

Nutrition News



Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

November 8, 2021

Nutrition Services announces New Brand Identity for the Summer Food Service Program

Introducing Happy Helpings!

Nutrition Services is excited to announce that Georgia's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) has a new name and logo. Happy Helpings is the new brand identity for the SFSP that ensures all Georgia's children continue to receive nutritious meals throughout their summer vacation.



Happy Helpings

Georgia's Summer Food Service Program

Although Happy Helpings is the program's new name, it will continue to operate in the same way as the USDA's Summer Food Service Program.

"We believe the new look is fun, kid-friendly and a better match for connecting with our intended audiences," said **Tamika Boone**, Director of Nutrition Services. "

In the upcoming months, you'll start to see the new Happy Helpings name and logo used in DECAL's training and promotions including online, video, social media, and statewide advertising. As we get closer to the summer meal season, sponsors will receive Happy Helpings branded banners, directional signs and speciality items for the kids to help promote meal sites.

In addition to the new name and logo, the Nutrition Division is launching a new Happy Helpings website. The site offers potential sponsoring organizations access to information and eligibility requirements for participation in the program. Users will be able to complete an online form to indicate their interest in the program and pre-qualify their organization.

The site will also be marketed to help Georgia families locate meal sites in their area as well as access nutrition education and activities for well-balanced meals.

To learn more about Helping Helpings, visit www.happyhelpingsga.com.

Annual Year End Reconciliation Notice

Extended SFSP & Traditional SFSP or Traditional SFSP Only

Per SFSP Policy 5, Sponsors are required to submit an Annual Year End Reconciliation Form as well as the bank statement and/or general ledger supporting the ending balance. The form should include all operating months from October 1, 2020 - August 30, 2021.

A bank statement and/or general ledger is requested to support the balance because these are source documents that are generated from the banking institution or financial management system used by the sponsor. DECAL is unable to accept documents that were created by the sponsor (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet) or financial records that do not clearly differentiate SFSP expenses separately from other expenses.

The deadline to complete the combined Extended or Traditional SFSP reconciliation form and final bank statement/general ledger was **October 31, 2021**.

[Click here](#) for the Annual Year End Reconciliation Form. If you haven't already done so, please submit the form and final bank statement/general ledger via email to Gwendolyn.Howard@dec.al.ga.gov. Please contact Gwendolyn Howard with any questions or concerns.

After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk

Afterschool programs **MUST** have a license or exemption in order to participate in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program by submitting a complete license or exemption application to DECAL's [Child Care Services \(CCS\)](#).

For more information, contact CCS at 404.657.5562.

Claim Deadlines announced for FY2022

State policy requires that original claims be submitted within 30 calendar days following the last day of the full month covered by the claim. Federal regulations require institutions to submit their final reimbursement claims including any revisions within 60 calendar days following the last day of the full month covered by the claim.

Sponsors' original claims not postmarked and/or submitted within 30 calendar days will be required to fill out a late claim explanation form after trying to submit a claim that is outside the state's 30 days deadline. Claims not postmarked and/or submitted within 60 calendar days cannot be processed unless DECAL and/or FNS determines that an exception should be granted. For example, ABC Day Care must submit their original claim for March reimbursement claim no later than April 30, and the final including any revision for March reimbursement claim no later than May 30.

Claim deadlines for FY 2022 are available [here](#).

It's Never too Early to Start Planning for Summer 2022

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! [Click here](#) for more information on proactive planning for sponsors.

Here's a guide for the remaining months of 2021:

November:

- Take time to reflect on the summer with site administrators and determine what could be improved or what worked.
- Reflect on the service provided by your vendor. Ensure the food was well-received by the children. Revise menus as needed.
- Review unserved and underserved areas near current sites.
- Recruit sites to these areas of need.
- Compare participation from this year to that of prior years, as well as current

- participation for free and reduced-price meals in local schools.
- Consider providing non-monetary awards to recognize sites that excelled during the summer.
- Reach out to sites that were underutilized and offer support to increase participation for the coming year.
- Set participation goals for the next summer and plan how you will accomplish them.
- Look out for dates on mandatory sponsor training from DECAL.
- Begin developing a marketing and outreach campaign.

