

## No Kid Hungry Summer Meals Texting Program

### 2018 Overview

No Kid Hungry is proud to promote our summer meals texting hotline, which began in 2013 and is entering its sixth year of operation. This hotline allows children and families to easily and quickly identify open summer meals sites in their area with the use of a cell phone. We continue to see strong growth in the use of this national service. In 2017, there were over 393,000 total texts from users in all fifty states and the District of Columbia, a **609 percent** increase over the previous year!

#### Simple to Use!

To receive information about open summer meals sites, users **text 'FOOD' to 877-877**, and receive a text back prompting them to enter an address (either their home address or any other location of their choosing). Once the user replies with a full address and/or zip code, the service provides information about nearby meals sites, or information about how to access sites if none are located in the vicinity.

#### What about Spanish?

The texting hotline also has a Spanish keyword! **Text 'COMIDA' to 877-877** to find summer meals sites in Spanish, using the same process described above.

#### How does it work?

When users text 'FOOD' or 'COMIDA' to 877-877, the service is activated and prompts users to provide their address. Upon doing so, users are given contact and meal service information for the nearest summer meals sites in their area. The database of open sites is drawn from official USDA open site data that is updated weekly, pulled by Share Our Strength and uploaded to our system that uses geolocation technology to pinpoint the closest sites based on the address provided by users. In instances where no sites are located in the vicinity, users are directed toward the National Hunger Clearinghouse hotline (1-866-3-HUNGRY; 1-877-8-HAMBRE) for additional assistance.



#### Help us spread the word!

This service, like summer meals, is only helpful to children and families if they know about it! Fully incorporating information about the texting hotline into your outreach efforts is therefore essential to achieving awareness of this tool. To spread the word, campaigns and allies have partnered with their State Agencies to include information about the texting hotline on printed materials; and have also featured the texting number in their own materials, press releases, event announcements, and newspaper ads. In Dallas, for example, our partner, Texas Hunger Initiative, included the number on posters placed in WIC offices and food pantries, leading to an increase in use of the service. If you're looking for ready-made templates to promote both summer meals and the texting hotline, please visit our [Sodexo Foundation Summer Meals Outreach Toolkit](#).

Questions or concerns about using this service or promoting it within your community? Contact Derrick Lambert ([dlambert@strength.org](mailto:dlambert@strength.org); 202.478.6519) for assistance.

If, during the summer, you or your colleagues notice that data provided by this service is inaccurate or out of date, please send a brief message outlining the problem to [bestpractices@strength.org](mailto:bestpractices@strength.org) so we can address the issue.