

# Nutrition News



Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

December 1, 2023



Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

Happy Helpings

## Happy Helpings Sponsor Kick-off Call

January 9 at 10:00 a.m.

Mark your calendar to attend the Happy Helpings Kick-off Call for experienced sponsors on Tuesday, January 9 at 10:00 a.m.

Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services will share the results of the Happy Helpings Sponsor Survey from FY23 and will provide updates on the upcoming summer meals season.

A link to attend the virtual call will be distributed later this month.

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## Summer 2024 will be Here Soon Start Planning Now

Providing summer meals is a year-round effort. At any point throughout the year, there are things you can do to prepare for next summer!

Here's a guide for the remainder of 2023:

### December:

- Begin to determine which sites are returning, explore new site options, and meet with community partners.
- Plan site staff training, meal production and delivery, and programs and activities.
- Begin exploring the potential for serving mobile meals.
- Begin developing a marketing and outreach campaign.
- Develop a plan for the Food Service Permitting process, if applicable.

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## Stay Informed: New Happy Helpings Memoranda

The memoranda below were recently issued by the USDA and are available on the Nutrition Services website and PolicyStat:

- **Best Practices for Determining Proximity of Sites for Congregate Feeding in the Summer Food Service Program.** This memorandum provides information to assist State agencies in preventing approval of multiple sites offering meal services at the same time to the same population of children in Happy Helpings.
- **Best Practices for Managing Unused Reimbursement in the Summer Food Service Program.** This memorandum provides guidance to State agencies for

- managing those situations in which sponsors have unused reimbursement.
- **Unused Reimbursement in the Summer Food Service Program** . This memorandum provides guidance to State agencies and Program operators for managing situations in which sponsors receive more reimbursement than they have spent on allowable costs.
- **Nationwide Expansion of Summer Food Service Program Simplified Cost Accounting Procedures-Revised**. This guidance clarifies Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) simplified cost accounting requirements.
- **Summer Food Service Program Questions and Answers – Revised** . This guidance updates previously issued Questions and Answers to clarify Happy Helpings requirements.

For questions regarding the memoranda, please contact [Robyn Parham](#).

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## Enhancing Local Procurement: Unlocking the Power of Geographic Preference

Explore the benefits of leveraging the new Geographic Preference option outlined in 7 CFR [225.17\(e\)\(1\)](#) and [7 CFR 225.17\(e\)\(2\)](#) . This change is poised to revolutionize local procurement efforts, promote nutrition security, and encourage the value chain model.

Geographic Preference allows Happy Helpings Operators to prioritize unprocessed locally grown or locally raised agricultural products when making procurement decisions.

Additionally, **Happy Helpings** Operators determine the specific local area to which the Geographic Preference will apply. Embracing Geographic Preference within the Happy Helpings has far-reaching advantages:

- **Supports Local Economies:** Happy Helpings Operators contribute directly to local economies' growth by opting for locally sourced products.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** The reduced transportation of goods from afar translates to lower carbon emissions, aligning with sustainability goals.
- **Nutritional Excellence:** Locally procured products are often fresher and of higher quality. This means the meals served are delicious and packed with essential nutrients, benefiting the health of children and adults in care.
- **Community Building:** Geographic Preference builds bridges between Happy Helpings institutions and local producers.

Happy Helpings Operators are encouraged to explore the possibilities of Geographic Preference. Making informed decisions based on procurement standards (7 CFR 225.17 and 2 CFR 200.317-326.327) and establishing connections with local producers can significantly impact your community's well-being and sustainability.

DECAL will continue to delve into local procurement, value chain, and sustainable sourcing in the upcoming months.

For questions regarding procurement, please contact Tempest Harris, Procurement Compliance Specialist at [tempest.harris@decalf.gov](mailto:tempest.harris@decalf.gov).

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## Areas of Need for Summer 2024

One of Nutrition Services goals is to have a meal site in every county of the state. Last summer, you helped us make significant progress in meeting that goal expanding service from 85 counties in 2022 to 100 counties in 2023! Thank you!

