



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Idaho Department of Education Seeks Community Sponsors for 2026 Federal Summer Food Service Program

(BOISE) – The Idaho Department of Education is inviting organizations statewide to serve as sponsors for the 2026 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), now known as the Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids (SUN). The federal program provides free meals and snacks to children ages 1 – 18 at approved meal sites in eligible low-income areas during the summer months.

The Idaho Foodbank reports that food insecurity, meaning limited or uncertain access to the food needed to meet basic needs, varies across the state and is often higher in rural communities. During the summer months, the challenge of reaching children and families in need increases. The SUN Programs help meet this need by providing children with nutritious meals at no cost while school is out of session.

The Idaho Department of Education partners with community organizations to provide meals to children during the summer months. Sponsors are reimbursed with federal funds for each qualifying breakfast, lunch, snack, and/or supper served at approved sites. Sponsors are needed across Idaho, especially in rural areas where coverage gaps exist. Rural sponsors may also choose to participate in non-congregate meal service options, which allow meals to be picked up and eaten offsite.

For the 2026 program year, sponsors may be, but are not limited to:

- Public or private nonprofit schools
- Public or private nonprofit residential camps
- Local, municipal, county, tribal, or state governments
- Public or private nonprofit colleges or universities that participate in the National Youth Sports Program
- Upward Bound programs, religious organizations, libraries, and nonprofit organizations

“Because schools can be a critical source of nutrition for students, families can look to outside organizations for support when school is not in session,” said Superintendent Debbie Critchfield. “There are organizations that want to make a meaningful difference in their communities, have the resources, and want the opportunity to directly serve kids right in their own neighborhoods.”

All sponsors, both new and returning, must complete the application process and attend a SUN Programs training at a location most convenient for them. The annual 2026 in-person sponsor training schedule is:

- February 13 | 8 – 5 p.m. PT | Coeur d’Alene
- February 19 | 8 – 5 p.m. MT | Chubbuck
- February 24 | 8 – 5 p.m. MT | Meridian

Eligible districts and organizations interested in operating rural non-congregate service (SUN Meals To-Go) must also attend a virtual SUN Meals To-Go training in addition to the required annual training:

- March 13 | 8 a.m. – noon MT | Virtual
- March 20 | noon – 4 p.m. MT | Virtual

Application information will be provided to eligible sponsors and is due to the Idaho Department of Education by May 1. Department approval is required before program operations may begin.

For more information on becoming a SUN Programs sponsor or meal site, call 208-332-6828 or visit <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/about-us/departments/child-nutrition-programs/summer-food-service-program/>

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