



JOY HOFMEISTER

STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

Dear Oklahoma Libraries,

During the school year, nearly 62% of our public school students qualify for and depend on free and reduced price lunches at school to fuel their minds and bodies. We need your help to ensure these children have access to healthy meals year-round. During summer break, **more than 425,000** low-income students across Oklahoma lose access to nutritious school meals and are at a higher risk of food insecurity and low nutrition.

There is a solution to solving summer hunger for students. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) can fill the gap for kids who rely on school meals during the school year. SFSP allows any child or teenager 18 or younger to visit a participating program and receive a free healthy meal or snack.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education and its child nutrition partners are working to increase participation in SFSP to connect more of our students to healthy summer meals. **For more kids to have access, we urgently need more locations where kids already visit – like libraries – to participate in the program.** Last summer, nearly 20 Oklahoma libraries served SFSP meals and snacks to kids as a part of their programming, and we are recruiting additional library sites to join us this summer.

Qualifying is simple. To be eligible to participate, a site must be located in a high-need area in which more than 50% of students qualify for free and reduced price school meals. Participating sites work with members of sponsor organizations who provide training, record-keeping forms, and reimbursable meals and snacks for sites to serve to kids.

Libraries are **an ideal partner** in the summer meals program for several reasons:

- Public libraries are accessible, welcoming spaces that can provide nourishing meals in addition to existing activities and programming for children and teenagers.
- Through SFSP, libraries can help prevent summer learning loss by connecting low-income kids to good nutrition and stimulating enrichment opportunities like summer reading programs.
- By participating in SFSP, libraries can feed kids without cutting into their funding for other programs.

Help us grow the minds and bodies of kids across our state! There are several ways your library can get involved:

- Find out if you are eligible to participate in SFSP by contacting Hunger Free Oklahoma at info@hungerfreeok.org.
- Locate your area's summer meals sites and let families and caregivers know about meal times and locations.
- Partner with existing meal sites to provide summer enrichment activities.

For more information on how to participate in SFSP and help us feed hungry kids this summer, please reach out to Hunger Free Oklahoma at info@hungerfreeok.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joy Hofmeister".

Joy Hofmeister
State Superintendent of Public Instruction