If your organization has the capacity to expand your meal service in 2024, please consider serving meals and snacks in any of the following target counties:

## Areas of Need: 59 counties

- |                 |              |              |            |             |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| • Appling       | • Dade       | • Laurens    | • Putman   | • Webster   |
| • Atkinson      | • Dawson     | • Lincoln    | • Quitman  | • Wheeler   |
| • Bacon         | • Dodge      | • Long       | • Schley   | • White     |
| • Banks         | • Emanuel    | • Lumpkin    | • Screven  | • Wilcox    |
| • Berrien       | • Evans      | • Marion     | • Stewart  | • Wilkes    |
| • Brantley      | • Gilmer     | • Miller     | • Sumter   | • Wilkinson |
| • Brooks        | • Gordon     | • Montgomery | • Talbot   | • Worth     |
| • Calhoun       | • Haralson   | • Murray     | • Telfair  |             |
| • Camden        | • Heard      | • Oconee     | • Towns    |             |
| • Charlton      | • Jasper     | • Oglethorpe | • Treutlen |             |
| • Chattahoochee | • Jeff Davis | • Pickens    | • Turner   |             |
| • Clay          | • Jenkins    | • Pierce     | • Union    |             |
| • Cook          | • Johnson    | • Pulaski    | • Warren   |             |

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## Unanticipated School Closure Waivers Available

On August 30, 2023, Nutrition Services received USDA approval for statewide waivers for Happy Helpings sponsors to utilize during unanticipated school closures.

The following waivers are available during unanticipated school closures when meal service operations are limited due to natural disasters, unscheduled major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes, or when approved by the State agency for similar unanticipated causes.

The following approved waivers are available when schools are closed with no virtual learning:

- **Non-Congregate Meal Service**
- **Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-up**
- **Meal Service Times**
- **Service of Meals at School Sites**

The waivers listed above are available through April 30, 2024. To read more, click [here](#).

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## Upcoming Sponsor Training

*Registration Opens December 4*

### Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Training

Do you plan to serve summer meals during the FY 2023-2024 program year? If so, please plan to participate in **one (1)** of the upcoming *SFSP Orientation and Program Training* sessions.

#### Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training (1 Day)

- January 11, 2024 (Virtual)
- February 22, 2024 (Virtual)

#### Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training (2 Days)

- March 13-14, 2024 (Macon)
- April 10-11, 2024 (Atlanta)

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## Training Dates

## NCA Webinar – SFSP Boot Camp

The **National CACFP Sponsor Association** is hosting an all-day webinar on January 17, 2024, to discuss all things SFSP from understanding program basics to exploring creative meal prep and menu ideas. You may also find inspiration from fellow program participants. Elevate your nutrition program participation by joining the SFSP community!

- **[Register Now]**
- *Earn up to **6.5 Hours** of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for attending. Can't make it to a live session? Registration includes on-demand viewing through January 24, 2024.*

**January 17, 2024**

### Happy Helpings Budget Readiness

Do you have the budget basics?

Join this webinar to learn:

- the purpose of the budget package,
- the purpose of all budget line items in GA ATLAS, and
- how to prepare & develop a complete GA ATLAS budget package.

**January 18, 2024**

### Happy Helpings Procurement Readiness

Are you practicing proper procurement requirements?

Join this webinar to learn:

- relevant procurement practices when procuring food & non-food items,
- how to develop formal solicitations, and
- how to incorporate local sourcing practices into a meal service.

Please click [here](#) to register for all DECAL webinars listed above.

**Registration:** This is a **two-step** process:

- **Step 1:**
  - After registering in GA ATLAS, you will receive a Training Confirmation email *immediately* from Georgia DECAL Help Desk - [helpdesk@cnpus.com](mailto:helpdesk@cnpus.com) with a registration link to attend the webinar (**check your spam/junk folder**).
- **Step 2:**
  - You must then register for the training using the link provided on the Training confirmation email.
  - If you should have an issue with registering, please contact Leslie Truman **prior** to the day of training.
  - **Click here** if you need a refresher on how to register for training in GA ATLAS.

**Please note: Only the Program Contact (PC) can self-register within GA ATLAS. If an additional person will be attending, please contact Leslie Truman, Administrative Assistant, at (404) 657-1779 for assistance.**

## Training Resources

### In Case You Missed It: Webinar Recordings Now Available!

If you missed a webinar, please visit the **Training and Technical Assistance** webpage for previously recorded webinars. This month's training highlight is the **Bid Specifications & Managing Contracts** webinar. It discussed the elements of contract management, bid specifications and how they are developed.

