

Nutrition News



Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

January 2, 2024



Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

Happy Helpings

Happy Helpings Sponsor Kick-off Call

January 9 at 10:00 a.m.

Join Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services for the Happy Helpings Kick-off Call for experienced sponsors on Tuesday, January 9 at 10:00 a.m. for updates on the upcoming summer meals season.

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 243 169 744 114

Passcode: 5bGhhP

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

+1 470-481-4462,,264087117# United States, Atlanta

Phone Conference ID: 264 087 117#

FNS hosts Non-congregate Meal Service Implementation Webinar

Register to attend January 11, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

On December 29, 2022, President Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (the Act) (P.L. 117-328). The Act included significant policy changes for Child Nutrition Programs, including the authorization of a permanent, non-congregate meal service through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) for rural areas with no congregate meal service.

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) anticipates that the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and Rural Non-congregate Summer Meals Option Interim Final Rule (IFR) will be published in late December 2023.

In anticipation of IFR publication, FNS plans to host an implementation webinar for Summer Meals Sponsoring Organizations and Program Operators on Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service for Rural Areas on Thursday, January 11, 2024, from 2 to 3:30 PM Eastern Time. Registration is available [here](#).

This webinar will include time for questions and answers from the audience. This webinar will be recorded and made available on the FNS website at a later date. All registrants will receive an email once webinar recordings are available, and an announcement will also be sent via PartnerWeb.

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 heading into 2024:

January:

- 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.
-

Start Preparing your Happy Helpings Budget

As the 2024 summer meals season quickly approaches, there is no better time to get a head start on budget planning for Happy Helpings. Once you have identified your potential sites for the 2024 program year, start planning your budget projections.

Identify your 2024 Revenue:

- Examples of revenue: Potential Reimbursement (# of meals x Rates), prior year excess funds, donations, other grants, and revenue producing activities

Determine Upcoming Costs:

- Review historical data such as previous years serving sites and meals and prior year reconciliation documents.
- Determine how many staff will be required to operate efficiently.
- Assess projected costs that are necessary and reasonable for the 2024 program.
 - Start gathering your supporting documents for requested costs.

For questions regarding your 2024 Happy Helpings budget, please email nutritionbudget@decal.ga.gov.

Procurement Helpful Hints

Start 2024 with Planning and Procurement

Bring in the new year with procurement success by planning for Happy Helpings FY 2024 food purchases now. Whether you're a self-prep sponsor preparing meals using your designated kitchen, or a sponsor with vended meal sites utilizing the services of a Food Service Management Company, this season is the time to evaluate previous contracts and agreements and assess current and potential meal sites.

Planning in January will allow time to determine if formal procurement or a new vendor is required for the upcoming year. Remember, securing a new bid is a multi-step process. Take a look at these eight steps:

1. Preparation of Invitation for Bids
2. Submission of Invitation for Bids to State Agency
3. Publicizing of Invitation for Bids and publicly announcing all IFBs at least 14 days before bid openings.
4. Notifying the State Agency of the time and place at least 14 days before the bid opening
5. Publicly opening all bids

6. Submitting to the State Agency copies of all contracts, a certificate of independent price determination, and copies of all bids received
7. Evaluation of bids
8. Contract award

Allow enough time to execute a contract for Happy Helpings. The process of securing a new bid estimate is three months.

For questions regarding procurement, please contact Tempest Harris, Procurement Compliance Specialist at tempest.harris@dec.al.ga.gov.

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 101 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: 58 counties

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



Stay Informed: New Happy Helpings Memoranda

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) issued the below guidance regarding Happy Helpings in November 2023:

- **Crediting Traditional Indigenous Foods in Child Nutrition Programs, November 1, 2023.** This updated memorandum provides guidance to Indigenous communities on incorporating traditional Indigenous foods that meet CNP meal pattern requirements and includes an updated and expanded list of traditional Indigenous foods that credit the same as similar foods currently listed in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG).
- **Procuring Local Meat, Poultry, Game, and Eggs for Child Nutrition Programs, November 20, 2023.** This memorandum seeks to clarify the regulatory requirements related to food safety and answer specific questions related to buying local meat, poultry, game and eggs.

For questions regarding available flexibilities, please contact [Robyn Parham](#).

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](#).

Training Dates

January 11, 2024

Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training (Virtual)

All returning Happy Helpings sponsors are required to attend experienced sponsor training.

January 17, 2024

SFSP Boot Camp

The [National CACFP Sponsor Association](#) is hosting an all-day webinar 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.

February 19, 2024

Memo Monday

Are you maximizing your program funds?

Join this webinar to review the following money management memos.

- ***Unused Reimbursement in the Summer Food Service Program – September 28, 2023***
- ***Best Practices for Managing Unused Reimbursement in the Summer Food Service Program – September 28, 2023***
- ***Nationwide Expansion of Summer Food Service Program Simplified Cost Accounting Procedures (Revised) – September 29, 2023***

February 22, 2024

Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training (Virtual)

All returning Happy Helpings sponsors are required to attend experienced sponsor training.

March 13-14, 2024

Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training (Macon)

April 10-11, 2024

Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training (Atlanta)

Please click [here](#) to register for all DECAL webinars listed above except for SFSP Boot Camp webinar.

