

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES  
COMMISSIONER

November 3, 2014

Members of the Legislature:

As required by House Bill 749, passed during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislative Session, the enclosed document outlines a five-year plan for collaborating with Baylor University's Texas Hunger Initiative to implement no-cost provisions aimed at improving outcomes in the federally-funded Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The report includes methods to ensure children in need of food assistance and eligible to receive free or reduced-price school lunches are aware of the programs and know how to avail themselves of the benefits provided. In addition, strategies specific to summer-meal-access concerns in rural areas are also addressed.

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) acquired this federally funded program from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in 2008. TDA continues to focus on its priorities of supporting and monitoring the SFSP to ensure the program is operated as intended and is committed to working with statewide partners to achieve efficient and effective operations.

The Texas Hunger Initiative and TDA have a long-standing relationship and will continue to work together to accomplish the goals outlined here. Importantly, these services are today broadly available to all Texas children meeting the federal eligibility requirements. Our philosophy is to increase the targeted use of these services by children who are eligible and most in need of the meals. I trust the strategy outlined in the information provided demonstrates an efficient and accountable approach to providing summer meals to children who are eligible and in need of this important assistance.

Sincerely yours,



Drew DeBerry  
Deputy Commissioner

DD/MDG/gc

Enclosure



# Summer Food Service Program Five Year Plan

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1. Data Sharing Process
  - a. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) will work with the Texas Hunger Initiative (THI) to identify and share relevant data collected by TDA.
2. Business Model
  - a. THI will develop business models for how sponsors can provide quality programs while remaining fiscally viable with consultation from TDA.
3. Local Sponsor Councils
  - a. TDA and THI will encourage the development of Local Sponsor Councils to ensure best practices, vendor information, and site analysis is shared amongst sponsors.
4. Training and Technical Assistance
  - a. TDA will continue to offer an annual conference or regional workshops as appropriate.
  - b. TDA will continue to offer program operation and compliance training opportunities to SFSP sponsors.
  - c. TDA will continue its partnership with the regional Education Service Centers to offer training and technical assistance on program operations and compliance to SFSP sponsors.
  - d. THI will offer a summer track at the Annual THI Summit.
  - e. THI will develop and provide outreach training for sites, including best practices, program strategies, and grant opportunities with consultation from TDA.
  - f. THI will develop a toolkit for faith-based organizations that includes volunteer management and training tools with consultation from TDA.
5. Mapping and Data Analysis
  - a. THI will utilize data provided by TDA to identify potential fraud and noncompliance, to help establish possible CE non-compliance and operational risk indicators.
  - b. THI will create an early alert system that utilizes predictive analytics to identify potential fraud and noncompliance, enabling TDA to make accurate financial viability, managerial capability, and accountability assessments during the application process.
  - c. TDA will continue to provide THI mandated district information to ensure mandated districts have the resources necessary offer a summer feeding program.
  - d. TDA will use THI predictive analysis data to optimize monitoring routes and ensure sponsors and sites are monitored effectively.
  - e. TDA will continue to create customized, interactive maps of available summer meal sites.
  - f. TDA will provide THI with updated projections for number of potential sponsors, allowing for targeted outreach and planning for resource allocation.
  - g. THI, in consultation with TDA, will create maps and reports to identify underserved areas with high poverty. TDA will use these maps to verify the food assistance need of children and target that need where appropriate.
  - h. THI will utilize historical site data, data obtained from outreach activities, and other appropriate information to identify site needs and match with appropriate volunteers informing TDA of all required information to ensure state resources are appropriately allocated.

6. Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program Afterschool Meal Programs (CACFP)
  - a. TDA will continue to evaluate methods to streamline the application process for dual sponsors to the extent allowable by federal regulations for SFSP and CACFP.
  - b. THI will identify & recruit statewide sponsors with the capacity to operate both CACFP and SFSP as identified by the sponsors' current usage of identified best practices, no or low risk indications, and whether or not an unmet need or underserved area is identified.

NOTE: All TDA activities in this plan are subject to federal fund availability.