



## Free Meals for Kids mobile app

April 10, 2020

- **Who is it for?**
  - It is for families and kids in need of food support but open to all kids. USDA waivers allow for adults to pick-up school meals and meal packs. Only free (open) sites are listed on the app and no registration is required.
- **What geographies does it cover?**
  - It is statewide.
- **How up-to-date is the meal site data?**
  - All sites (curbside pick-ups, school bus drops, food trucks and home deliveries) are updated daily.
- **What do parents or kids need to know before using the app?**
  - There are many different distribution methods so check the 'Meals Updates' tab which is referenced in site information for school district-specific requirements.
  - Information on the app is provided directly from schools and school districts and from the MDE database which approves federal meal programs in Minnesota.
  - Content changes frequently and updates are done daily. 'Push' notifications are sent to app users regarding updates. Additional Assistance resources are included on the app: Hunger Solutions Minnesota, SNAP Assistance at Second Harvest Heartland, The Sheridan Story, United Way Helpline 211 and Minnesota Food Helpline.
- **Why can people trust the safety of the food available at these sites?**
  - Meals and meal packs provided by schools meet the USDA guidelines. There is no evidence of human or food packaging being associated with the transmission of the Covid-19 virus (FDA).
- **What should people do if they go to a site on the app, and it's closed, or they're turned away?**
  - Unexpected circumstances can happen but sites report that families understand these are unrepresented times and quantities are hard to predict. Most sites have back-up shelf stable meal packs. Some sites are 'first come, first serve' or require identification if they have limited resources and that information is noted on the app. Contact the site directly regarding issues. Site contact information is contained on the app in Site Information.

- **Who developed the app?**
  - Hunger Impact Partners, a 501c3 non-profit, developed and built the app. It is a similar platform to the Summer Eats Minnesota app developed in 2016. They work with MDE for data sets for approved meal providers, school and school districts as well as many community organizations including: YMCAs, The Sheridan Story, Youthprise, Initiative Foundation, Minnesota Children’s Cabinet and the hunger-relief network.
- **What kinds of meal sites and food types are represented and featured within the app?**
  - Meal sites can be schools, community centers, school bus stops, libraries, parks, post offices, police stations, etc. Food delivery options are listed on the app so people have an idea of what to expect.
- **Do any meal sites offer an ability to cater to children with food allergies/dietary restrictions?**
  - This would be up to the site. Most do not have capacity in place to address special diets. Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts have nutrition information posted including ingredients and/or carb count.
- **Mobile app data?**
  - Over 840 sites across Minnesota as of April 10 with more listed on the Meals Updates tab.
  - New sites are added daily.
  - The app was developed and launched in less than 10 days.
  - The app was piloted with Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts first.
  - 3500 unique visits since March 18<sup>th</sup>.