



# TRANSCRIPT

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## USDA Food and Nutrition Service Press Conference Call about the National Summer Food Service Program Awareness Week

June 7, 2011

Speakers:

**Kevin Concannon**, USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services

**James Weill**, President, The Food Research and Action Center

**Josh Wachs**, Chief Strategy Officer, Share Our Strength

**KJ Lavoie**, Senior Director, Office of Government Relations, Boys and Girls Clubs of America

**Tammara Tyrell**, Parent

**Moderator:** Hello, everyone, and thank you for joining us for this afternoon's media conference.

Today's topic centers on feeding more hungry children this summer when school is out. The call is part of the first ever National Summer Food Service Program Awareness Week. Here in the studio to talk about the USDA's Summer Food Service Program, also known as SFSP is USDA Undersecretary for Food and Nutrition Consumer Services, Kevin Concannon; President of the Food Research and Action Center, Jim Weill; Chief Strategy Officer for Share Our Strength, Josh Wachs; Senior Director for the Office of Government Relations for the Office of Government Relations for the Boys & Girls Club of America, K.J. Lavoie; and we also have a parent who has a son that participates in a summer food service program in Baltimore, and she joins us and her name is (Tamara Tyrell). Thank you everyone.

Each of our speakers will give a brief opening statement, and then once we've completed that we'll open up the lines to reporters for questions. Reporters, if you'd like to ask a question, please let us know by pressing star 1 on your touch-tone pad.

First off, we'll start off with FNS Undersecretary Kevin Concannon. Welcome, and your opening statement.

**Kevin Concannon:** Thank you very much. It's a special opportunity and an honor to be here with these partners today on a day in which our country is observing National Hunger Awareness Day.

It was created by the U.S. Senate recently and it also happens to be the day when FRAC, the Food Research and Action Center you're going to be hearing from Jim Weill shortly, has released a major study, as they've done in the past, on summer feeding programs, and my role today is to introduce the fact that summer time, unfortunately, in our country is the time of the year in which children and youth across the country are at the highest risk of going hungry.

And we know as a country we have the capacity to end hunger. We need to have the systems, as well as the will to do so. Well, one of the systems that we have to address hunger, as it relates to children, is the Summer Food Service Program. It serves just under three million children each summer. And the important number in that regard, these are individual children of all ages, but the important number associated with that is this.

During the school year, school year ending in most areas of the country this very month, some 32 million American children have lunch at school; 21 million of them have a free or reduced price lunch based on family income. These are the children of lower income households, and it's only nearly three million of those, actually even slightly less than three million, that have access to those summer feeding programs.

So, today is the day nationally that we are launching formally our Outreach for Summer Food Service Programs. Secretary Vilsack is at an event today in Virginia, again, in an effort to try to elevate awareness across our country of both the need that exists and the opportunity.

Some 17 million American children lived in households last year where food and security reigned. I don't like that term food and security because I think it masks the reality that it means that kids may go hungry; it means that meals may be skipped, it means that particularly as the month wears on in many households people are stressed to provide necessary food for their children.

So, the Summer Food Service Program is an opportunity for us. We partner with different organizations. You're going to hear from one of our strongest partners in the form of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America shortly as well, but we work with churches, schools, recreation departments, county governments. We're open to partnerships up and down the - from one end of the country to the other and we very much need them.

So, our hope is today, this program being one example of it, we can answer any questions, but also bring to peoples' attention the fact that there are children in our midst who this time of year are at much greater risk of going hungry. And we want them to know that in many areas of the country there are opportunities, places to which these young people can go in which they can be provided a healthy, nutritious summer meal.

**Moderator:** Next on the panel, President of the Food Research and Action Center, Jim Weill.

**Jim Weill:** So, first I want to thank Kevin and USDA for their leadership on Summer Food this year, including putting together this Summer Food Awareness Week, and also making some important recent changes that are cutting red tape and making it easier for non-profits and schools and local government agencies like park and recs departments to operate Summer Food Programs, these are important steps forward.

