILLE – During the school year, many Minnesota families depend on the free or reduced-price meals their children get at school to provide nourishment. When school is out, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program bridges the “nutrition gap”.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is looking for organizations to sponsor the 2011 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and provide free meals to Minnesota children 18 and under during the summer when school is out. There are many underserved areas in need of a sponsor to operate a summer feeding site, especially in greater Minnesota. Sponsors receive training, technical assistance and reimbursement for providing meals to children 18 and under in areas of economic need.

“It’s hard to learn and play on an empty stomach,” said MDE Commissioner Dr. Brenda Cassellius. “The Summer Food Service Program guarantees our low-income children will not lose access to the nutritious meals they receive during the regular school year. I encourage schools, park and recreation programs, faith-based organizations, and other nonprofit organizations that provide educational and recreational activities for children during the summer to offer meals through the Summer Food Service Program.”

Program sites are often located at local schools, recreation and community centers, parks, and other locations operated by youth, cultural and faith-based organizations. In 2010, the SFSP had 107 sponsors with 475 sites and those sites provided over 1.7 million meals, up 14.7 percent from 2009.

### **A sponsoring organization must be a:**

- public or nonprofit private school food authority;
- public or nonprofit private residential summer camp;
- unit of local, municipal, county or state government;
- public or nonprofit college or university; or a
- private nonprofit organization.

Interested schools and nonprofit organizations may register their interest by submitting the Interest Survey-New Participants, available on the MDE website under Learning Support, Food and Nutrition Service, Summer Food Service Program. Program details will be provided at the 2011 Summer Meals Information Meeting on Thursday, February 24, 2011, from 1 - 3 p.m. in Conference Center B, CC15 at the Minnesota Department of Education in Roseville.

For more information about the SFSP or to find out how you can help improve access to summer meals by being a sponsor or by partnering with an existing sponsor offering the SFSP in your area, contact MDE Food and Nutrition Service, 651-582-8526, 800-366-8922 or email to [fns@state.mn.us](mailto:fns@state.mn.us). Also, visit the MDE website, [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us).

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