



United States
Department of Health
and Human Services



United States
Department of Agriculture

Mar 05, 2010

Dear Colleague:

Each summer, millions of families struggle to provide their children with nutritious meals when schools close for the summer and no longer provide meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is intended to fill this gap, less than 20 percent of the more than 19.6 million children receiving a free or reduced price meal from the National School Lunch Program participate in the SFSP. In these difficult economic times, even more children may face this hardship in the coming summer.

We want to highlight an opportunity to leverage available federal funds to address childhood hunger and food insecurity by improving participation in the SFSP. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) established a \$5 billion TANF Emergency Contingency Fund. States can seek 80 percent reimbursement through the Fund for costs in a set of areas, including increased costs for non-recurrent, short-term benefit expenditures, which are designed to deal with a needy family's specific crisis situation or need, and do not extend beyond four months. A range of expenditures that support programs that feed children during summer months may constitute non-recurrent, short-term benefits, and thus be a potential use of the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund.

A number of organizations including schools, local governments (particularly Parks and Recreation Departments), community organizations, camps, and faith-based organizations might choose to operate a summer food service program if additional resources beyond those currently funded by USDA's SFSP program are made available. TANF Emergency Contingency Funds can be used for a set of expenditures to support their participation in the program, and to help meet a set of costs at existing sites. For example, allowable TANF expenses could include: short-term leased or rented equipment, transportation services to transport food and/or children to feeding sites, recreational activities to attract more youth to program locations, pay for staff support to provide supervision and programming at summer feeding sites, and meal preparation costs that are not otherwise reimbursed under the SFSP (including the cost of additional meals and meals provided to parents of SFSP-eligible children).

Page 2 – Dear Colleague

We hope that you give serious consideration to using some of these resources to help struggling families and children this summer.

Additional information and guidance on the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund can be found on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/> and information about the SFSP can be found on the U.S. Department of Agriculture website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/>. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant State TANF Directors as listed here: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/st_index.html, or to be in touch with the SFSP Directors in each State: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to those in need.

Sincerely,

Original Signed

Carmen R. Nazario
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Original Signed

Kevin W. Concannon
Under Secretary
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture