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ECECD's Summer Food Program fills meal gap while children in New Mexico are out of school.

SANTA FE – Today, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) Family Nutrition Bureau and Public Education Department (PED) announced the Summer Food Programs for children and youth aged 1 to 18 will begin its 2023 service period today, through July 30, 2023, in most parts of the state. Federal funding, provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), allows the state to provide nutritious meals to youth and children at more than 700 locations across New Mexico. Most locations serve breakfast and lunch with some serving dinner options.

Both ECECD and PED are actively working to expand access to program services statewide as part of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's effort to combine resources and bring statewide agencies together to better target and close gaps that experience persistent childhood hunger and food insecurity. Summer feeding programs are essential tools in the Governor's battle against hunger and both agencies are prepared to carry out any effort to that end.

“Healthy and nutritious meals are vital to the well-being and development of young children,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “The Summer Food Program provides a stable and predictable source of meals for families during summer. With hundreds of sites all over the state, we encourage New Mexico families to seek out a program nearby to access, free, ready-to-eat meals for your children.”

“Making sure that our children have what they need for success year-round is the charge for those of us in public education,” said Education Secretary Arsenio Romero. “Ensuring access to free, healthy meals all summer long is paramount among that charge. We are glad to partner with our colleagues at ECECD in delivering meals to our children.”

Since the beginning of this administration, we have seen a nationally leading decrease in food insecurity rates. Still, 1 in 5 children in New Mexico experiences food insecurity, and many rely on school-based food programs to receive their main source of nutrition. The program’s primary purpose is to provide free meals to children 1 to 18 to fill the nutrition gap during summer school closure. These meals are served on a first come first served basis and are available to all children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, reprisal, or retaliation for prior civil rights activities. No registration or enrollment is required to participate in this program.

Visit summerfoodnm.org for participating meal sites or call 1-800-328-2665 for more information.

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Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham launched the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) in 2020, making New Mexico among the first states to consolidate all early childhood programs and services under a single cabinet-level agency. Under this administration, ECECD has led the nation by expanding access to free New Mexico PreK, overseeing the largest investment in early childhood infrastructure in state history, and implementing cost-free child care for a majority of New Mexico families. Learn more about how ECECD supports children, families, and the early childhood professionals that serve our communities at nmececd.org. On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as @NewMexicoECECD.