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 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.



Nutrition Ed Nook *Southern-Style Greens*

Collard, Mustard, and Turnip greens are the January Harvest of the Month (**English** and **Spanish**) spotlight! Categorized as dark green vegetables, these green varieties are rich in vitamins A, C, and K, fiber, & folate. These nutrient powerhouses protect bones and teeth, help with vision, and improve immunity.

Typically planted eight to ten weeks before the first frost,

these green varieties are available for purchase year-round but taste much sweeter during their peak time of December through March. Collard greens have a slightly bitter flavor, while mustard and turnip greens have a slightly spicy, peppery one.

Greens are a popular vegetable in southern cuisine but can also be found in meals elsewhere around the world, such as Brazil, Kashmir, Kenya, Portugal, and Tanzania. Greens can take on a range of global flavors and be interchanged in many dishes. These leafy green vegetables make great additions to green smoothies, salads, stir fries, soups, or pastas. Share cultural traditions from across the world with your participants! **Remember:** It is a great southern tradition to eat your greens at the start of the new year.

Integration:

- [Mustard Green Pesto](#)
- [Butternut Squash with Collard Greens](#)*
- [Seared Greens](#)*
- [Greens & Beans Soup](#)* (Sopa de garbanzo y hojas verdes)

*You may substitute any of the HOTM greens for this recipe or include a combination of all of them.

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 greens exploration** with collard, mustard, and turnip greens. Create an observation chart for your class to complete together. Have the participants describe how the greens look, feel, and taste. Make sure your observation chart is in a centralized area where all participants can see it and participate in the discussion.
- **Read [Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip](#) by Denia Lewis Hester** with program participants. Grandma Lena believes that something worth doing is worth doing right. So, she takes good care of the turnips she plants in her garden. One turnip grows to an enormous size—Baby Pearl thinks it's a big potato! It is big enough to feed half the town. And it's so big that Grandma can't pull it out of the ground! Even when family members come to help, including the dog, the turnip doesn't budge. Still, this family knows how to pull together.
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as swishing greens in a bowl of water to remove dirt. **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate greens into their meals!

Conversation:

- Have your participants tried greens before?
- What is their favorite type of green to try? Each type has a unique flavor!
- What are examples of other dark green vegetables?

Share your winter Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of collard, mustard, and turnip greens with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov.

Physical Activity Corner

New Year, New You

It's a brand-new year and it is the most popular time to hit that “reset button” – a change to a healthier you.

To maintain a healthy lifestyle in the New Year, initiate small steps to set SMART goals – goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timebound.

For example, you may set a goal to exercise 30-minutes,



three times a week for the new month, carry a water bottle with you to increase hydration, or practice a one-minute deep breathing exercise before work each day. Keep moving, sit less, and get active!

Integration:

- [Top 5 Ways to Stay Active When it's Cold Out - ONIE Project](#)
- [Exercise Videos | Virginia Family Nutrition Program \(eatsmartmovemoreva.org\)](#)
- [New Year's Resolution 2024 on Physical Activity](#)

Education:

- **Read** aloud the book, [“Bringing in the New Yearbook” by Grace Lin.](#)
- **Watch** the video on [Smart Goals with Examples.](#)
- **Talk** with families about ways to incorporate new fitness goals into the New Year. **Bonus:** Share [#NewYear'sResolution2024](#), [#SMARTFitnessGoals2024](#), [#MotivationalFitness](#) pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

Conversation:

- What are your fitness goals for the New Year 2024?
- How do you stay active with your family during and after the holidays?
- What is your motivation to exercise?
- Why review Specific Measurable Attainable Reasonable Time (SMART) fitness goals annually (2024)?

Share your [#NewYearFitnessGoals](#), [#SMARTFitnessgoals](#), [#FitnessMotivation](#) [#GetFit](#) stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at 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
January	Harvest of the Month: Greens
January 9	Happy Helpings Kick-off Call
January 11	Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training Non-congregate Meal Service Implementation Webinar
January 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 17	SFSP Boot Camp Webinar Happy Helpings Budget Readiness Webinar
January 18	Happy Helpings Procurement Readiness Webinar
February 19	Memo Monday
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](#)
- [Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)

How was my Customer Service?

Provide feedback on your experience with



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

NEW DECAL Download EXPAND Grants



Earlier this year, DECAL awarded new Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery or EXPAND Grants to seven child care providers and six nonprofit and government organizations.

Supported by research and analysis showing that the availability of high-quality child care and early education plays a key role in Georgia's workforce

development and economic growth, DECAL created the EXPAND Grants with the growing need for childcare outside traditional hours in mind.

We hope to learn a lot through these projects happening in licensed child care providers who are expanding their operating hours and also governments and non-profits who are forming collaboratives to address the challenges of child care access in their communities.

Joining us on this week's DECAL Download to talk about the new EXPAND grants is Jill Taylor, Director of Community Partnerships and 2Gen Outreach; Shayna Funke, Director of Research Partnerships and Business Supports; and Dr. Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner for Quality Innovations and Partnerships here at DECAL.

Listen to the episode [here](#).

Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach Team



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