December:

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

Get Informed: Upcoming Training Opportunities

Webinar Recordings Now available!

SFSP Transition to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Webinar Recording

Are you interested in serving meals year-round when school is in-session?

Click on [Webinar Recording](#) to register and learn:

- the overview of the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program,
- eligibility, application, licensing, and exemption requirements to participate.

In Case You Missed It!

If you missed a *webinar*, please visit the [Training and Technical Assistance](#) webpage for previously recorded webinars. This month's featured recording is the *July Memo Monday* webinar. It discusses procedure updates when requesting a waiver using the USDA Waivers feature in GA ATLAS.

Procurement Tips for SFSP

Now is a great time to begin thinking about and planning for SFSP FY22 food purchases.

Whether you are a self-prep sponsor preparing meals using your own designated kitchen or a sponsor with vended meal sites utilizing the services of a Food Service Management Company, this is the time to begin evaluating previous contract and/or agreements as well as assessing current and potential meal sites.

Doing so will allow you to determine if a new vendor should be used or if you will have to execute proper procurement using alternative procurement methods different from previous years.

If you have any questions, please feel free to visit the [DECAL Procurement Webpage](#) for masterclasses on each procurement method as well as required documentation needed.

Local Sourcing Spotlight

How sweet are those potatoes?

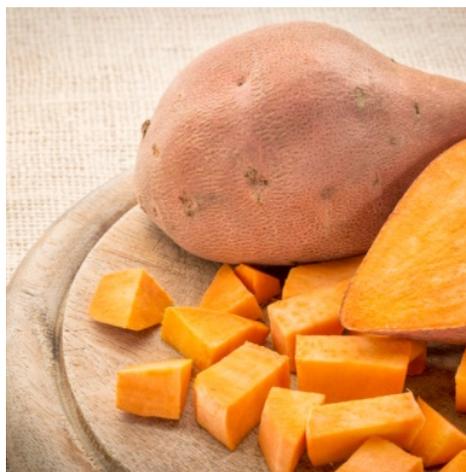
Georgia is famous for quite a few things...but did you know sweet potatoes was one of them?

[Georgia Grown Sweet Potatoes](#) account for \$2.5M of Georgia's agricultural market. These potatoes are a Native American plant high in

Calcium, Potassium and Vitamin A and C. There are currently five different varieties grown in Georgia with a harvest time averaging around 90 days after the first planting.

Calhoun Produce is a great option for purchasing locally grown sweet potatoes. Visit their main location in Ashburn, GA, or stop by the fall farmer's market in Cordele, GA.

For questions regarding procurement, please contact LaMonika Jones, Procurement Compliance Officer at lamonika.jones@decal.ga.gov.



Nutrition Ed Nook

'Tis the Season for Sweet Potatoes

Can you feel it?

The crisp air in the morning time, the changing colors of the trees, the sound of birds migrating south for the winter, and the smell of sweet potatoes cooking on our stovetops.

It's sweet potato season! Our Georgia farmers have been hard at work preparing, planting, caring, and harvesting sweet potatoes so that they can then land on the plates of Georgia's youngest eaters.

As November's **Harvest of the Month** item, we encourage you to engage the participants in your program with various sweet potato recipes.

Consider mashing, roasting, or sauteing them to encourage participant's to try them! Did you know it can take a child ten or more tastes before learning to accept and love a new vegetable? How will you introduce sweet potatoes into your menu this season?

Integration

- **Local Harvest Bake**
- **Whipped Sweet Potatoes**
- **Smokin' Powerhouse Chili**
- **Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples**
- **Tasty Tots** (USDA's Popular Choice Award!)

