



January 15, 2025

USDA Announces Availability of \$1.13 Billion for Local Food Programs

In December, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a \$1.13 billion investment to support local and regional food systems, building upon the Department's previous investments in the [Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement](#) (LFPA) and [Local Food for Schools](#) (LFS) programs.

- USDA will allocate up to \$188.6 million for use in child care facilities participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Additionally, \$471.5 million will be dedicated for states and territories to purchase local, unprocessed, or minimally processed domestic foods for use by schools participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Programs.
- The USDA will allocate up to \$471.5 million for states, territories, and Tribal governments to use in local feeding programs, including food banks, schools and other organizations that reach underserved communities. Of that, \$100 million will go to Tribal governments.

DECAL is forming a planning team to determine how the funds will be disbursed. More information will be provided at a later date.

Have You Thought About Feeding Kids This Summer?

Consider participating in Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program, ensures children 18 and under have access to nutritious meals and snacks during the summer when school is not in session.

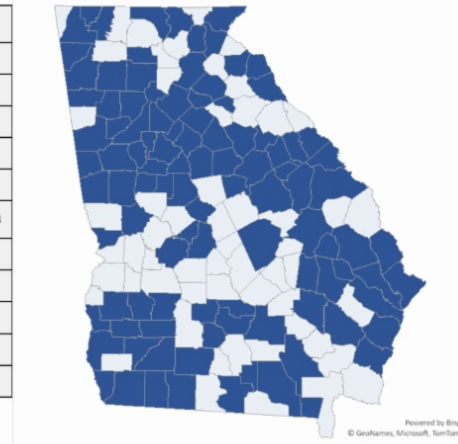
If your institution currently participates in at-risk afterschool meals, you are well-positioned to offer summer meals through Happy Helpings. If you would like to offer year-round feeding and are a CACFP Sponsor, we'd like to invite you to register for New Sponsor Training in GA ATLAS.

Training is offered on March 19 & 20 and April 9 & 10. There are 56 Georgia counties where children did not have access to a Happy Helpings' meal site during FY24. If you are able, please consider expanding your meal service to offer meals in any of the counties listed below.

FY25 Areas of Need: 56

1. Atkinson	13. Crisp	25. Jeff Davis	37. Oglethorpe	49. Twiggs
2. Bacon	14. Dade	26. Jenkins	38. Pierce	50. Upson
3. Banks	15. Dawson	27. Jones	39. Pulaski	51. Webster
4. Berrien	16. Dodge	28. Lincoln	40. Quitman	52. Wheeler
5. Bleckley	17. Dooly	29. Long	41. Schley	53. Wilcox
6. Brantley	18. Echols	30. Lumpkin	42. Screven	54. Wilkes
7. Brooks	19. Forsyth	31. Madison	43. Stewart	55. Wilkinson
8. Camden	20. Gilmer	32. Marion	44. Sumter	56. Worth
9. Charlton	21. Gordon	33. Miller	45. Taylor	
10. Chattahoochee	22. Grady	34. Montgomery	46. Telfair	
11. Cook	23. Haralson	35. Murray	47. Towns	
12. Crawford	24. Harris	36. Oconee	48. Treutlen	

Blue: HH meals were offered in these counties: White: Areas of Need



Stay Informed: Revised CACFP Memoranda

The following revised memoranda were recently issued by USDA's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS):

- **Grain Requirements in the CACFP; Questions and Answers** - This memorandum explains the grain requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and includes questions and answers and was revised to include updates from the 2024 final rule *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines*.
- **Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Questions and Answers** – The purpose of this revised memorandum is to provide recommendations on infant feeding and infant meal pattern requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and guidance from the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Dietary Guidelines).

For questions, please contact Robyn Parham at Robyn.Parham@dec.al.ga.gov.

Stay Informed: At-Risk Afterschool Waivers Available during Unanticipated School Closure

On August 5, 2024, DECAL was approved by USDA to grant CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal Component facilities waivers for the following:

- Non-Congregate Meal Service
- Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-up
- Meal Service Times
- At-Risk Enrichment Activities

The waivers listed above are available through **June 30, 2025**.

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.

