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**Happy Helpings, Georgia’s Summer Food Service Program, Provides Free
Nutritious Meals for All Children during the Summer**

*Organizations needed statewide to host meal sites for Happy Helpings,
Georgia’s Summer Food Service Program*

ATLANTA, Ga., (July 1, 2022) – During the summer months when school is out, many children no longer have consistent access to nutritious meals and snacks. Happy Helpings, Georgia’s Summer Food Service Program, helps to fill the hunger gap by providing free, nutritious meals to any child 18 years old and younger. Adults 19 years and older who are enrolled in school programs for persons with disabilities may also receive meals.

Families can locate a Happy Helpings meal site in their area by texting “Summer Meals” to 914-342-7744 or calling the Hunger Hotline at 1-866-348-6479 (English) 1-877-842-6273 (Spanish).

In an effort to expand access to these meals, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is looking for organizations to host local meal sites this summer.

Organizations that agree to host meal sites will work with approved Happy Helpings sponsors, and the sponsors will provide fresh, well-balanced meals for each site.

“Happy Helpings plays a vital role in providing children with the healthy meals they need every day,” said Tamika Boone, director of Nutrition Services for DECAL. “Hosting a Happy Helpings site in your local community ensures that meals and snacks reach the most vulnerable children throughout the state,” she added.

Meal sites may be located where children congregate such as parks, churches, schools, libraries, and apartment complexes. Meals must be served in low-income communities where at least 50 percent of children are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals or in other locations where at least 50 percent of the children enrolled in a specific program are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. For more information, about Happy Helpings, contact Cindy Kicklighter, Marketing & Outreach manager, at cindy.kicklighter@dec.al.ga.gov or (678) 841.3170.

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Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf> from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter

addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. **fax:**

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. **email:**

program.intake@usda.gov

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About DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program; licenses child care centers and home-based child care; administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Program and federal nutrition programs; and manages Quality Rated, Georgia's community-powered child care rating system.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.