

January 3, 2023



### Happy Helpings Sponsor Kick-off Call Register today for January 6 call.

It's a new year and it's a great time to start the planning process for summer meals.

We invite you to join Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services for a**Happy Helpings Kick-Off Call** on January 6, 2023 at 10 am.

We will share the results of the Happy Helpings Sponsor Survey and provide updates on the upcoming summer meals season.

Click here to register for the call. Once you register, you will receive a link to join the call.

# **Gudiance on Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data**

On May 17, 2021, USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) issued the Policy Memorandum, Collection of Race and Ethnicity Data by Visual Observation and Identification in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program – Policy Rescission.

This policy advised that visual observation and identification by CACFP institutions and facilities and SFSP sponsors is no longer an allowable practice for CACFP and SFSP program operators to use during the collection of race or ethnicity data. **The requirement to end the practice of visual identification was effective May 17, 2021.** 

FNS Policy Memorandum, Questions and Answers Related to Collection of Race and Ethnicity Data by Visual Observation and Identification in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program – Policy Rescission, issued on June 13, 2022, advised that State agencies and Program operators should use methods that are based on self-identification and self-reporting; and further advised that a best practice for this would be obtaining the information from parents or guardians or adult participants.

FNS provided a grace period for CACFP and SFSP program operators and state agencies to develop other data collection methods. This grace period began May 17, 2021 and will come to an end on **December 31, 2022**. During this grace period, program operators were not to receive a finding of non-compliance during reviews; however, it was to be noted as an observation and could have become a finding if alternative means were not implemented before the end of the grace period.

By **January 1, 2023**, program operators must have alternative means to capture the data or they may be issued a finding of non-compliance on their next review.

Nutrition Services has issued the following guidance to aid Program operators in the development of alternate means to capture this data. The below is applicable to both CACFP institutions and SFSP sponsors:

- A new DECAL Memorandum, Collection of Race and Ethnicity Data in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program, provides guidance to CACFP institutions and SFSP sponsors on allowable methods to collect race and ethnicity data, required documentation, and best practices.
- The CACFP/SFSP Racial and Ethnic Data Individual Collection Form for Families has been developed to assist CACFP and SFSP programs in the gathering of race and ethnicity data from parents and/or guardians.
- The Combined Racial/Ethnic Data Collection Form for Institutions and Sponsors is a new DECAL required form that CACFP institutions/facilities and SFSP sponsors must use to document the collected racial and ethnic information received.
- The Income Eligibility Statement's Part V regarding Ethnic and Racial Identities that may be completed by parents and/or guardians has been revised so as CACFP institutions and facilities may use the Income Eligibility Statement as a form of race and ethnic data collection.

Program operators are invited to attend the January 23, 2023, Memo Monday Webinar on the new DECAL memo, Collection of Race and Ethnicity Data in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program. Institutions may register for the Memo Monday Webinar by clicking **here**.

Nutrition Services encourages all CACFP institutions and facilities to begin the actual process of collecting racial and ethnic participant information as soon as possible.

For questions regarding the new memorandum on race and ethnicity data collection, please contact Robyn Parham, Policy Administrator, at **Robyn.Parham@decal.ga.gov**.

# **Updated Happy Helpings Forms & Policies**

The **FY 2023 Happy Helpings Revised Forms-Documents-Policies Chart** was created as a resource tool for sponsors to be aware of all new and revised Happy Helpings forms/documents, manuals, and policies. Decal recommends that sponsors refer to this chart to ensure they are compliant with most recent updates.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the following Technical Assistance Coordinators or Trainers listed below.

TA Coordinators and Trainers	Email	Region	Phone Number
Victoria Carden	Victoria.Carden@decal.ga.gov	Trainer	(470) 532-0873
LaKisha Battle	Lakisha.Battle@decal.ga.gov	Southeast	(478) 314-2806
Leatha Bryant	Leatha.Bryant@decal.ga.gov	Southwest	(404) 782-7287
Emilia Emmanuel	Emilia.Emmanuel@decal.ga.gov	Metro West	(678) 337-9759
Nkem Ijeh	Nkem.Ijeh@decal.ga.gov	North/Northwest	(404) 973-4099
Vacant	NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov	East	

### New Organizations Interested in Happy Helpings

### All Participants Required to Complete a Viability Screening Assessment

A complete and accurate viability screening packet must be submitted at least seven business days prior to the last new sponsor training to allow time for review of the submitted information.

Organizations that meet all viability requirements will be registered to attend one of the required two-day trainings for new sponsors scheduled in February, March, or April 2023.

**\*Note**: School Food Authorities (SFAs) and government entities are exempt from the Viability, Capability, and Accountability (VCA) Checklist requirement. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Kicklighter, Marketing and Outreach Manager, at 678-841-3170.

