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## Boozman Bulletin: Leading Efforts to Provide Flexibility to Summer Meal Programs

For children, summertime brings a euphoric feeling of freedom. For a few months, it means no more early classes, pop quizzes or homework. But for too many children in Arkansas, it raises levels of anxiety instead of euphoria because they no longer have a reliable prospect to eat a meal at breakfast or lunchtime.

More than 300,000 Arkansas students rely on free or reduced-price breakfast or lunch served during the school year. Many of those students lose access to the same nutritious meals when school is out. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was created to fill in that gap during the summer months.

The SFSP offers children from low-income families free lunch and snacks in the summer. While it works well in some communities, too many children still go hungry during the summer. This is evidenced by the fact that summer meals currently reach less than 20 percent of children who participate in similar programs during the school year.



## Visiting an Arkansas summer meals site.

I've seen the need to update these programs. That's why Senator Pat Leahy (D-VT) and I are leading a bipartisan charge to overcome this challenge and make federal child nutrition programs more efficient, flexible and better equipped to reach children in need. Our bill, the *Hunger-Free Summer for Kids Act of 2019*, brings colleagues from different regions, with views across the political spectrum, together to address the issue, and it counts Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) as one of its cosponsors. We teamed up because we have seen the need for more options to end hunger in our communities and share a belief that the best solutions to this problem come from the ground up.

[Learn more](#) about the legislation and why the Executive Director of Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance says the legislation will make a "significant difference" in the effort to reduce child hunger during the summertime.

[Watch](#) the KARK story about the *Hunger-Free Summer for Kids Act of 2019*.

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## Arkansas River Flood Recovery: How to Apply for Federal Disaster Assistance

Federal resources are available to Arkansans impacted by the devastating Arkansas River flooding. Residents of Arkansas, Conway, Crawford, Desha, Faulkner, Jefferson, Logan, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Sebastian and Yell counties are eligible to apply for individual assistance that may include money to help pay for temporary housing, emergency home repairs or other disaster-related expenses.

### To apply for federal disaster assistance:

- Call 800-621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. For TTY call 800-462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS) can call 800-621-3362.
- Go online at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov).
- Use the FEMA app for smartphones – click to download by going to [www.fema.gov/mobile-app](http://www.fema.gov/mobile-app).
- FEMA established Disaster Recovery Centers around the state. Arkansans can register with FEMA at the following locations Monday - Saturday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

### **Crawford County**

Mulberry Community Center  
29 Kirksey Parkway (Just off of Hwy 215N)  
Mulberry

### **Faulkner County**

Tornado Shelter  
4 Grove Circle (Behind 1st Security Bank)  
Mayflower

### **Jefferson County**

*Scheduled to open Thursday, June 27*  
Donald W Reynolds Community Services Center  
211 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.

Pine Bluff

**Perry County**

First Assembly of God  
2151 Arkansas Hwy 60  
Houston

**Pulaski County**

North Little Rock Community Center  
2700 Willow Street  
North Little Rock

**Sebastian County**

Central Mall  
Suite 605  
5111 Rogers Ave.  
Fort Smith

**Yell County**

Dardanelle Community Center  
2011 Hwy 22 West  
Dardanelle

For more information on recovery resources [click here](#).

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**Quick Takes:**

- **“Key” to Unlocking the Veteran Suicide Crisis:** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie called my legislation to create a VA grant program to leverage veteran-serving non-profits and other community networks in order to reduce veteran suicide [“key”](#) to unlocking the crisis. The *IMPROVE Wellbeing for Veterans Act* [creates a new grant program](#) to enable the VA to improve coordination of veteran mental health and suicide prevention services and to better measure the effectiveness of these programs in order to reduce the alarming number of veteran suicides.
- **Franklin County Job Corps Center to Remain Open:** I was pleased to learn that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will continue to maintain the important job training resources at the Cass Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center. Last month, the department announced that it would close the location. I [fought to keep this center open](#) as the lead Republican on the *Job Corps Protection Act*.
- **Rural Broadband Expansion:** The Federal Communications Commission is investing \$22 million in Arkansas to [expand rural broadband](#). Baxter, Fulton, Izard, Marion, Sharp and Stone Counties will receive support for broadband deployment. As a co-chair of the Senate Broadband Caucus, I will continue to promote and advance policies that strengthen internet service in rural Arkansas.
- **Connect on Social Media:** Stay up to date with what I’m doing for Arkansans via social media. You can find me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



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