Every year, my organization, the Food Research and Action Center, or FRAC as a lot of people know it, releases an analysis titled Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation, and that report looks at USDA data and state data to show national food summer trends - summer food trends, and also state-by-state performance and to suggest strategies for improving that performance.

We're releasing today the Summer 2010 Analysis and you can find it at [www.FRAC -- F-R-A-C -- dot-org](http://www.FRAC--F-R-A-C--dot-org). This year the report shows two trends and they're consistent with what Kevin just said.

First, children's hunger and need for help getting food definitely went up in 2010 and will again, we fully expect, to go up this summer as well. In other words, and understandably, the recession has made many more kids hungry and many - made many more kids eligible for help. And we see that as one key

example in the increase of about one million children per year and the number of low-income children qualifying for regular school year free and reduced price meals.

And that growth, you know, very roughly a million kids a year, has happened each year during the recession. But, even while that need was rising, summer food participation dropped in 2009 and 2010. The - one key reason for that is that the recession's budget squeeze on local social services and on schools caused state and local programs, especially summer schools and summer base - school-based summer programs to close shop in summer 2010, so there wasn't a place at which to serve the federally funded summer meals.

As a result, in 2010 for every 100 low-income kids who got a regular school year lunch, only 15 got summer food, and that was down from two years ago earlier when the number was 17 per 100, which wasn't good enough, but better.

So, the rise in need and the decline in summer feeding means a real weakening of the reach of the program, but this isn't inevitable. The USDA is working to fix this, and some states have shown the way. Some states do a lot better than the national average, twice, three times the national average, which proves that with good strategies and strong effort these number can rise.

We worked last year with groups in Arizona, D.C., Florida, Mississippi, and other states where there was some real gains in some places, double-digit gains, so it can be done. So, we need these stronger efforts, not just by USDA but by all states and by schools, local governments, and non-profits to develop summer food sites and conduct outreach to families.

There's still time to make that happen this summer if we can get more sites, if we can get more outreach, and we look forward to working with USDA, national collaborators like the Boys & Girls Clubs, and our state and local network to make that happen.

**Moderator:** Thank you. Up next on our phone line we have Chief Strategy Officer for Share Our Strength, Josh Wachs. Good afternoon.

**Josh Wachs:** I want to thank Undersecretary Concannon for his tremendous leadership on summer this year and also thank you to Jim for releasing this really important study today.

When Share Our Strength surveyed 750 teachers several months ago about hunger in the classrooms, we weren't surprised to learn that many of them were worried about their students during the summer months because so many of those kids rely on school meals as their major source of nutrition during the school year.

And that's why Share Our Strength is launching our No Kid Hungry In Summer campaign. We're working with local partners, non-profits, corporations, advocacy groups, and state and local governments across the country to connect kids with meals this summer.

I'm thrilled to be talking to you from Arlington, Virginia where just moments ago we launched our No Kid Hungry Virginia campaign with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Virginia Governor, Bob McDonnell, The Virginia Federation of Food Banks and actor, Jeff Bridges, and the first focus of that campaign will be summer meals.

In summer of 2011, Share Our Strength is going to invest more than \$1.6 million in national, state, and community-based organizations in 35 states in the District of Columbia to help increase the number of

kids getting summer meals. This summer, by using a combination of tools, including grant making, public service announcements, press events, and outreach materials, we're working hand-in-hand with partners to inform families in need about where they can access free meals through their - free meals for their children.

We're making more than 125 grants to organizations that do everything from support the beginning of new summer meal sites to expanding the capacity of current sites. Some of those grants will be used to fund equipment, such as coolers and serving utensils, or to help fund staff to provide supervision and recreational and educational activities, or transportation as well.

Outreach is clearly, as the Undersecretary said, a key part of this and we're working with partners to develop outreach materials, including postcards and door hangers and business cards and banners and yard signs, all that are designed to provide critical information about food service locations and Web sites and hotlines, both locally and nationally where families can get more information.

