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Summer Break is No Break from Summer Nutrition

While a mother works two jobs or a father looks for work to make ends meet, too many Ohio children spend the summer months without the healthy, nutritious meals they need to grow and thrive. **Share This Email On:**



For many Ohio children, summer isn't just a break from school – it's a lapse in basic nutrition.

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Every school day, more than 787,000 Ohio children receive free or reduced-priced meals at their schools. These meals provide them with the nutrition they need to excel inside the classroom and outside during afterschool activities.

But when school doors close for summer, less than 10 percent – or fewer than 80,000 – of eligible children continue to receive nutrition assistance. Oftentimes children lack this critical nutrition because families are unaware that similar food assistance programs are offered during the summer or do not know how to register for them. Unfortunately, this lack of information means far too many Ohio children go without proper nutrition from the time school ends in the summer until school resumes in the fall.



[Watch Sen. Brown discuss Summer Food programs here.](#)

To close this gap, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program helps parents, educators and guardians of school-aged children ensure healthy meals all summer long. There are nearly 1,500 Summer Feeding Program locations across our state – at schools and summer camps, parks and recreation centers, and churches and community centers – where children can receive healthy meals while participating in educational activities or organized games.

Most summer feeding locations will be open by Monday, June 21 and run until the beginning of the school year. [To find the feeding site closest to you, click here.](#)

Unfortunately, not all Ohio children will have access to these programs. More than a dozen rural and Appalachian Ohio counties – from Brown to Paulding to Morgan and Vinton – currently lack summer feeding locations.

That's why, as a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I'm working to help pass the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act](#) introduced this past spring. This bill would reauthorize critical child nutrition programs and allow for innovative pilot programs that would provide children in isolated or rural areas with access to food. One such program would provide grants to states to develop more effective ways to retain summer feeding program sponsors, the organizations that help find volunteers to staff and establish sites that make the program possible.

We can all do our part to spread the word about critical summer feeding programs – to our family and friends and through our libraries and schools. When a mother or father returns after a long day of work during these summer months, she or he should know their children are still receiving the nutritious meals they need to grow and thrive.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown



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