



**NEWS RELEASE**

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Media Contact: Communications Director Tricia Yates, [tricia.yates@state.or.us](mailto:tricia.yates@state.or.us)

**Schools, Community Groups Sought for Summer Food Service Program Participation**

*Department of Education Wants to Increase Sites to Feed Hungry Children, Teens*

(Salem, Ore.) – In Oregon, only 12.8 percent of the 311,958 children who are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals in the National School Lunch Program participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is seeking more schools and community organizations to participate in SFSP this summer to help ensure that hungry children and teens receive the nutritious meals they need during the summer months. Last summer, Oregon’s 140 summer food sponsors served almost 1.7 million meals and snacks at 866 sites.

“You can’t underestimate the importance of access to food and enrichment programs in the summer to a child’s educational growth,” ODE Community Nutrition Manager Lynne Reinoso said. “When children go hungry and miss out on chances to learn during the summer, it causes a gap that they must try to make up when school reconvenes. Having access to meals during the summer, especially in coordination with summer reading programs, can really help students that need it the most.”

While it’s important to expand the program in all areas of the state, ODE’s Child Nutrition Program is particularly interested in having more summer meals served in the following counties:

Clackamas	Jackson	Sherman
Crook	Lane	Union
Curry	Lincoln	Wallowa
Harney	Malheur	Wasco
Hood River	Polk	Wheeler

Sponsors enter into agreements with State agencies to run the program. Schools, local government agencies, camps, faith-based and other non-profit community organizations that have the ability to manage a food service program may be SFSP sponsors. Sponsors are reimbursed by the Program and may manage multiple sites.

Sites are places in the community where children receive meals in a safe and supervised environment. Sites may be located in a variety of settings, including schools, parks, community centers, health clinics, hospitals, apartment complexes, churches, and migrant centers. Sites work directly with sponsors.

More information on the Summer Food Service Program, including an application to become a sponsor, [can be found on the ODE website](#). Applications are due by April 17.

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