### Preventing Peanut Allergies

The **National Peanut Board** has a great nutrition education resource on **Preventing Peanut Allergies** that outlines:

- The recommended timeline for peanut introduction.
  - Two [2] ways to introduce peanut foods.
  - Two [2] recipes for introducing peanut butter.
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## Nutrition Ed Nook

### *Lettuce Eat*

Lettuce is the December Harvest of the Month (**English** and **Spanish**) spotlight.

Lettuce is a leafy green vegetable that can grow as loose leaves or in a tightly packed head. You can enjoy lettuce raw or cooked. There are many varieties of lettuce that provide vitamins A, C & K, potassium, calcium, folate, and iron. Typically, the darker varieties of lettuce provide more nutrients.

Lettuce is a cool-season vegetable, grown in spring or fall. Lettuce is in season in Georgia from around October through May but needs protection from extreme heat and cold. Lettuce is an easy item to plant in child care program gardens that can be harvested all season long.

**Fun Fact:** People in Georgia eat more than 285 million pounds of lettuce a year, but we grow less than 0.1 percent of that.

#### **Integration:**

- **Mini-Burgers**
- **Salmon Patties**
- **Teriyaki Lettuce Wraps**
- **Veggie Tortilla Roll-Ups**
- **Fruity Fun Chicken Salad Cups**
- **Ground Chicken Lettuce Wraps**

#### **Education:**

- **Watch** the *Harvest with Holly* video that explores the Harvest of the Month spotlight, how these items grow, where they grow in Georgia, and how they get from the farms to school meals all across the state of Georgia.
- **Do a lettuce exploration** with different varieties of lettuce (i.e., romaine, green leaf, red leaf, spring mix). Create an observation chart for your class to complete together. Have the children describe how the lettuce varieties feel, look, taste and smell. Make sure your observation chart is in a centralized area where all children can see it and participate in the discussion.
- **Read ‘The Vegetables We Eat’ by Gail Gibbons** with your program participants. Peppers, beans, corn, and peas! Nonfiction superstar Gail Gibbons lays out the basics of veggies with colorful watercolors and straightforward text. Learn how they grow, how they get to stores, and how many kinds there are—and learn some weird trivia, too!
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as tearing lettuce for salads and sandwiches. **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate lettuce into their meals!

#### **Conversation:**

- Have your program participants eaten lettuce before?
- What is their favorite meal that includes lettuce?
- What other green vegetables do they like to eat?

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## December’s Harvest of the Month Bonus Item

### *Citrus*

Citrus is the December Harvest of the Month bonus spotlight.

Citrus refers to juicy fruits that grow on trees and have a



bitter outer skin that must be peeled before eating the juicy inner fruit. Most citrus fruits are very high in vitamin C, which helps heal cuts and gives you healthy skin.

Citrus plants are in season in Georgia from November through December. There are 70+ citrus farming operations in Georgia and an estimated 300 acres committed to citrus year-round, mostly in the southern portion of the state where the most citrus is produced.

**Fun Fact:** After citrus flowering shrubs or trees are planted, it takes around four years before a tree will start producing significant amounts of citrus.

- **Fresh Salsa**
- **Citrus Berry Ice**
- **Fruit Salad With Citrus Sauce**
- **Glass of Sunshine Flavored Water**

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of lettuce and citrus with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at [morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov](mailto:morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov).

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## Physical Activity Corner

### *Self-Care for the Holiday Season*



New Month, New You - Energize Your Health!

It is that time of the year when loved ones, co-workers, and friends gather during the holiday seasons and New Year. Make it exciting, entertaining and stress free for you and your loved ones. Here are some simple active ways to stay active and stress-free.

Reduce screen time, add exercise, and move it. You and your loved ones can create calendars of fun and easy fitness activities for the month of December. This can include indoor and outdoor activities, such as yoga,

walking/jogging, gardening, dancing (Zumba), doing sit-ups, walking/jogging, jumping rope, biking, playing basketball and soccer.

Post and write small, specific, measurable exercise goals in a visible area, such as on the refrigerator, holiday calendar, and white board. Encourage each other to set active habits. Furthermore, do some stretches hours before bedtime to help with relaxation and sleep. Make physical activity a part of the joyous and fun holiday season.

