



June 2, 2025

Submit Your Happy Helpings Application

Federal Deadline: June 15

If you have not submitted your Happy Helpings (HH) application, please make sure to do so by the federal deadline on Sunday, June 15, 2025. Applications not submitted by the deadline date will not be reviewed; therefore, they cannot be approved.

If your organization still has plans to participate this summer, you are strongly encouraged to complete and submit the application before the deadline date.

For detailed instructions on completing the application, you may refer to the [FY 2025 HH Application Instruction Booklet](#)

Tips for Completing the Application

- To minimize confusion and delays, only the program contact and/or authorized representative should be contacting the application reviewer. Keep in mind that the program contact is responsible for entering the information in the online application, GA ATLAS.
- Complete all forms in their entirety.
- The Food Service Permit Inquiry Form needs to be submitted/signed in every county where meals are being served prior to being submitted to DECAL.
- If utilizing a food service management company (FSMC) or acting as FSMC, ensure that numbers 42 & 43 are responded to correctly on the institution application.

Board of Directors Section:

- Ensure that all sections are completed for each board member.
- Any changes made to the Board of Directors (BOD) need to be supported with board meeting minutes.
- Ensure that the "delegation of authority" form is signed by an officer of the board (as defined on the form).

Management Plan:

- The plan should be updated annually.
- The percentage of time allocated to Happy Helpings for personnel/staffing should align with the allocation on the staff distribution report.
- Staff and duty allocations in the Management Plan must match the names of staff and duty time listed in Staff Distribution Worksheet.

Budget:

Specific Prior Written Approval (SPWA) submission and approval process

- Sponsors with an emergency request, are required to email the [SPWA request form](#) with supporting documentation to Gwendolyn.Howard@dec.al.gov within 24hrs of purchase and then submit a

- budget revision to include the cost.
- For all other requests, sponsors are required to submit a budget revision to include the cost, upload the [SPWA request form](#) and supporting documents to the attachments list section in GA ATLAS and notify the budget team via email at Nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov at least three days prior to making the purchase.
- DECAL will review the request and provide an approval or denial status in writing, including any special considerations or reasons. The SPWA will be signed and uploaded to the attachment list section in GA ATLAS.

Site Application:

- Site changes, including add-a-sites, need to be approved prior to making changes to an approved budget.
- Ensure to indicate days that the site will not serve meals during normal operating dates on #14.
- If site is outdoors (park, driveway, pool), please detail the plan if indicating that meals will be served indoors when answering #28.

Maximum Meal Count:

- The threshold for the maximum number of meals that can be served is 100.
- Sponsors that request a Maximum Meal Count (MMC) over the threshold prior to the initial approval of the site application must submit written justification to their assigned Application Specialist explaining why an increase is needed.
- Enrollment/registration information should be submitted to justify the increase for sites that are closed enrolled.
- Letters of authorization for sites located at unaffiliated schools and/or unaffiliated apartment communities can include information to justify the increase. A justification letter is not required for sites requesting the same MMC over the threshold that was approved the previous year. Additionally, if the request is over the MMC threshold, but under the approved MMC that was approved the previous year, no justification letter is required.
- If a request appears unreasonable/unsupported, then the MMC over 100 will not be approved.
- Sponsors that begin operations and later request a MMC over the threshold must submit written justification to their assigned Business Operations Specialist explaining why the increase is needed. Additionally, three consecutive days of daily meal count (DMC) forms must be submitted. If the request is unsupported, the MMC to provide more than 100 meals will not be approved.
- Sponsors requesting a MMC increase are required to indicate the additional children requesting a meal after all available meals were served on the daily meal count form. Sponsors do not have to serve any additional meals over the approved MMC in the site application. Note: If DECAL doesn't approve the requested MMC increase, then the cost of any additional meals served over the approved MMC will be the responsibility of the sponsor.
- All meal count increase requests must be reviewed and approved by DECAL prior to claim submission for the operating month.

Stay Informed: New Happy Helpings Memoranda

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recently issued the following guidance:

Using Federal Funds to Purchase Local Foods, May 6, 2025 .

This memorandum reminds schools, sponsors, and institutions participating in any U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Program (CNP), including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Special Milk Program for Children (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), of the many ways they can purchase local foods to serve in Program meals.

For questions or for additional information, please contact Tempest Harris, Procurement Compliance Specialist at Tempest.Harris@decals.ga.gov.

