

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TRANSFORMING TENNESSEE'S FOOD PROGRAM
DHS Seeking Sponsors for Summer Food Program
OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH COMMITTED TO ADDRESS CHILD HUNGER

NASHVILLE, TN— The Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) is joining forces with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) and partners across the state to ensure no Tennessee child goes hungry this summer. DHS needs more partners, especially in unserved and underserved areas, to help meet this very important need.

According to 2013 U.S. Census Bureau Data, an estimated 25.8 percent of children in Hamilton County live in poverty. Daily, one in four children faces hunger in Tennessee. During each school day, approximately 649,000 children in Tennessee participate in the free or reduced-price school lunch program. Last summer, Tennessee's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) served approximately 42,000 children per day - clearly indicating that when school is out the need to reach more children is great. DHS needs the help of community partners to help close this gap for Tennessee children.

DHS is continuing its application cycle for the 2015 Summer Food Service Program. The SFSP is a program funded by the USDA intended to assure that children who benefit from free and reduced price meals during the school year have access to nutritious meals during the summer. In celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Summer Food Service Program, USDA-FNS has set a goal of serving 200 million meals to children across the nation, an increase of 14 million from 2014. This summer Olivet Baptist Church, among others, has committed to serve as a SFSP sponsor and to manage feeding sites across Hamilton County. There are still underserved areas both in and around Hamilton County where sponsors are needed to help reach more children.

Children age 18 and under are eligible to receive meals through the SFSP. In addition, a person 19 years of age and older who has a mental or physical disability and participates during the school year in a public or private non-profit school program established for individuals with disabilities, is also eligible to receive meals.

Eligible sponsors include schools, private non-profit organizations, government entities, and non-profit residential camps. Sponsors are reimbursed on a per meal basis for meals served to eligible children and may sponsor the SFSP at one or more sites.

The criteria for sponsorship are simple and straightforward, as outlined in the USDA Administrative Guidance for Sponsors Manual. Sponsoring organizations serve meals to all children in attendance regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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There is a [mandatory online training](#) for potential sponsors, and technical support can be provided by DHS staff.

Potential new SFSP sponsors are strongly encouraged to contact DHS as soon as possible to begin the application process and ensure proper training for administration of the program.

If your organization is interested in sponsoring the SFSP in your community, or becoming a feeding site under an existing sponsor, please contact Myra Foxworth or Pamela Norton before June 15, 2015 at (615) 313-4749; or by e-mail TNSFSP.DHS@tn.gov.

For more information on the Summer Food Service Program, please visit: <http://www.tn.gov/humanservices/article/css-summer-food-service-program> or <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp>.

For more information on Olivet Baptist Church, please visit: <http://www.obcministries.org/>

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