DECAL cannot approve a waiver for more than 10 consecutive operating days without

approval from Food Nutrition Services (FNS). You may access the USDA's approval [here](#). CACFP institutions that are approved to operate the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Component and are interested in applying for these waivers during unanticipated school closures must submit waiver requests via the Waiver Module in GA ATLAS.

Once institutions have submitted waiver requests, institutions should email [Tammie Baldwin](#) advising of the submittal. For questions, please contact [Robyn Parham](#).

Need To Update Your Banking Information?

Anytime changes are made to your banking account information, please notify DECAL by completing the [Supplier Change Request Form](#) (SCR) and submitting it to your organization's assigned Application Specialist.

The State Accounting Office (SAO) Vendor Management Group has an extensive process for verifying the bank accounts of any individual or organization for which payments are made. This is to prevent fraudulent banking and payments. Therefore, any updates made to your existing banking information may take up to four to five weeks to process. Please note that this process has been longer than usual due to limited staff at the SAO.

Please see updates to the vendor management process below:

- Supplier Change Request (SCR) forms must have a recent date by the vendor's signature. Electronic signatures will not be accepted on the SCR form. It must be a wet signature or digital signature with date. Recent date means less than **60 days**.
- The VMG (vendor management group) **will no longer** accept voided checks or official bank letter for bank verification.
- W9's must be submitted using the March 2024 version. The version date is both in the top left and bottom right of the form. W9's must have an IRS specified recent date of 365 days or less. (If today is November 18, 2024, the earliest valid date is November 18, 2023.) Digital signatures are **NOT** acceptable on the W9. It must be a wet signature or electronic signature with date.
- W9's for businesses must be completed exactly as the IRS has the company name listed on their tax returns. Both DECAL and SAO verify Tax ID and Name combinations using IRS software. DECAL will not honor requests to setup new vendors where the Tax ID and Name combination does not match IRS records.

If you have any questions, please contact your assigned Application Specialist:

* Application reviewer through April 12, 2025

Application Representative	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
*Demetria Thornton	o (zero)-G	Demetria.Thornton@decals.ga.gov	(404) 463-2182
Shericka Blount	H-P	Shericka.Blount@decals.ga.gov	(404) 656-6411
Vanessa Goodman	Q-Z	Vanessa.Goodman@decals.ga.gov	(404) 591-6027

New Contacts for Budget Inquiries

Please note the new contacts for budget inquiries through March 2025

Budget Representative	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Kristy Lanier	o (zero)- M Including Combo Sponsors	Kristy.Lanier@dec.al.ga.gov	(770) 359-4401
Lashaunda King	N-Z Excluding Combo Sponsors	Lashaunda.King@dec.al.ga.gov	(678) 831-1044

For all general budget inquiries contact NutritionBudget@dec.al.ga.gov

Reminder to Review Online CACFP Applications

CACFP Institutions/Sponsors are required to review their online application monthly in GA ATLAS and to ensure that any updates are made within 30 days. Click [here](#) to access CACFP application update procedures.

Independent Centers who have questions or concerns regarding updates, please contact your assigned Application Specialist:

Application Representative	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
*Demetria Thornton	o (zero)-G	Demetria.Thornton@dec.al.ga.gov	(404) 463-2182
Shericka Blount	H-P	Shericka.Blount@dec.al.ga.gov	(404) 656-6411
Vanessa Goodman	Q-Z	Vanessa.Goodman@dec.al.ga.gov	(404) 591-6027

* Application reviewer through April 12, 2025

Sponsors who have questions or concerns regarding updates, please contact your assigned Business Operations Representative:

Business Operations Representative	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Lavesia Ervin	o (zero)-C, H-P	Lavesia.Ervin@dec.al.ga.gov	(404) 293-5258
Joveta Watson	D-G, Q-Z	Joveta.Watson@dec.al.ga.gov	(706) 434-6831

Upcoming Training Dates:

January 29, 2025- Physical Activity is Important in Early Childhood 1:00-2:00 pm

Would you like to be introduced to the concepts of physical literacy and the fundamental movement skills of infants, toddlers, and pre-schooled aged children? Please join this session to recognize the importance of physical activity, and how it supports child development to include your personal physical activity practices.