Today, we have distributed about 1-1/2 million, more than 1-1/2 million printed materials to organizations and families in need through our partnerships with state and local partners through a partnership with the National Basketball Association. We're getting - working to get radio and print public service announcements produced and placed in part - targeted markets.

Chauncey Billups for - point guard for the New York Knicks has recorded a public service announcement. In Florida, the Florida Partnership To End Childhood Hunger is working with the Orlando Magic and Miami Heat to, for example, rebrand summer meal sites with team colors and logos making them more attractive places for teens and pre-teens to hang out during the summer months.

And to connect directly with kids, they're also, rather than just parents and teachers, the partnership is using Facebook and Twitter to promote the sites, along with the public service announcement by Retired Miami Heat Center, Orlando - Alonzo Mourning. In Arkansas, with the leadership of Governor Bibi and Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the No Kid Hungry Arkansas campaign has increased the number of summer meal sites from 339 last year to more than 500 in 2011.

And in Maryland, the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger, in conjunction with Maryland Hunger Solutions and the Governor's office, has launched an innovative public pilot program featuring a mobile meals truck in Baltimore, really changing the way meal sites are structured and bringing the food directly to the kids in the neighborhoods where they live.

Those are just a few of the examples of the work that's going - that - the innovative work that are going on in partnerships around the country, and it serves a real reminder that when organizations work together to address a problem we're much more successful.

Share Our Strength is committed to ending childhood hunger by the year 2015, along with the Administration and the USDA, and we hope that the media will join us in this fight by helping to bring awareness to Summer Meals Programs this summer.

Thanks.

**Moderator:** Next on our panel, we're back here inside of the studio, is Senior Director for the Office of Government Relations for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, K.J. Lavoie.

**K.J. Lavoie:** Thanks for having us here today, and I am just so excited to be part of a partnership that is making a difference in kids' lives. And I myself am a product of the Summer Food Service Program and

this is something that's important to me personally, as well as professionally, so I'm truly honored to be here and be a partner.

Nationwide, 63% of the kids that go to Boys & Girls Clubs qualify for the free and reduced meal program. That represents over a million youths in our country. Eighty-eight percent of our clubs report serving snack or meals, which is 3400 sites across the country. We are a big provider of food to kids. And locally, in 2010, Club served over 62 million meals or snacks, okay? We're feeding our kids, but we know there's more to do, okay? But, we know there's still so many kids we've not yet reached.

Over the last three years 174 million kids have come through a Boys & Girls Club doors and been fed thanks to your program. At the same time, these meals have been served we've been able to learn from our Clubs that they've received \$16 million in the funding to be reimbursed. That seems pretty low. I think we've still got Clubs that are not fully aware of this program. I'm so excited about this awareness week so that people can learn what you have to offer and we can increase those numbers even greater.

When I ran the local Boys & Girls Clubs in Sacramento, we were a sponsor of the SFSP, and although I would love to brag about my personal experience and how fabulous it was, I'm really here today to talk about a Club in Boise, Idaho that has done an incredible job, not only serving the kids at their Boys & Girls Club, but also with the YMCA.

I think a lot of times people think we might all be in competition with each other, (youth serving) providers, but in fact we want kids fed, we want kids improving academically, we want kids not in gangs, and we can't do it alone. We have to do it together. In Boise though, they served 60,000 meals in 54 days. You do the math. That is amazing. We're talking Boise, Idaho. Who would have thought, but that is amazing

And at Boys & Girls Clubs though it's not just about healthy food, we offer a robust physical activity program, we have parents' nights to bring them in to learn about nutrition and other education problems and issues that they may face, or that they're facing with their kids or their guardians. We want to make sure that kids have daily physical activity. We take them on field trips to local farms so they can learn about organic farming, vegetables, fresh fruit, and then perhaps even learning about local irrigation systems.

So, we know that health I not just at school, it's not just at your after-school provider, but it starts at home and we're doing what we can to make sure that the adults in their lives are also educated.