# Summer 2023 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 new year:

#### 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.

# **Procurement Helpful Hints**

### Start 2023 with Planning and Procurement

Bring in the new year with procurement success by planning for Happy Helpings FY 2023 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:

- Preparation of Invitation for Bids
- Submission of Invitation for Bids to State Agency
- Publicizing of Invitation for Bids and publicly announcing all IFBs at least 14 days before bid openings.
- Notifying the State Agency of the time and place at least 14 days before the bid opening
- Publicly opening all bids
- Submitting to the State Agency copies of all contracts, a certificate of independent price determination, and copies of all bids received
- Evaluation of bids
- Contract award

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

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

# **Reminder: PolicyStat is available on the Nutrition Services' Webpage**

**PolicyStat** is an *online policy management system* that allows CACFP and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program, organizations and DECAL staff to navigate, locate, and access policy documents more quickly. The links for PolicyStat can be accessed at the following two links:

• For CACFP, click here

• For Happy Helpings, click here

CACFP and Happy Helpings organizations are encouraged to take a moment to become familiar with the system.

**Please Note:** As Nutrition Services works to perfect PolicyStat, please continue to use the current **Policy** and **Memos** links on the DECAL website as your main resource for all CACFP and Happy Helpings related policies and memoranda.

For questions, please feel free to contact Robyn Parham atRobyn.Parham@decal.ga.gov or Sonja Adams at Sonja.Adams@decal.ga.gov.

# Happy Helping Waivers available during Unanticipated School Closures

On May 18, 2022, DECAL received approval from the USDA for the following statewide waivers which are available during unanticipated school closures. These waivers are in effect October 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023. The waiver approval letter can be found **here**.

Please note: For the purposes of these waivers, unanticipated school closures only occur when instruction is not provided to children. If a school plans to offer virtual learning or a mix of in-person classes and virtual learning, then the school would be considered open and not in an "unanticipated school closure" status.

- Waiver 16: Non-Congregate Meal Service during Unanticipated School Closures waives the requirements that meals must be served in a congregate setting and be consumed by participants on site.
- Waiver 17: Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-Up during Unanticipated School Closures waives the requirement that meals be served directly to eligible participants.
- Waiver 18: Meal Service Times for Unanticipated School Closures waives meal service time requirements.
- Waiver 19: Service of Meals at School Sites during Unanticipated School Closures waives the requirement that State agencies are to only approve meal service operations at non-school sites.

**These waivers are only applicable when the congregate meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.** Therefore, the following criteria is required for these waivers to be approved and used by Happy Helpings sponsors during unanticipated school closures. Waiver requests must be based on at least 1 of the following criteria:

#### Criteria 1:

The site must be located in a county that is designated as High, Substantial, or Moderate regarding COVID-19 community transmissions as determined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and/or Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) websites:

- CDC, **listed here** Under the "Data Type" pull down menu (located mid-page), the user would select "Community Transmission" to access a county's designation; and/or
- DPH, listed here- The user would select the most recent County Indicator Report and

click "Community Transmission" in the top right corner of the page to access a county's designation.

#### Criteria 2:

Sponsors can provide official documentation affirming a meal service has been impacted as a result of COVID-19 transmission. The documentation must be issued by the following:

- A public state, local, or county official
- A school superintendent or principal
- An SFSP Sponsor reporting a documented case of COVD-19 at an SFSP Site. Documentation to support the documented case of COVID-19 could be a letter or email that was sent to parents, staff, or site location such as an apartment complex advising of the documented case.

These waivers will be effective for **30 days** upon approval, with the option to re-apply for an additional 30 days, if the criteria are met using the most current data from the CDC, GA DPH, or with new documentation affirming that meal services have been impacted.

#### Happy Helpings sponsors interested in applying for these waivers during unanticipated school closures must submit waiver requests via the Waiver Module within GA ATLAS.

\*Documentation to support the criteria chosen must be uploaded with the waiver request in GA Atlas. Additionally, waiver requests for sponsored sites will be reviewed and approved upon the site's approval to operate the Program.

**More Information on Requesting a Waiver:** For information on requesting a waiver, please access the following resources:

- **USDA Waiver User Guide** Provides step by step instructions on how to submit a waiver request in GA Atlas (applies to both CACFP and SFSP).
- Important Reminders when using USDA Approved Waivers Discusses key recordkeeping requirements.
- USDA Waiver Addendum Required when using the Parent Pick-up waiver or when conducting home delivery under the Non-Congregate waiver.