And Justice for All Posters



Sponsors participating in Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program are required to display the "And Justice for All" poster at meal sites where it can be viewed by the public.

You can download the poster [here](#), and display it in the specific size of 11" width x 17" height. The cost for printing posters is an approved Happy Helpings expense and should be allocated to the publication, printing and reproduction budget line item.

Resources to Promote Meal Sites

Ensuring families and guardians are aware of the availability of meals in their area is an important part of the Happy Helpings program. Nutrition Services has created several promotional resources to help sponsors gain exposure for meal sites this summer.

These resources include:

- Editable flyer
- Editable Poster
- Social Media Graphics
- Vehicle Magnet*

**To produce a vehicle magnet, print the artwork and take it to any sign company.*

Marketing Materials to Promote Meal Sites

Social Media Graphics


Flyers


Posters

Vehicle Magnet

Facebook


Right click on image and save






Instagram

Right click on image and save





To locate these resources, visit the [Nutrition Page](#) on [Decal.ga.gov](#) and locate "Happy Helpings Participant Information" on the menu. Expand the menu and scroll to "Posters and Flyers." Click on the link and it will take you to a password protected section. The password is "Flyer."

If you have questions, please contact Cindy.Kicklighter@decal.ga.gov

New Supplier Change Request (SCR) Form and Updates

Anytime changes are made to your banking account information, please notify DECAL by completing the Supplier Change Request (SCR) Form 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 see updates to the vendor management process below:

- The State Accounting Office (SAO) has issued a new [Supplier Change Request \(SCR\) Form](#) and [Instructions](#) that must be used.
- The SAO is now requiring the supplier to enter the "county" on the Supplier Change Request (SCR) Form after the address.
- Supplier Change Request (SCR) Form 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.) Electronic signatures are NOT acceptable on the W9. It must be a wet signature or digital 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.

Celebrate Farm to Summer Week: June 23-27

The graphic is a promotional poster for "Farm to Summer Week 2025". On the left, there is a collage of various fresh fruits and vegetables, including blueberries, strawberries, orange slices, and cucumbers, arranged in small white bowls. A circular inset shows a young girl smiling and holding a bowl of fruit. The right side of the graphic has a green background with white and yellow text. At the top right is the "Nutrition Services DECAL" logo. The main title "Farm to Summer Week" is in large, stylized letters, with "2025" in the middle. Below that, the dates "June 23 - 27" are listed. A blue box contains the "Themes of the Week" for each day: Monday (What is Farm to Summer?), Tuesday (Gardening & Physical Activity), Wednesday (Cooking & Tasting), Thursday (Locally Grown in Meals & Snacks), and Friday (Literacy, Music & Movement). At the bottom, a tagline reads "Teaching our youngest learners healthy habits that will last a lifetime."

Join DECAL's Nutrition Services as we celebrate [Farm to Summer Week](#), an initiative that brings the joy of fresh, local food and hands-on learning to children and families during the

summer months.

Farm to Summer Week is all about engaging kids through fun, experiential activities that connect them to where their food comes from. It's a great way to improve the quality and appeal of summer meals, increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and ensure children stay nourished while school is out.

Each day of the week features a special theme to inspire learning and creativity:

- **Monday – What is Farm to Summer?** Introduce kids to the concept of Farm to Summer and explore how food gets from the farm to their plates.
- **Tuesday – Gardening & Physical Activity:** Get moving with garden-based activities that teach how food grows while encouraging physical activity.
- **Wednesday – Cooking & Taste Testing:** Involve children in preparing and tasting fresh fruits and veggies to build healthy habits and curiosity around food.
- **Thursday – Locally Grown in Meals & Snacks:** Highlight local produce in meals and snacks, and talk about the importance of supporting local farmers.
- **Friday – Literacy, Music & Movement:** Wrap up the week with farm-themed books, songs, and movement activities that make learning about food fun and memorable.

We encourage all summer programs to participate by incorporating these themes into your daily activities. Whether it's planting a garden, hosting a taste test, or reading a farm-themed story, every activity helps children build a stronger connection to healthy food and where it comes from. Visit the [Farm to Summer Week](#) webpage for resources, activity ideas, and more.

Share your photos with us throughout the week! Show us how your program is celebrating Farm to Summer Week by posting on social media using #GAFarmtoSummer or by emailing your photos to morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov.

Upcoming Training and Technical Assistance

June 3, 2025

Tuesday Tip! Let's Hydrate

1:30 - 2:00 pm

Are you frequently thinking about fun ways to increase fluid intake?