I guess in summary, I just want to thank you again for having Boys & Girls Clubs a part of this today. And I learned in sitting here in the studio that in fact the Undersecretary is a product of the Boys & Girls Club in Portland, Main, and that always does my heart warm and fuzzy inside when I get to talk to someone who grew up in a club and understands what we're doing, and wants to continue to partner with us.

And I also want to say I'm interested in learning more about the NBA partnership, as a Sacramento Kings Fan. I'm looking forward to having our kids get their meals in some purple and silver. Thanks.

**Moderator:** Also on the line we have a parent who very know - who knows very well the Summer Food Service Program. She has a son that has participated in the program in Baltimore and she joins us, and that's (Tamara Tyrell).

(Tamara)?

**Tamara Tyrell:** Yes, hi. Can you hear me? Yes, I'm here. Thank you for having me today. To speak a little bit more about the role that the Summer Food Service Program plays for both myself and my son, last

year he participated in the Super Kids Summer Camp through the Department of Parks and People in Baltimore City.

When he - as a part of the program he was able to have both his breakfast and lunch served to him on-site at one of the camp sites that they had. The role that is has played for me has been to set my mind at ease regarding how my son was going to eat. I'm not native to Maryland. I was raised in New York and I worked in New York for a time, and meanwhile I was there I was able to make ends meet and had more than enough to make sure that my son had what he needed.

But, after relocating to Maryland I found myself out of work and just really struggling finding it very difficult to get by. And one of the questions that I had in my mind many a day was how was my son going to eat tonight? Even if I didn't have anything to eat, I always needed to make sure that he was taken care of.

And during the school year, we did qualify for the free and reduced lunch meals. My son got his food for free, but over the summer I had a major concern of what I was going to do to feed him. Once I found out that meals were included through the Summer Food Service Program at the summer camp that he went to, I was able to breathe a lot easier and have a lot less worry about what I would do to get food to him. Really, all I had to worry about after that was the nights and the weekends.

But, for a person who is working and really struggling to make ends meet and just getting by, programs like these really provide a sigh of relief for parents who are able to participate in them. I was thinking about the way that the recession has impacted our lives, specifically, and the fact that if there were not any food programs like this around I don't know what we would do.

Like, maybe there would be soup kitchens and stuff like that, but it's the little things that matter and a meal goes a long way for a hungry little boy who's still growing. I've thought a lot about what awareness can - like what we can do to make awareness. I figure that - how I found out about it was through my son's schools, because every Monday they send out a mailer that parents are supposed to read.

I get concerned for the parents who do read it who might not be aware of it. I think that outreach has to get grass roots when it comes to initiatives like this. When the gentleman was talking about the door hangers and the postcards, and even having in Maryland the food to kids' transportation, those type of initiatives are excellent at getting the word out there that programs like these do exist, so that more people can participate.

My only other query would be like transportation. How people who might be struggling with food, if they don't have money for food, then they certainly may not even have money for transportation. I myself take the bus. If the sites are more local, I hate to hear about all the budget cuts that are impacting local sites that are nearby where parents can actually reach to go have their children eat. But, it sounds like people are taking a lot of initiative in getting the word out.

Thank you for having me. That's all I had to say.

**Moderator:** Everyone, thank you for your opening statements. Reporters, if you'd like to ask a question of our panel, please let us know by pressing star 1.

Also, a reminder to our panel members who you are responding because we have so many different voices, we have several male and several female voices, if you could identify yourself every time you speak that would be very helpful for those who are on the line.

We'll take our first call, and that's from Pamela Fessler with NPR News. Pamela? Pamela?

**Questioner (NPR) :** Can you hear me?

**Moderator:** Yes, we can.

**Questioner (NPR):** Yes, hi. I was wondering, at this late date, realistically, how much you think you'll be able to increase participation with these outreach efforts since FRAC's has a big problem is that there are fewer sites and summer programs available. I mean if the programs aren't there, how can you actually increase participation very much?