For general questions on requesting a USDA approved waiver, please contact **Tammie.Baldwin@decal.ga.gov.** 

For specific policy questions pertaining to waivers, please contact **Robyn.Parham@decal.ga.gov.** 

# **Training Dates**

#### January 11, 2023- Budget and Procurement - Readiness Training

Are you practicing proper procurement requirements with the budget basics? Join this webinar to learn:

- relevant procurement practices when procuring food & non-food items,
- how to develop formal solicitations,
- how to incorporate local sourcing practices into meal service,
- the purpose of the budget package,
- the purpose of all the budget line items in GA ATLAS, and
- how to prepare & develop a complete GA ATLAS budget package.
  - [Register Now]

#### January 23, 2023 - Memo Monday!

Regulations are constantly changing and interpreting all the policies and memorandums can be a challenge. Therefore, Nutrition Services will discuss the following policy memo(s) during our January *Memo Monday*.

• Collection of Race and Ethnicity Data in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program

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

- February 16, 2023 (Virtual)
- February 23, 2023 (DECAL: Atlanta)
- April 13, 2023 (Hilton Garden Inn: Albany)

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

- February 1-2 2023 (Atlanta Metro State College)
- March 22-23 2023 (Hilton Garden Inn: Albany)
- April 26-27 2023 (Atlanta Metro State College)

# **Get Informed: 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 **Farm to Summer** webinar. It discussed tips for increasing local foods, ways to engage children through hands-on food education, and ideas for increasing garden-based education.

#### Using the Nutrition Facts Label in the CACFP

USDA's **Team Nutrition** has developed this worksheet to help program operators understand the benefits of the Nutrition Fact Label and how to read the label to choose the best foods to serve the children and adults in your care, available in English and Spanish.

• [Get the Nutrition Facts]

#### **Corn 5 Ways**

**MyPlate** has developed this infographic to share five [5] ways to prepare corn for a CACFP meal. Explore the website to discover more infographics on nutrition information.

• [Get the Info]

#### Whole-Child Wellness

The **Sesame Street in the Communities** has shared a new resource on their **Staying Healthy** webpage to help all families build healthy habits, healthy minds and healthy bodies.

• [Get Healthy]

# Food Buying Guide (FBG) for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based Tool *New feature!*

USDA's Team Nutrition has added the following new food yields: frozen cherries, frozen cauliflower rice, frozen diced carrots, frozen legumes (black-eyed peas, navy beans, and garbanzo beans), mini sweet peppers, and pearled farro. Additionally, a new feature is now available on the Food Buying Guide (FBG) for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Webbased Tool and FBG Interactive Mobile App. Team Nutrition is excited to announce that this new feature allows a Favorites List and Compare Items List to be exported as an Excel file for ease of use. Explore the **Food Buying Guide** today!

### Training & Technical Assistance

The goal of the Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Unit is to improve performance and better equip new and participating institutions and sponsors by providing practical, user-friendly resources and guidance materials that strengthen internal controls and result in successful, sustainable Program administration and operation. We want to ensure that we continue to meet this goal during any transitions and/or position changes.



Therefore, sponsors that reside in**region 2** listed in the map above, please contact our Nutrition TA mailbox at **NutritionTA@decal.ga.gov** with any needed technical assistance.

You may also visit our **Training and Technical Assistance** webpage for Program resources and recorded webinars.



# Apply for a No Kid Hungry Grant Today

A key part of No Kid Hungry's strategy is building partnerships and supporting child nutrition efforts through grantmaking. Their grants provide schools and community-based organizations with the financial

support they need to ensure kids have access to the nutritious food needed to live, learn and play.

Please complete the following form **here**, where the No Kid Hungry team will reach out if grant funding is available for your program.



### **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, and folate. These nutrients protect bones and teeth, help with vision, and improve immunity.

Typically planted eight to ten weeks before the first frost, these vegetables are available to be purchased locally in

Georgia at this time of the year and will continue growing well throughout the winter. 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!

#### Integration:

- Butternut Squash with Collard Greens\*
- Seared Greens\*
- Greens & Beans Soup \* (Sopa de garbanzo y hojas verdes)

\*You may substitute any of the Harvest of the Month 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.
- *Grow* turnip, mustard, and collard greens growing greens begins in fall time and early spring and are an exciting item to harvest as the leaves get bigger.
- *Make* a variety of cultural dishes that include greens to share various meals from

across the world with your participants.

• *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, MCH 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:

- Running Events in Georgia for the New Year 2023
- Top 5 Ways to Stay Active When it's Cold Out ONIE Project
- Exercise Videos | Virginia Family Nutrition Program (eatsmartmovemoreva.org)

#### **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'sResolution2023, #NewFitnessGoals2023, #MotivationalFitness pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

#### **Conversation:**

- What are your fitness goals for the New Year 2023?
- How do you stay active with your family during and after the holidays?
- What is your motivation to exercise?