Education

- Perform a sweet potato taste test with your participants – what do they think of mashed sweet potatoes versus baked sweet potato fries? **BONUS:** Add their favorite taste testing recipe to your menu cycle!
- Read the books *Little Sweet Potato* by Amy Beth Bloom and *Sweet Potato Pie* by Kathleen Lindsey
- **Sprout sweet potatoes** for participant's to observe and experience the growth firsthand.

CALi had a curiosity: what would happen if she placed her sprouted sweet potato into a pot of soil? To her amazement, her sweet potato grew a vine that grew foot by foot all the way up to 8 feet long! What a great way to experiment in the garden, she says!

Conversation

- How are sweet potatoes different than regular potatoes?
- Have your participants ever tasted sweet

- potatoes before?
- What family traditions do your participants have surrounding sweet potatoes?



DECAL's Nutrition Spotlight: *Meet Victoria Carden, Training Coordinator*

Victoria Carden is the newly appointed Training Coordinator for the Nutrition Services Division. In this role, she oversees both experienced and new sponsor training for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Happy Helpings, Georgia's Summer Food Service Program.

Victoria aims to help sponsors and institutions build a solid understanding of the federal nutrition programs. "My goal is to ensure participants have a strong foundation to build upon and continue to grow during their journey of serving healthy meals," she said.

Victoria has a long history of experience in the field of Nutrition. Since August 2017, she served as a Technical Assistance Coordinator for DECAL's Southwest Region. Previously, she held roles as the CACFP program contact for Early Head Start/Head Start in Georgia and Alabama as well as the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) area coordinator for the Muscogee County School District.

She prides herself in providing great customer service all while being an asset to both internal and external stakeholders. Victoria uses her nutrition field experience to set up sponsors and institutions for success. "I've been in their seat and having that experience gives me the opportunity to train from their perspective," she said.

Victoria recently earned two professional certifications: CACFP Child Nutrition Professional (CCNP) and CACFP Management Professional (CMP). She also earned a Masters of Public Administration with a concentration in Healthcare Administration from Walden University in She and her husband Bryant and their three children Carmen, Christan and Dylan reside in Columbus, Georgia.

SFSP Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous SFSP Newsletters:

- [COVID Resources for Sponsors](#)
- [How to Submit a Waiver Request](#)
- [Transitioning from SFSP to CACFP At Risk Afterschool Meals](#)
- [Income Eligibility Guidelines for FY 2022](#)
- [Questions and Answers for Child Nutrition Program Operations in School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [What to do if you have lost or destroyed records](#)

- SFSP Reimbursement Rates for 2021
- Updated SFSP Sponsor Monitoring Guidance during COVID-19
- Waiver to Claim Meals Prior to SFSP Approval
- How to File a SFSP Claim for Reimbursement
- Budgeting for SFSP
- Pre-Award Costs and Advance Requests
- USDA extends Flexibilities for Summer 2021
- Suspension and Debarment Certification Requirement
- Update: Procurement Templates (Formal and Informal Documents)
- Virtual Vendor Summit Replay

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

Georgia's Pre-K Teacher of the Year



There was plenty of fun and activities during our annual Georgia's Pre-K Week this year but there was also a big announcement.

DECAL officially named Georgia's Pre-K Teachers of the year for the 2021-2022 school year. The private center winner is **LaNita Carey** from Jackson Creek Academy in Lilburn, and the public-school winner is **Stephanie Curington** from Kings Chapel Elementary School in Perry. The winners were surprised on a zoom call with **Commissioner Jacobs**, co-workers, family, and friends.

Joining us in this week's episode to talk about this experience are our new Georgia Pre-K Teachers of the

Year **LaNita Carey** and **Stephanie Curington**, along with **Meghan McNail**, the Summer Transition Program and Outreach Coordinator who oversees the Teachers of the Year every year.

[Click here to listen.](#)

Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach Team



Cindy Kicklighter

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