



# App connects Minneapolis youth with free meals this summer

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Did you know that many kids don't have enough food during the summer? Hunger causes many problems for young people. Coming to sports practices on an empty stomach can cause lightheadedness, fainting, and poor performance. You feel it – in a bad way – when you don't eat. Hunger can also cause attitude and behavior problems; sometimes it inspires desperate actions like stealing food from stores.

Half a million kids in the state are hungry. During the school year, they can rely on two meals a day. During the summer, kids have to manage getting these meals themselves. It can be really hard.

A new app, Summers Eats Minnesota, is a big solution to helping kids get food during this time. The app makes finding free food options easy. Just a couple clicks leads users to a map where they can see where they're at and where all the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites around them are. Currently the app only shows locations

in Minneapolis, but eventually it is intended to be a statewide tool. The SFSP is a federal nutrition program administered by the Minnesota Department of Education. Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) sponsors over 80 sites in Minneapolis where students can receive free meals at schools, parks, and community centers when school is out for summer vacation. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are offered to youth under 18.

The app was created by the Minneapolis nonprofit Hunger Impact Partners (HIP) in partnership with MPS, particularly MPS' Culinary Center. In the span of a month they came up with the idea, built the app, and launched it. "It's so easy and simple to participate in," said Wendy Tai, Strategic Director of Early Childhood Nutrition at HIP. "You just show up and eat. You don't have to sign up or show an ID or live two blocks away."

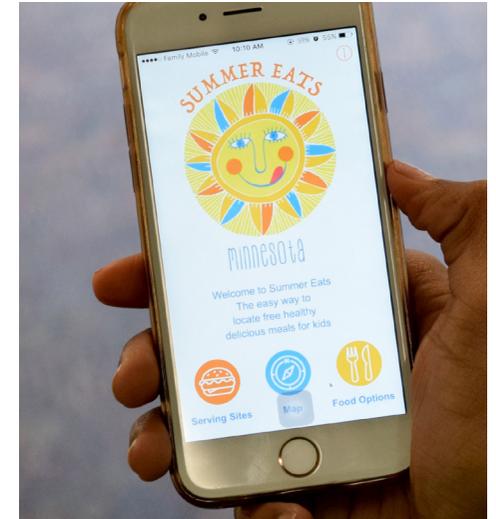
Tai says the app also solves for a problem the program has experienced in the past: food waste. By making it easier for kids to take advantage of the free food options offered, she expects less food will go to waste.

"There is enough food and enough reimbursement revenue. We just need kids to consume it," said HIP CEO Ellie Lucas.

North High sophomore Antonio Simmons says he has sporadically taken advantage of free meals over the summer in the past. He says he would definitely download the app and eat meals more regularly because of it. He spends most of his summer days playing basketball and often skips breakfast. "I start to get real hungry by [lunch]. That's around the time they start serving the free lunches. I'd grab one and eat and get back to hooping," he said.

North High freshman Nichomus Dilday is aware that free meals are offered in the community during the summer and says he eats them when he happens upon them, particularly in the parks. He thinks the app will be helpful to students because it'll give them a good sense of all the options available to them, not just the ones they happen to encounter. "It's a good app," he said.

Another North High freshman Jasmine Jackson said that she would utilize free



**Summer Eats Minnesota can be found in the app store for free.**

lunch options during the summer, "depending on what it is." For young people like her, the app offers detailed menus for the meals being served each day.

*This story was made possible by Hunger Impact Partners.*



**Two-Bedroom Public Housing Waitlist Will Open June 1**  
**Initial Opening: Thursday, June 1, 2017 through Saturday, June 3, 2017**  
More Information to apply online: [MPHAOnline.org/FamilyWaitlist](http://MPHAOnline.org/FamilyWaitlist)

**To be eligible for two-bedroom family housing, you must:**

1. Have at least two family members, including one dependent.
2. Not exceed income limits (family of two - \$54,400; family of three - \$62,200).

*It does not matter which day you apply. Eligible applicants will be placed on the waitlist according to preference points. The wait for housing may vary considerably.*

**Following the initial opening, the Two-Bedroom Family Waitlist will open online on the third Wednesday of every month.**

**Family waitlists for four and five-bedroom units are also open.**

**Three-Bedroom Family Waitlist closing until further notice.**

**This list has reached capacity, and will open for a final time on May 17, 2017.**

**Opportunity Equal Housing Opportunity – Equal Employment Opportunity**

You must apply using a device with Internet access. MPHA does not have computers available to the public. Upon request, MPHA will provide application assistance or alternative accessible formats for qualified individuals with a disability.

**WEST BROADWAY FARMERS MARKET**

**Fridays 3-7pm  
June 9-October 6  
Freedom Square  
2034 West Broadway Avenue  
(West Broadway and Logan)**

More WBC summer events  
**Check westbroadway.org  
for more details.**

**Freedom Square Weekly events  
FLOW July 27-28, 2017  
Open Streets September 8, 2017**

WBC West Broadway Business and Economic Team