



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 23, 2020**

**Free Meal Sites Open to Connecticut's Children**  
***CT Summer Meal Site Locator Map is Now Available***

HARTFORD – End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) are pleased to announce that EHC!'s Summer Meal Locator Map has been updated with more than 400 locations serving free summer meals around the state. Kids and teens, 18 years of age and younger, can receive free, nutritious meals all summer long. The EHC! Meal Locator Map, which allows residents to find a site closest to them, is operated in partnership with EHC! and the CSDE.

When schools are closed, millions of children with low-incomes across the country lose access to the school meals provided through the National School Lunch Program. The Summer Meals Programs help fill this gap by providing free meals and snacks to children who might otherwise go hungry. These programs are funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by the CSDE. This year, through federal waivers, many sites have the added flexibilities to improve access to meals, including: allowing parents and guardians to pick up meals; offering multiple meals (breakfast and lunch, or meals for multiple days) during one pick-up; and allowing those meals to be consumed off-site.

“As we continue through the significant disruption to our lives created by COVID-19, access to consistent, safe, and nutritious meals provides a critical lifeline and stability for children and households grappling with food insecurity and other challenges intensified by the pandemic. Ensuring food security over the summer months is critical to our kids' current and future health and development so they are ready to learn when school resumes in the fall,” said Education Commissioner Miguel Cardona. “With hundreds of CSDE authorized sites around the state, the Summer Meal Locator Map is a reliable tool to let families know exactly where they can access meals for every child in their household.”

“EHC!’s Summer Meal Locator Map is a fantastic resource for local families seeking free, nutritious meals during summer vacation for children under the age of 18,” said Bryan P. Hurlburt, Commissioner of Agriculture. “Now more than ever this assistance is vitally important and we are grateful to the food service providers and volunteers who ensure the needs of the local community are met.”

“Hunger doesn’t take a summer vacation, and especially not this year,” said Robin Lamott Sparks, EHC! Executive Director. “This summer, it’s more important than ever to make sure our families know locations where they can obtain healthy, free food for their children,” Sparks said.

Over the summer of 2018, [1 in 5 children in Connecticut](#) who received free or reduced-price lunches during the school year also participated in Summer Meals Programs, compared to the national average of 1 in 7. According to the national Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), [Connecticut ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation](#) for average daily participation in Summer Breakfast and Summer Lunch. FRAC also reported that Connecticut has the 3<sup>rd</sup> strongest participation in the ratio of Summer Breakfasts to Summer Lunches served. The FRAC report for 2019 will be released this summer.

Families can find locations across Connecticut where kids and teens 18 years of age and younger can eat free, healthy meals all summer long at [www.ctsummermeals.org](http://www.ctsummermeals.org), texting “CTMeals” to 877-877, or calling 211.

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