Share your **#NewYearFitnessGoals**, **#FitnessMotivation**, and **#GetFit** stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at **tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov**.

# Be a Health Hero – Health Empowers You

HealthMPowers, a partner organization with the Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning, promotes healthy habits to build a better future for all children in Georgia.



To connect with their work, text 'HEALTHY' to 833-369-3547 to receive one text message per week on healthy tips, recipes, and activities for your whole family.

What are you waiting for? Sign-up now! Information is also available in **Spanish**.



### **DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight:** *Meet Leatha Bryant, Technical Assistance Coordinator and Trainer*

Leatha Bryant recently joined the Nutrition Services Division as the Technical Assistance Coordinator and Trainer for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program in the Southwest region. In her position, Leatha will aid sponsors and institutions by assisting them to thrive through program needs and demands, as well as manage compliance. She will also accomplish tasks and procedures relating to outreach planning and assessment, technical assistance and training, and

surveillance.

Leatha resides in Southwest Georgia, and for the past 15 years, has worked with The Boys and Girls Club of Mitchell County as the director of operations and the compliance director for their state and federally funded programs. In these roles, Leatha was responsible for ensuring overall daily operations and compliance. She brings twenty plus years of management experience working with non-profits; leading work teams, structuring quality improvement systems, coaching and training key personnel, and overseeing daily operations.

Leatha has a passion for serving and mentoring youth and young adults. Her passion drives her to ensure that youth develop mentally, physical, and academically. She understands the connection between healthy meals and youth development, and how important the meals are that are provided by the centers. "For some youth, the meals that they receive at school and in their afterschool and out-of-school programs may be the only meals they receive that day. Therefore, the centers are so important to our communities" she said.

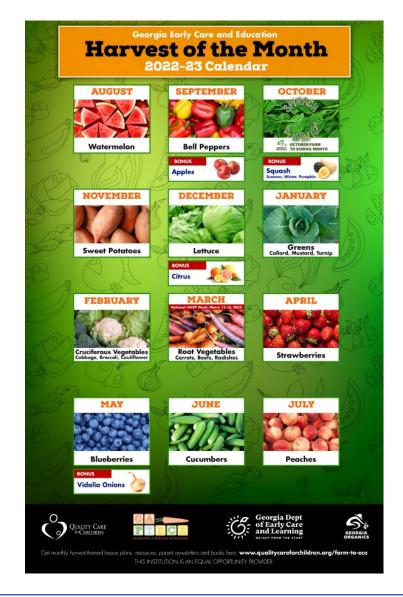
Leatha loves assisting others, teaching new policies and techniques, and ensuring that program compliance and expectations can be met. She added that she has consistently done this by ensuring that her teammates understand the main goal. "The team sets the expectations and reach the goals together, or not at all." Leatha believes in continuous education and takes every opportunity to not only help educate others, but is a lifelong learner who continues to pursue her education and works hard to be the best individual, employee, and human being possible.

### **Eat Healthy and Live Active** Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 22-23 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.

DECAL's Harvest of the Month calendar aligns with the Georgia Department of Education's Harvest of the Month initiative and was created in partnership with Quality Care for Children, Georgia Organics, and the Farm to Early Care & Education (ECE) Coalition for ECE settings.

Visit the **Georgia Department of Education's HOTM webpage** and **Quality Care for Children's HOTM webpage**. Upon viewing, you can findtips and tricks for preparing produce items, curriculum connections, activity lists and book alignment for your early care classrooms.



### **Dates To Know**

DATE:	EVENTS
January	Harvest of the Month: Greens
	Start Planning for Summer 2023
January 6	Happy Helpings Sponsor Kick-off Call
January 11	Happy Helpings Budget and Procurement Readiness
	Training Webinar
January 23	Memo Monday!
February 1-2	Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training
February 16	Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training
February 23	Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training
March 22-23	Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training
April 13	Happy Helpings Experienced Sponsor Training
April 26-27	Happy Helpings New Sponsor Training

### Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- Happy Helpings Year-End Reconciliation Memorandum Revised
- Thank You Happy Helpings Sponsors
- Statewide Happy Helpings Waivers Available
- After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk
- Transitioning from Happy Helpings to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals
- HH Sponsors: Pictures of High Quality Meals
- Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS
- Reimbursement Rates for Summer 2022

### 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** *Ten Most Popular Episodes of 2022*

Christmas has come and gone, and the new year is here. As we look back on 2022, DECAL Download had another great year, winning three Awards of Distinction in the 28th Annual Communicator Awards. In this week's episode we look back at the ten most popular episodes of 2022, as we get ready to usher in 2023.



Listen to the episode**here**.



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<u>Nutrition Division</u> <u>Marketing & Outreach Team</u>

Cindy Kicklighter Carl Glover

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