**Kevin Concannon:** It's Kevin Concannon here. We've actually been working, really going back for better than the last six months, in preparation for this summer, recognizing that the loss of sites has principally come through schools where school summer programs are no longer occurring or school departments have major struggles with budgets.

So actually, last year we increased the number of children who were served in other than school settings in places like Boys & Girls Clubs or Catholic Charities, or other organizations. So, we've been very much focused on that. Our staff, we've run a series of Webinars, for example, through the spring. We've done outreach with a variety of faith-based groups in the recognition that many religions organizations run summer camps.

And so, we're swimming upstream, admittedly, because as school programs are reduced in the summer, we lose those reliable institutional sites. But, we're hoping that by both, Jim Weill referenced, we've eased some of the regulatory burden associated with the program so that more sponsors can come in. And again, we've made it a priority over the winter months and early spring to really try to elevate it.

And what we're doing today is, again, almost another launch day to say, "What else can we do," by shaking the trees there to say, "Who else may be willing to come join us?"

**Questioner (NPR):** Thanks.

**Moderator:** Next up on the line we have Wendell Marsh with Reuters. Wendell?

**Questioner (Reuters):** Hi, thank you for having the call. This question is for Kevin Concannon. How much will the Awareness campaign cost, and where will that money come from. That's the first part of my question.

Then the second part is, if only three million children are currently making use of this program or are benefiting from this program will, you know, an uptick in more children, how much more money will that cost the program?

**Kevin Concannon:** Well, the - the first question, there isn't a budget per se around the Information campaign. It's been more of an effort to use the resources and the partnerships we have with organizations like FRAC or Feeding America or Share Our Strength, Boys & Girls Club, Catholic Charities. So, we haven't really budgeted in that regard.

And on the question of outreach or enrollment, we actually have, interestingly enough, several pilot studies underway this year, one of which would be to increase the benefit amount provided to a family that is already eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. We're trying that in an area where, again, part of our challenge for enrolling kids relates to logistics.

Many poor children live in rural areas, as well as in cities and for those young people to get access to a central site is a particular challenge, particularly in many of the states that are - have large rural

populations. So, we have a pilot underway in that regard, Congress is very interested in that to see, does it result in more kids being enrolled?

And we can handle - we pay agencies or programs on the basis of the number of meals that they serve, so it's a per meal reimbursement. And even if we are significantly successful, which I hope we really are this year, we can afford to cover those meal costs for these young people.

The folks from Share Our Strength have mentioned they've done studies, I recall it last year as well, where teachers report kids coming back to school after summer vacation really challenged because they haven't had regular access to nutritious meals over the summer. So, there's no doubt in my mind about the cost benefit of doing it.

And in terms of the way in which we reimburse programs on a per meal basis, you know, it's one of those program areas that we can't afford federally.

**Questioner (Reuters):** Are there any figures...

**K.J. Lavoie:** Wendell, this is K.J. Lavoie, and I want to respond to a couple quick things. I know at Boys & Girls Club of America, as far as this Awareness campaign goes, we're going to get word out, not only on our Internet site, but to local Clubs to really promote the Summer Food Service Program.

And I look forward to sending reimbursement invoices to the Undersecretary because I'm confident we will see an increased number of kids served meals at their Clubs over the summer.

**Questioner (Reuters):** Okay.

**Jim Weill:** And this is Jim Weill, I just want to add one quick thing. As Kevin said, the cost of the outreach and the partnerships is really negligible, and we're all building stronger networks and partnerships that - and also Congress, in last years' Child Nutrition Reauthorization Law, the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, said that schools need to start doing food - summer meal outreach at the end of the school year.

So, if we can engage America's 100,000 schools in doing some serious summer food outreach that'll make a huge difference as well.

**Questioner (Reuters):** Okay.

**Moderator:** Reporters, if you'd like to ask a question of our fine panel, please let us know by pressing star 1 on your touch-tone pad.

We go to Antonieta Cádiz with L.A. Opinion or La Opinion; correct me.

