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New Approaches Needed to Fight Summer Hunger

11,470 Children in Placer County Fall into the Summer Nutrition Gap

Oakland, CA – When school is out for the summer, children across the state are at risk of losing access to healthy, affordable meals. A report released today by California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) reveals a summer nutrition gap that spans nearly two million kids in California. That is, over 80 percent of the state's low-income children and youth who benefited from free or reduced-price lunches during the academic year missed out on such meals during the summer of 2013. This gap affected 11,470 (or 93 percent) of Placer County's low-income children and youth.

School's Out...Who Ate? is an annual report published by CFPA to examine the reach of summer nutrition programs across the state. For the first time in many years, there was a modest increase in the number of summer meals served throughout California. While this is a promising step, far too many of California's most vulnerable children and youth are still falling into the summer nutrition gap.

"We applaud the efforts of summer meal providers and administrators working to strengthen the summer meal programs. We also look to new solutions, like Summer EBT, that will help our state recover years of lost ground and ensure that all of California's kids are well nourished throughout the summer," said Tia Shimada, Managing Nutrition Policy Advocate with CFPA.

Children need access to nutritious summer meals that combat hunger and food insecurity, support year-round learning, and help prevent obesity. Local, state, and federal decision makers can ensure that children in California have year-round access to healthy, affordable meals. These leaders should take action to

- Invest in innovative models that provide summer nutrition benefits to families with children through a debit card-like system called Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT);
- Ensure science-based nutritional standards are used to serve summer meals that support optimal health;
- Invest public education resources in the revitalization of summer learning programs and ensure that these programs include access to affordable, nutritious meals; and
- Make summer meals available on all school campuses that host summer programming.

To access the full *School's Out...Who Ate?* report and summary documents, please visit: cfpa.net/sowa-2014.

To find the nearest summer meal location, visit:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/summersites14.asp> or <http://www.whyhunger.org/findfood>

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California Food Policy Advocates is a statewide policy advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food.