

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES  
COMMISSIONER

August 31, 2009

To: School Food Authorities and Community Organizations

Dear Program Provider:

Last spring more than 500,000 Texas students were left without access to their regular school meals when many schools were forced to close temporarily during the H1N1 flu outbreaks. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is committed to protecting students from illnesses while ensuring nutritious meal services continue. Together TDA, the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission have been working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop a plan to allow schools and community organizations to provide reimbursable meals during a public health emergency.

School food authorities (SFAs) and community organizations (COs) will be able to offer meals in non-congregate settings through a modified Summer Food Service Program or the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option. Since no duplication of coverage is allowed, SFAs and COs are encouraged to work together to ensure meals are provided to students in the event of an H1N1-related school closure. This special program allowance may be invoked only upon the declaration of a public health emergency.

The forms and guidance you need to ensure your school can continue providing meals in the event of an H1N1-related closure are located on the TDA Food and Nutrition web site at [www.squaremeals.org/H1N1](http://www.squaremeals.org/H1N1). A waiver request and agreement addendum, if applicable, must be received and approved by TDA prior to meal service to allow for meal reimbursement. We encourage you to complete the applicable forms and return them to TDA as soon as possible. If you need assistance in completing the forms, please contact the TDA Food and Nutrition Division at 1-877-TEX MEALS.

TDA stands ready to assist you in continuing your service to the school children of Texas. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely yours,

**Original Signed**

Todd Staples

TS/AMO/sw