**Questioner (La Opinion):** Yes. Thank you for taking my call. One question on the Latino outreach for this program, how many Hispanics do you want reach this year and can you elaborate please a little more on how have you reached Hispanics for them to participate in this program that it is really essential for Latino families? And also, if you can comment on the situation, particularly in California, how California has performed in this program?

**K.J. Lavoie:** This is K.J. from Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and I actually came in today from Sacramento and - I live there, so I'll be glad to talk a little bit about California and the outreach to the Latinas and Latinos. You know, most of the materials that we prepare for the Clubs in California or - are bilingual, and so - and we are in primarily high minority neighborhoods, so we've had pretty good luck in being able to outreach to those groups.

I'm sorry; I've already forgotten the second half of your question.

**Questioner (La Opinion):** It was specifically on California, the second part, and the first part on the Latino outreach in general.

**Jim Weill:** This is Jim, let me just comment on the California numbers. California had a really shocking drop from 2009 to 2010 in the number of kids participating in the Summer Food Programs. And we think that's because California had a particularly large decrease in the number of schools that were open over the summer because of its budget problems.

But, looking at the numbers, the entire national decrease from '09 to 2010 happened in California and more. If you look at the country without California the numbers actually went up, so California's got a ways to go in dealing with the problem, particularly of schools closing over the summer and kids not getting food.

**Kevin Concannon:** Yes, and it's Kevin Concannon here. I might add to the fact that, it was mentioned earlier, every public school across the country, 101,000 schools, are required by law to notify students this time of year as the school year is ending about the availability of summer feeding programs.

And specifically on outreach to the Latino or Hispanic community, I have met with - actually met outside of Sacramento with national leaders from Hispanic Clergy Associations, and did the same down in Texas recently and in Florida where we had been doing outreach to various religious organizations that are - that have large participation or contact.

And all of our outreach materials are available in English and in Spanish, including those Webcasts that were referred to. And we have kind of a toolkit, sort of a packet of information that we make available to organizations, churches, rec departments, others, as a way of introducing them to the basic aspects of the program, so we're very much (unintelligible). Plus, we've done outreach with Hispanic media as well.

**K.J. Lavoie:** I'd like to add one more thing, this is K.J. again. In California, we're only too aware of the schools that are closed in the summer and the Clubs, you can imagine, are impacted pretty significantly as a result. So, we're also working on combating summer learning loss and we know that, you know, kids go back to school in September, not only behind in school, but because they've been hungry on top of it.

So, we're working on both of those important issues, not only the clubs, but in a large coalition of service providers throughout the state.

**Moderator:** If we go back to our line, our next call comes from Dana Straehley with The Press-Enterprise Paper. Dana?

**Questioner (The Press-Enterprise):** I'm concerned, can talk a little bit about the low-income families who can't afford to feed their kids adequately during the school year, but you know we also hear a lot about childhood obesity, you know, are these families filling up their kids on empty calories with like Kool-Aid and Ramen, or what's going on with them in the summer?

**Kevin Concannon:** Well, I think you touched on -one of the paradox's of American life is that we have coexisting together, both the widespread experience of hunger and obesity.

And associated with that are both the foods that we eat and often times the least expensive foods, and I hear this from food banks, I hear it from food store chain executives that at the beginning of the month when they look at what poor families, in this case families on our SNAP Program, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, they purchase foods virtually similar to the rest of the populations that

shop in those stores. But, as the month wears on and their benefits decline, they switch over to foods that are more filling and less nutritious.

So, while it's a problem, you know, the healthy eating index is a way in which we formally at the federal level have done studies on how healthily, if you will, Americans eat and adhere to the dietary guidelines. And I think the population - Americans as a whole get a score of 56 out of a possible 100, and the poorest people among us get a score of 52.

So, it's marginally less, but only marginally, so that's why just a little more than a week ago we released MyPlate with the First Lady who was here at USDA in an effort to try to, again, bring forward to all of us as Americans (at all) income levels the need to both exercise, eat (something) less. Sometimes Americans think more is better, more isn't necessarily better, and to make half of our plate fruits and vegetables.

