



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 2021

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

HARTFORD –The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!) are pleased to announce that EHC!'s Summer Meals Site Locator Map is now updated with more than 400 locations serving free summer meals around the state. Children and teens 18-and-under can receive free, nutritious meals all summer long, no questions asked. EHC!'s Summer Meals Site Locator Map, which allows residents to find a site closest to them, is operated in partnership with EHC! and the CSDE. As of July 1, Connecticut has a record number of summer meal program sites in operation this summer to meet the needs of Connecticut families. Meals are currently available at a total of 764 sites, which is 56 more than the previous high in 2016.

When schools are closed, millions of children in low-income households across the country lose access to the school meals provided through the National School Lunch Program. 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 state agencies. This year, through federal waivers, many sites will continue to have 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.

“Connecticut is fortunate to have incredible summer meal program operators and partners offering a record number of summer meals sites to help ensure children are receiving continued

access to healthy and nutritious meals; so they are able to continue learning every day, everywhere,” **Acting Commissioner of Education Charlene Russell-Tucker** said.

“The CT Summer Meals program provides children under the age of 18 access to free, nutritious complete meals featuring fruits, veggies, proteins, whole grains, and dairy at more than 400 open locations statewide,” said **Bryan P. Hurlburt, Commissioner of Agriculture**. “Help your local community fight food insecurity by sharing the mobile friendly locator map far and wide.”

“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.

According to the national Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), food insecurity has increased due to COVID-19. It is estimated that 6.8 million additional children across the country will experience food insecurity as a result of COVID-19, bringing the total number of food-insecure children to [18 million \(1 in 4 children\)](#).

During the summer of 2019, nearly [2.8 million children](#) participated in Summer Nutrition Programs on an average day in July 2019. [Connecticut was ranked 6th for strongest participation in the ratio](#) of Summer Breakfasts to Summer Lunches served, according to FRAC’s 2019 Summer Nutrition Status Report. FRAC’s report for summer 2020 will be released later this summer.

[Increased investments](#) in Summer Nutrition Programs, combined with the implementation of best practices, such as intensive outreach, site recruitment, and reducing barriers to participation, will help eliminate the nutrition and summer learning opportunity gaps millions of children face.

End Hunger CT! is excited to announce expanded promotional outreach efforts. This summer, CT Summer Meals bus advertisements were installed in over 10 Connecticut cities and towns including: New London, Hartford, Norwalk, Stamford, and Windham. Additionally, digital

billboard advertising space is being utilized for the first time to help improve Summer Meals outreach efforts.

Families can find locations across Connecticut where kids and teens 18-and-under can eat free, healthy meals all summer long by visiting www.ctsummermeals.org, texting “CTMeals” to 877-877, or calling 211.

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**For more info about CT
Summer Meals:**

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