Participants can earn one [1.0] state-approved hour(s) for attending this training in its entirety.

[\[Register Now\]](#)

February 11, 2025 – Tuesday Tip! Creditable or Not in CACFP

1:30- 2:00 pm

Would you like a refresher on which foods credit towards the CACFP meal pattern requirements? Do you know where to look to find nutritional education resources? Please join this webinar to learn tips to help you become confident in your food component choices for the CACFP.

Participants can earn one half [0.5] state-approved hour for attending this training in its entirety

[[Register Now](#)]

Notes: 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 e-mail. 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 or email leslie.truman@dec.al.gov for assistance.

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 **FY 2025 Renewal Readiness** webinar that discusses step-by-step instructions on how to complete Annual Renewal requirements.

Snack Attack *New Recipes!*

The [National CACFP Sponsor Association](#) has shared snack options for program operators that are #CACFPCreditable.

- Banana and yogurt
- Applesauce and crackers
- Blueberries and pretzels
- Pineapple smoothie
- Sliced grapes and cheese stick

Meal Pattern Minute *New!*

The [National CACFP Sponsor Association](#) has developed quick CACFP meal pattern tips, recipes, resources, and videos. View the videos of the following meal pattern minute tips below.

- [Pumpkin Pie](#)
- [CACFP Funds for Garden](#)
- [Vegetables for Grains in Tribal Communities](#)
- [Verifying CN Labels *New!*](#)
- [Chestnuts *New!*](#)

CACFP Meal Pattern Training Worksheets *Updated!*

[Team Nutrition](#) has released an updated training worksheet for CACFP operators. All worksheets are available in English and Spanish. To see Team Nutrition's collection of CACFP training tools, visit the [CACFP Training Tools](#) page.

- [Choose Yogurt That is Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)
- [Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program *New!*](#)

Adult Day Care Centers in CACFP Study

USDA conducted a survey in 2024 to better understand key characteristics of adult day care centers participating in CACFP. USDA collected data from 2,495 adult day care centers that participated in CACFP in Fiscal Year 2023.

[\[See the Survey\]](#)



Nutrition Ed Nook

Greens Galore!

Collard, Mustard, and Turnip greens are the January Harvest of the Month (HOTM) spotlight ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)).

These dark green vegetables are packed with vitamins A, C, and K, fiber, and folate. They help protect bones and teeth, improve vision, and boost immunity.

Typically planted eight to ten weeks before the first frost, these green varieties are available year-round but have the best flavor in-season from December to

March. Collard greens have a slightly bitter taste, while mustard and turnip greens offer a spicy, peppery flavor.

Popular in southern cuisine, these greens are also enjoyed worldwide in places like Brazil, Kashmir, Kenya, Portugal, and Tanzania. They can be used in a variety of dishes, from green smoothies and salads to stir-fries, soups, and pastas. Share and celebrate these global culinary traditions with your participants!

Remember that it's a great southern tradition to eat your greens at the start of the new year.

Integration:

- [Smothered Greens](#)
- [Black-Eyed Peas and Greens](#)
- [Chicken and Greens Soup](#)
- [Butternut Squash with Collard 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.
- **Greens Taste Test** Prepare small, bite-sized pieces of cooked collard, mustard, and/or turnip greens. Let children program participants taste each one and describe the flavors. Encourage them to use words like "bitter," "spicy," or "peppery." Discuss which green they liked best and why, and talk about how these greens help keep us healthy.
- **Read** [The Enormous Turnip \(First Favourite Tales\)](#) with the children you serve. The old man wants the enormous turnip for his dinner. He pulls and he pulls, but the turnip is too big! Find out what happens when a very, very large turnip doesn't want to be pulled out of the ground!
- **Talk** with families about how children 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!
- **Want ECE greens-themed resources?** Check out Quality Care for Children's [Harvest of the Month toolkit](#) for more ways to engage ECE students.

Conversation:

- Have the children you serve eaten greens before? If so, which ones?

- How do children think greens grow? What things do plants need to grow?
- How do children think greens help our bodies stay healthy and strong?