### **Integration:**

- **Twelve (12) Days of Fitness on the holidays**
- **Move Your Way: Tips for Getting Motivated**
- **Outdoor Holiday Activities for Children**
- **Healthier Holidays in 1-2-3**
- **What Exercise is Right for Me?**

### **Education:**

- **Read** aloud the book, "**Grow Strong! A Book About Healthy Habits,**" by Cheri J. Meiners.
- **Watch** the video on "**The Importance of Being Physically Active**"
- **Talk** with families about ways to integrate fitness into the holiday winter season.  
**Bonus:** Send #HolidayWorkout, #HolidayFitnessGoal pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

## Conversation:

- What is your favorite fitness activity to do during the holiday winter season?
- How do you stay physically active during the holidays?
- Why is it important to exercise during the holidays?
- What is stress free and easy exercise to do in the holidays?

Share your **#HolidayFitnessChallenge**, **#HolidayFitnessGoals** and **#HolidayWorkout** stories and photos with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at [tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov](mailto:tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov).

## Eat Healthy and Live Active

### Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 23-24 Calendar

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) is the Georgia Department of Education School Nutrition Program's farm to school initiative that highlights an item each month that can be sourced locally and served in Georgia's school meals.

The Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month is a collaborative campaign to promote a different local, seasonal fruit or vegetable in child care settings each month.

Visit the Georgia Department of Education's HOTM [webpage](#) and Quality Care for Children [webpage](#). Upon viewing, you can find tips and tricks for preparing produce items, curriculum connections, activity lists and book alignment for your early care classrooms.



## Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
December	Harvest of the Month: Lettuce Bonus Harvest of the Month: Citrus
December 4	Registration opens for Experienced Sponsor Training
December 25	Christmas
January 9	Happy Helpings Kick-off Call
January 11	Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training
January 17	Happy Helpings Budget Readiness Webinar
January 17	SFSP Boot Camp Webinar
January 18	Happy Helpings Procurement Readiness Webinar
February 22	Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training
March 13-14	Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training
April 10-11	Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training

# Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- [Start-up Grants ensured More Georgia Kids had Access to Nutritious Meals & Snacks this Summer](#)
- [Increasing Access to Food Through Mobile Feeding](#)
- [Thank You for Another Successful Summer Season](#)
- [Annual Year-End Reconciliation Requirement for FY2023](#)
- [Sonja Adams Celebrates 15 Years with State of Georgia](#)
- [Happy Helpings Year-End Reconciliation Memorandum](#)
- [Understanding Food Yield to Prevent Food Waste](#)
- [Transitioning from Happy Helpings to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals](#)
- [After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk](#)
- [Stay Informed on Monitoring](#)
- [Determining Duty Allocation in the Management Plan](#)
- [Pre-Award Cost Request vs. Excess Funds Use Request](#)
- [Be a Health Hero - Health Empowers You](#)
- [Guidance on Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data](#)
- [Updated HH Forms and Policies](#)
- [Reminder: PolicyStat is available on the Nutrition Services' Webpage](#)
- [Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)

## How was my Customer Service?

*Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team*



Click on the icon at right to participate in the customer service survey. Responses are anonymous.

## NEW DECAL Download

*CAPS Provider Management and Payment System*

A promotional banner for a DECAL Download episode. The background is split into yellow and blue. On the left, it says "On the next ... DECAL Download" with a download icon and "New Episodes Every Wednesday!". Below this are photos of Aleisha Golden and Kay Mayfield. On the right, it says "This Week's Topic: CAPS Provider Management and Payment System" with a QR code. At the bottom, there are social media icons and the Georgia Dept of Early Care and Learning logo with the tagline "BRIGHT FROM THE START".

Georgia's CAPS Program is going to have some big changes very soon. As of November 15, the program that assists low-income families with the cost of child care, will now administer the provider management function of the CAPS Program. This was the work previously done through our contractor, Maximus.

The changes will now provide more streamlined services and increased service levels for child care providers who support CAPS parents and Children. Joining us on this episode of DECAL Download to explain the changes happening with CAPS is Kay Mayfield, the CAPS Provider Relations Director and Aleshia Golden, our CAPS Provider Relations Quality Assurance and Payment Manager.

Listen to the episode [here](#).

**Nutrition Division**

**Marketing & Outreach Team**



Cindy Kicklighter  
Carl Glover



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