Join this webinar to learn:

- creditable milks and juices,
- fun ways to increase water intake, and
- the importance and benefits of water consumption.

Participants can earn one-half [0.50] state-approved hour(s) for attending this training in its entirety.

[\[Register Now\]](#)

June 16, 2025

Memo Monday

10:00 am- 12:00 pm

Are you aware of the 30/60-day claim procedures and how to maximize monthly reimbursements?

Please join this webinar for a review on the following policy memos.

- **[30/60 Day Claim Procedure and Revised Claims Limitation for the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\), SFSP #4 \(03-4\)](#)**
- **[Unused Reimbursement in the Summer Food Service Program](#)**

[\[Register Now\]](#)

June 17, 2025

Happy Helpings Reconciliation Training

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Do you need a refresher on reconciliation and the required records?

Join this webinar to learn:

- detailed information on the annual Year-End Reconciliation process,
- how to complete the Reconciliation Form, and
- documents required for submission and potential next steps.

[\[Register Now\]](#)

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 leslie.truman@dec.al.ga.gov or (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 [Product Formulation Statement \(PFS\) & CN Labels webinar](#). It discussed how Product Formulation Statements & CN Labels provide a way for a manufacturer to demonstrate how a processed food product may contribute to the meal pattern requirements in child nutrition programs (CNP).

New Resources from No Kid Hungry

Check out these updated tools to support summer sponsors in expanding non-congregate meal service—especially in rural areas. These resources offer practical guidance on implementation, staffing, gathering feedback, and more.

- [Successful Non-Congregate Meal Service Models for Rural Areas: Implementation Guide](#)
 - [The Summer Meals Student Workforce Toolkit](#)
 - [Gathering Feedback from Families: Using a Survey to Inform Meal Service](#)
 - [Sample Survey for Parents- Summer Grab & Go Programs](#)
 - [How to Offer Bulk Meals During the Summer Months](#)
 - [Staffing Up: Strategies for Working Through Labor Shortage Challenges](#)
-

Nutrition Ed Nook

Juicy, Red Tomatoes!

Tomatoes are the June Harvest of the Month ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) spotlight! Juicy and succulent, tomatoes are



packed with vitamins and nutrients that promote good health. They are rich in fiber, vitamins A & C, and potassium. Additionally, tomatoes are an important source of lycopene, a powerful antioxidant with numerous health benefits.

Tomatoes come in a variety of sizes and colors, including red, yellow, orange, green, and purple. Some common types are red round, cherry, grape, pear, Roma (Italian plum), and heirloom tomatoes. Tomatoes are incredibly versatile in the kitchen. They can be stuffed, stewed, baked, and used in sauces, casseroles, and soups. Raw tomatoes are perfect for salads, sandwiches, or as a quick snack!

In Georgia, tomatoes are in season from March through November. As a warm-season crop, they do not tolerate frost and require about 6-8 hours of full sun daily to grow. When purchasing fresh tomatoes, look for those with bright, shiny skin and firm flesh.

Fun Fact: Tomatoes are botanically a fruit, but we often place them in the vegetable food group.

Integration:

- [Pico de Gallo](#)
- [Avocado Rice Cakes](#)
- [Pizza Kebab](#)
- [Tofu Taco](#)
- [Quick Chili](#)

Education:

- **Watch** the [Georgia Tomatoes](#) video to discover the history of tomatoes, explore the different varieties, learn about their production including how they are grown and harvested, understand their nutritional benefits, and ways to enjoy them.
- **Explore** different tomato varieties by selecting several for participants to try. Encourage them to use their senses. Create an observation chart to record their observations and discuss the similarities and differences between the varieties.
- **Taste test** a variety of tomatoes. Is there a favorite from the exploration activity? You can make quick and easy fresh tomato salsa. Dice a few tomatoes and add garlic, onions, peppers, cilantro, or basil and you have a perfect snack to eat with whole grain tortilla chips!
- **Read** [I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato](#), by Lauren Child. Lola is a fussy eater. A very fussy eater. She won't eat her carrots (until Charlie reveals that they're orange twiglets from Jupiter). There are many things Lola won't eat, including — and especially — tomatoes. Or will she? Two endearing siblings star in a witty story about the triumph of imagination.
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation including rinsing and drying tomatoes to be served with a meal.
- **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate tomatoes into their meals!
- **Want ECE tomato-themed resources?** Check out Quality Care for Children's [Harvest of the Month toolkit](#) for more ways to engage ECE students.