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

Active Play in Cold Weather

As winter arrives and temperatures drop, we often stay indoors to keep warm. Parents and educators share concerns about children playing outside in the cold. Physical activity is crucial year-round in supporting and helping children and adults boost cardiovascular health, strengthen muscles and bones, and improve mental wellbeing. Staying active, especially on gray, cold days, is essential.

Winter's embrace offers a world of possibilities for indoor/outdoor exploration and play.

Here are fun and entertaining ideas to engage children, educators, and staff in physical activity as an everyday routine. Watch the temperature and wind chill, and limit outdoors to 20-30 minutes if it's extremely cold.



Indoor Winter Activities:

- **Color Painting:** Ignite creativity and sensory skills with color painting, where children can express their artistic side while learning about different colors. This activity is a fantastic way to explore their artistic expression and understand color, using the white bond paper as their canvas.
- **Toddler Snowstorm:** This activity from SHAPE America is a fun and engaging way for toddlers to develop social, emotional, and motor skills. It involves rolling and catching cotton balls, followed by creating a "snowstorm" by tossing the cotton balls into the air. This activity helps toddlers improve coordination and interaction with others.
- **Winter-Themed Crafts:** Enhance fine motor skills with winter-themed crafts. Crafting activities such as cutting, gluing and assembling various materials not only aid in developing hand-eye coordination, but also foster creativity, allowing children to create their own winter wonderlands.
- **Story Time:** Read aloud **"Winter is Here,"** by Kevin Henkes. A celebration of the sights, sounds, and smells of the season, this is perfect for young readers. Snow falls, animals burrow, and children prepare for the wonders winter brings.
- **Tummy Time:** An exercise for infants to 12 months, tummy time is an activity that needs supervised time when an infant is awake and alert, lying on her/his belly. Opportunities for tummy time should last as long as possible to help infants learn to enjoy it and build their strength. For infants who are not used to it or do not enjoy it, each period of tummy time can start at 1–2 minutes, and build up to 5-10 minutes over time.
- **Simon Says:** This is a fun classic game that encourages active play and helps in exercising listening skills. Although Simon Says is traditionally a child's game, kids of all ages can play and enjoy the game. The fun increases with the number of players!
- **Let's Get Moving:** Play "Moving Along with Elmo" and enjoy the moves together. Sing Along: Substitute "Elmo" with the kids' names. For example, if the child's name is Alex, you can sing "Alex's got the moves!" Have fun dancing and singing along!

Outdoor Winter Activities:

- **Winter Nature Walks:** Encourage the children to observe and describe what they see, hear, and feel. Bring along a small bag to collect interesting natural items like pinecones, acorns, or smooth stones. After the walk, you can discuss their findings and even create a nature collage with the items collected.
- **Sensory Bin Winter Scavenger Hunt:** Create a winter-theme scavenger hunt list with items like evergreen trees, stones, falling leaves, etc. Encourage children to use their five senses to experience the cold winter environment.
- **Snowball Toss:** Create “snowballs” using soft balls, lightweight materials like yarn. Set up targets, such as buckets or hula hoops, and let children practice tossing the item into the target, enhancing both coordination and motor skills.
- **Soft Balls Bowling:** Set up bowling pins using empty plastic bottles. Children can take turns rolling soft balls and knocking down the “pins.” This game is perfect for promoting physical activity, coordination, and friendly competition among young children.

Education:

- **Read** aloud the book, "**Winter is Here**," by Kevin Henkes.
- **Watch** the video on "**Move Your Way: Tips for Getting Motivated**”
- **Talk** with families about ways to integrate fitness into the cold winter season.
- **Bonus:** Send #ActivePlay, #ColdWinterActivities, #Outdoor/Indoor pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

Conversation:

- What is your favorite fitness activity to do during the winter season?
- How do you usually stay active during the colder months?
- Why is it important to exercise outdoors during the cold winter?
- How do you engage children in cold weather?

Physical Activity Resources

- Active Play in Cold Weather (**English** & **Spanish**)
- **Dressing Kids for the Winter**
- **Understand the Weather: Child Care Weather Watch**

When playing outside in cold weather, children should dress in layers to stay warm. Encourage families to provide hats and gloves to wear, especially below 32°F. As educators, enjoy the winter fun and adventures. Always prioritize children’s safety during any physical activity. Let’s keep moving!

