

May 10, 2016

TO: State Directors
Program Directors
Rural Development

FROM: Vernita Dore /s/ *Vernita Dore*
Deputy Under Secretary
Rural Development

SUBJECT: Hosting the U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Programs at Rural Development Multi-Family Housing Properties

This Unnumbered Letter (UL) is to encourage and promote participation by Rural Development (RD) Multi-Family Housing (MFH) properties with community facilities or common areas that are available to offer the space for Summer Food programs, operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Many MFH borrowers and management companies are already partnering with local community organizations to capitalize on this opportunity, often through the USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP, also known as the USDA Summer Meals Program).

The USDA Summer Meals Program provides children in low-income areas with free, healthy meals during the summer when school is out. [RD's MFH program has been hands-on in our support of USDA Summer Meals by encouraging MFH communities to use community facilities or common areas as summer meal sites. The meals are provided by local sponsoring organizations, which are reimbursed by USDA for the meals served to children. MFH communities can find their local sponsoring organizations by contacting their State Agency at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>.](#)

In fiscal year 2015, USDA was able to serve Summer Meals at 184 MFH properties. This fiscal year, RD aims to increase participation by 50 percent, to 276 properties. The attached spreadsheet lists the number of MFH properties in each state that participated in the program during fiscal year 2015. In order to meet our goal, we need to boost our outreach on this important program and track the properties that sign up. We ask that you keep this SharePoint site updated with the names of participating properties in your state: https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/RD_HCFP/mfh/Lists/FNS/AllItems.aspx.

EXPIRATION DATE:
April 30, 2017

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Housing Programs

RD staff can also make it easier to serve USDA Summer Meals by coordinating with local officials, municipalities, and community organizations to use ground transportation to get meals to MFH communities, or to transport children in an MFH community to a nearby meal site. RD staff should encourage borrowers and management companies to contact local organizations that may be interested in facilitating access to this program.

If you have any questions regarding this UL, please contact the MFH Portfolio Management Division at (202) 720-1604.

Four Steps to Encourage Your MFH Property Managers to Sign Up for Summer Meals

1. Contact your FNS Regional Office and the State Agency coordinating your State's USDA Summer Meals Program to learn how to bring the program to your MFH communities. Contact information for FNS Regional Offices can be found at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>. Contact information for State Agencies is located at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>.
2. Send a letter inviting your MFH property managers to participate in the Summer Meals program.
3. Follow up on the letter with phone calls and site visits to MFH properties.
4. Customize the template op-ed with State-specific information and submit to local media outlets.

Tools and Resources

1. Promotional image and language for RD State websites (attached)
2. Template letter to MFH property managers (attached)
3. Template op-ed for local media outlets (attached)
4. *How to Serve Healthy Summer Meals to Kids in Multi-Family Housing Communities* (attached)
5. USDA webinar highlighting Summer Meals success stories in Virginia and Colorado: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyXpfubP_oo&list=PLBccton6gOdqPwQvPfO_wwPEPN_7EeQ-m&index=3)
6. USDA Summer Meals Toolkit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>

Complete listings of USDA food assistance program that can assist MFH residents can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov>.

Attachment

NUMBER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING PROPERTIES
PARTICIPATING IN THE FNS SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM IN FISCAL YEAR 2015

State	Number
AZ	5
CA	17
CO	1
DE/MD	3
FL	5
ID	3
KY	13
MO	4
NH	2
NJ	2
NM	9
NV	7
OH	4
PA	2
PR	59
SC	15
VA	17
WV	11
WY	5
Total	184