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten tomatoes before?
- What is their favorite way to eat tomatoes?
- What other red fruits and vegetables do they like to eat?

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

Physical Activity Corner

Be Active All Summer Long!

Hello Summer Activities! This is the perfect time to venture outdoors, bring out those running shoes, get ready to play and get in some physical activity. It is recommended that children and adults get at least one hour of physical activity every day.

Physical activity doesn't have to mean structured exercise and instead can be a way to integrate movement in your day while being outdoors. Unstructured and structured play are both forms of physical activity.

Be prepared with activity ideas when children say, "I'm bored." Have less screen time, turn off TVs, and electronic devices and get everyone moving at set times during the day. It may be helpful to brainstorm with the children a list of activities in advance that your family enjoys.

Here are a few summer activities for the children and families:

- Go on a group bike ride.
- Go on a trail walk, jog, or run with your family.
- Take time to go to local community pools early in the morning.
- Play games like *Freeze Tag* and *Red Light/Green Light*.
- Have a backyard garden party—invite the neighbors and friends to harvest a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Draw different shapes with sidewalk chalk and practice moving over, around, frog hops, and counting numbers like hopscotch.
- Play catch with a water balloon.
- Walk like different animals—bear, crab, chicken, dog, snake, etc.
- Set up a variety of targets— old bottles, cans, buckets. Then work on throwing a ball at them from different distances.



Integration:

- **Getting Started: Georgia Farm to ECE Guide**
- **Explore Georgia - Summer Family Adventure**
- **Georgia Master Gardeners: Gardens of Georgia**
- **Quality Care for Children – Eat, Learn & Grow Georgia**
- **UGA Extension's on Gardening**
- **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

Education:

- **Read** aloud, *And Then Comes Summer*, by Tome Brenner.
- **Watch** the video on **Summer Safety Tips for Kids**.
- **Talk** with families about ways to get moving in the summer, whether at home, outside, in their local community, at your childcare site, or at their local recreational areas.
- **Bonus:** Share #GetMoving, #BeActive, #SummerMoves, #InstaMoves, #KeepKidsMoving pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

Conversation:

- What are some fun physical activities for preschoolers?
- What are some of your favorite summer indoor/outdoor activities?
- How do you beat the heat in sports?
- Why is being hydrated in summer important?

Share your #GetMoving, #BeActive, #SummerMoves, #KeepKidsMoving, #InstaMoves stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov.



Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 2024-2025 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, including activity ideas linked to the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), recipe 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](#).

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
June	Harvest of the Month:
June 3	Tuesday Tip! Let's Hydrate- Webinar
June 15	Happy Helpings Application Due
June 16	Memo Monday: Review on Claim Procedures and Unused Reimbursements - Webinar
June 16	Happy Helpings Start-up Grant Awardees will be announced
June 17	Happy Helpings Reconciliation Training- Webinar
June 23	Happy Helpings Start-up Grant: Applications must be approved to be eligible to receive grant funds
June 23-27	Farm to Summer Week
June 30	Happy Helpings Start-up Grant Awardees: Payments will be made on or before June 30, 2025
September 30	Deadline to submit Happy Helpings Start-up Grant Results

Decal Download Language and Literacy

This week we're discussing the pivotal changes and initiatives that are reshaping literacy training in Georgia. Beginning July 1, all child care providers will be required to obtain at least 2 hours of state-approved language and literacy training annually.

On the next ...

DECAL

Download 

New Episodes Every Wednesday!




Jennifer Bridgeman
CCS Director of Process and Policy

Dr. Christi Moore
Director of Workforce Supports and Learning

This Week's Topic:
Language and Literacy



This move underscores DECAL's commitment to enhancing language and literacy outcomes for even our youngest learners. Joining us to talk about DECAL's language and literacy efforts is Jennifer Bridgeman, Director of Process and Policy in our Child Care Services Division, and

Dr. Christi Moore is Director of Workforce Supports and Learning.

Listen to the episode [here](#).

Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- [No Kid Hungry GA Summer Webinar Series](#)
- [Advance Payment Requests Update](#)
- [Updates to SFSP Procurement Templates](#)
- [Procurement Methods At-A-Glance](#)
- [Have You Determined this Summer's Food Cost & Procurement Methods?](#)
- [2025 SFSP Reimbursement Rates](#)
- [Check you Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)

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.



Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach

**Cindy Kicklighter
Joann Kilpatrick**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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