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## **Summer food programs for NM kids resume**

*More than 700 locations statewide to offer free meals for children, youth*

SANTA FE – Free meal programs for children and youth are resuming at more than 700 locations statewide this summer, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care and Public Education departments announced today.

The two departments work together on summer feeding programs to make sure children and youth from 1 to 18 have access to nutritious meals from June through August.

“These programs fill an important nutrition gap when school-based meal programs go offline for the summer and are an important part of our state’s fight against child hunger,” ECECD Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky said.

“Nutrition needs for growing children don’t end when schools break for the summer,” Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart said. “Having summer feeding sites across New Mexico ensures students have seamless access to nutrition programs year-round.”

Summer feeding programs are available in almost every community and neighborhood across New Mexico. Each site has been mapped and listed in a searchable format at [summerfoodnm.org](http://summerfoodnm.org).

More than 70% of New Mexico public school students qualify for free or reduced-price meals during the school year, although that is not a requirement for participating in the summer programs. All children ages 1-18 (as well as those older than 18 with disabilities) can receive free meals through the summer programs.

Additionally:

- No prior registration or enrollment is required for participation.
- In consideration of ongoing safety concerns due to the COVID-19 health emergency, meals will be provided in a “grab-and-go” format.
- Meals at all sites meet U.S. Department of Agriculture nutritional standards.
- Nearly all sites serve lunch, and many serve both breakfast and lunch

The summer feeding programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to fight childhood hunger in a state where 1 in 5 children face food insecurity.

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The New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) launched in 2020, one of the first state cabinet level departments to consolidate all early childhood agencies under one roof. ECECD works to optimize the health, development, education, and well-being of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers through a family-driven, equitable, community-based system of programs and services. Learn more about how ECECD supports children, families, and the early childhood professionals that serve our communities at [nmececd.org](http://nmececd.org). On Facebook and Twitter as @NewMexicoECECD.

The New Mexico Public Education Department partners with educators, communities and families to ensure that all students are healthy, secure in their identity and holistically prepared for college, career and life. Currently, the NMPED serves more than 317,000 students in 187 districts and charter schools. Find an abundance of resources for administrators, educators, families and students at [New Mexico Public Education Department \(state.nm.us\)](http://NewMexicoPublicEducationDepartment(state.nm.us)) or follow the PED at [NMPublicEducationDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/NMPublicEducationDepartment) on Facebook and @NMPED on Twitter.