Share your #ColdWinterActivities, #Outdoor/Indoor stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov.



Follow DECAL on Pinterest

Do you need ideas to help incorporate nutrition education and physical activity at your site?

Check out DECAL’s Pinterest for CACFP, Happy Helpings& Harvest of the Month recipes, physical activity ideas, healthy holiday celebrations, and more click [here](#).

Nutrition and Physical Activity pins are saved and added weekly.

Questions or suggestions, submit to morgan.chapman@dec.al.ga.gov or tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov.

Nourishing Healthy Eaters

Interactive, Online Courses by Nemours Children's Health

As a child care professional, you work to ensure healthy development for those in your care. Making sure they eat nutritious foods and build healthy habits is a crucial part of their development.

Nemours Children's Health have an interactive course to help you learn how to nourish healthy eaters – they even have a course focused on preschool-aged children.



Nourishing Healthy Eaters and **Nourishing Preschoolers** are interactive, online courses for child care professionals (Head Start and Early Head Start teachers, family child care providers, child care providers) to explore the role of nutrition in early childhood development and deepen their understanding of how children learn to become healthy eaters.



Eat Healthy and Live Active *Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 24-25 Calendar*

The Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month is a collaborative campaign between Quality Care for Children, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Georgia Department of Human Services, and Georgia Organics. The campaign aims to encourage healthy eating habits by promoting a different local, seasonal fruit or vegetable each month.

Visit Quality Care for Children's Farm to ECE [webpage](#) to access a variety of classroom resources, ideas, a book list, and family newsletter to help you promote a new vegetable or fruit each month.

For school-age children resources, visit the Georgia Department of Education's Harvest of the month [webpage](#).

CACFP Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- **A Message for CAPS and Quality Rated Providers**
- **CACFP Policy 41 – State Agency Monitoring Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program**
- **Reimbursement Rates for CACFP Providers**
- **CACFP Learning Collaborative Launches FARMWISE**
- **Updated Procurement Forms to include Civil Rights Assurance Statement**
- **New CACFP Memo on State Agency Monitoring**
- **Updated Agreement for DCH Sponsors**
- **Thriving Child Care Business Academy**
- **Claim Deadlines Updated**
- **Get the Lead Out of Water Where Children Learn and Play**
- **Updated Agreements for DCH and Administrative Sponsors**
- **Updated Suspension & Disbarment Certification Information**
- **How to File a CACFP Claim for Reimbursement**

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
January	Harvest of the Month: Collard, Mustard, and Turnip Greens
January 15	Budget Readiness Webinar
January 20	Holiday: Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday
January 29	Physical Activity is Important in Early Childhood Training
February 11	Tuesday Tip! Creditable or Not in CACFP
March 16-22	National CACFP Week

Join Us for a NEW DECAL Download!

Early Childhood Care and Education Pipeline Grant

On the next ...
DECAL
Download
New Episodes Every Wednesday!

This Week's Topic:
Early Childhood Care and Education Pipeline Grant

Dr. Christi Moore
Director of Workforce Supports

Bobby Creech
TCSG Executive Director of Adult Education

Sescily Bell
Grant Beneficiary

A grant administered by DECAL and the Technical College System of Georgia is helping identify and pay for the tuition of adult education students looking to work in early childhood education.

This is a field of work that has seen a severe shortage of qualified workers. It's called the Early Childhood Care and Education Pipeline Grant. So

far, it has supported close to 200 students.

Joining us to talk about the Pipeline Grant is Dr. Christi Moore, the Director of Workforce Supports and Learning and the TCSG Executive Director of Adult Education, Bobby Creech. We are also joined by a grant beneficiary Sescily Bell of Covington, who is a working mother of seven, and a pn student at Georgia Piedmont Technical College.

Listen to the episode [here](#).

How was my Customer Service?

Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team



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



Outreach Team

Cindy Kicklighter
Joann Kilpatrick

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Nondiscrimination Statement: English

Nondiscrimination Statement: Spanish

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