**Jim Weill:** This is Jim Weill again, I'd just add, I - the studies show that both childhood hunger and childhood obesity spiked in the summer, so the question is that they're related problems, as Kevin said, and summer meals is one key way. You know, the programs we're talking about have to meet nutrition standards. It's one key way of addressing both problems. Another is getting eligible families on to food stamps.

**Moderator:** Our last call is going to come from Bonnie Delaney with Asbury Park Press. Bonnie?

**Questioner (Asbury Park Press):** Yes. Can someone speak to the situation in New Jersey and how you're going about reaching more families in the Garden State?

**Kevin Concannon:** Well, it's Kevin Concannon here. I can't speak to New Jersey per se, other than in each of our - we - our regional office actually is for the Central or Mid-Atlantic states is located in New Jersey, and we typically work with - and I know they have done outreach with the New Jersey Department of Education, which virtually everything we do in the food and nutrition service from USDA we do through state agencies, and then on to the not-for-profit sector like Boys & Girls Clubs.

So, I know they've been working with the state agencies. In this case it would be the Department of Education, both - and we have been doing these Webinars, as I've said. We've actually had hundreds of people from across the country representing, more like thousands, representing organizations that...

**Questioner (Asbury Park Press):** Okay.

**Kevin Concannon:** ...have tuned in to these Webinars that we've promoted, going back to the very first of the year; January I think we had our first. And we are, again, doing all we can to outreach and make the program known to people.

But also, I - we've been speaking at national meetings of Catholic Charities, for example, urging them. We know in many parts of the country they are the sponsor. We've been encouraging them in other parts to say, "Look, you could do it there," Boys & Girls Clubs, Mazon, the Jewish organization for anti-hunger is another group to which we've - we have promoted, again, just linkages of context, anybody you know or any organization to try to outreach.

**Moderator:** You mentioned rural areas as a place where it could be problematic for some people to get to, what - if you have organizations in those areas and they are interested in participating but they cannot bear the full load of the cost for this, but they really want to participate and they have a facility and they're able to come up with some funding, if they were to call how does that work? What's the process and can they still participate?

**Kevin Concannon:** The answer is yes they can still participate, absolutely. And as I mentioned earlier, we reimburse for the meals, which typically includes not only the food costs, but the costs of preparation. In many - in rural areas or many new programs, we encourage sponsors, potential sponsors to sponsor a site.

In other words, to operate the site, but they don't have to take on the overall management of the program. They can do that with partnership, with - it could be a Boys & Girls Club or a food bank in many areas of the country doing this now.

And so to me, the best way for them, if they are interested in any state or any state or any person in any state on the line, the place I would start with be the State Department of Education or it would be, I don't know if we have a specific number on - right here, here we have the hungry - the hotline for folks across the country, the National Hunger Hotline, 1-866-3, and the word Hungry, H-U-N-G-R-Y.

And that number then - say you're interested in the Summer Food Service Feeding Program, we can connect you to that. But, if you are representing an organization, again, they can further connect you. In many areas of the country, the United Ways are also sources of connections for us. So, we can partner up with organizations to help you get started.

**Moderator:** Everyone, I want to thank you for joining the call, especially our panel, Kevin Concannon, Jim Weill, Josh Wachs, K.J. Lavoie, as well as (Tamara Tyrell).

And everyone else who was on the line and those of you who were able to ask questions, again if you want to get the word out and let families know how they can get information about the program, please give out the information for the National Hunger Hotline. Once again, 1-866-3Hungry, and that's where you can find Summer Food Service Program sites and other food help in your individual community.

Also, for more information on FNS Assistance Programs, visit [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov). That is also the same site that you'll be able to hear the broadcast that we are doing now in its entirety, so that you'll be able to get some more information if you weren't able to get everything that you needed while we were doing this live.

Again, thank you for joining us and that concludes today's media briefing.

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