

The Governor has signed the Early Learning bill with language to exempt federal Afterschool Meal Program (AMP) sponsors/sites from redundant childcare licensing.

This represents the last of three administrative barriers to implementing the federal Afterschool Meal Program (two and a half years after the Congress expanded it nationally)—see details below.

Background:

In December 2010, Congress expanded the federal Afterschool Meal Program (AMP) nationally, providing a new resource in Florida for addressing hunger and under nutrition among children who don't receive a balanced meal until their next one at school. The AMP reimburses schools and nonprofits \$3.08 for each nutritious supper provided in afterschool programs in low-income neighborhoods, allowing up to 15% to be used for administrative costs. Soon after the expansion of the federal AMP to Florida, Impact discovered three state administrative hurdles that would dramatically slow the roll-out of the program. As of last Friday, June 28th, Impact has addressed all three:

- Some Florida nonprofit afterschool programs--otherwise eligible for the AMP-- were without access to a state agency that could authorize the food and safety inspection required by the program. These were largely sponsored by churches, municipal parks, and apartment complexes. Florida Impact crafted 10 words to be inserted in the statute that would remedy this situation. This language was amended to the Department of Health reorganization bill, passed the Florida Legislature, and was enacted into law in March of 2012.
- Prospective school sponsors of AMP cited the dual paperwork required by the new program as a deterrent to their jumping on board. Impact pulled together the Florida departments of Health and Agriculture (administrators of the AMP and National School Lunch, respectively) along with Broward County Schools (the nation's sixth largest) to outline the redundant requirements for school sponsors of each program. Proposed changes reflecting a sharing of information between the two agencies in order to streamline the AMP application for school sponsors were submitted in a singular, state waiver request to USDA. Although Florida's waiver request was denied by USDA, it served to support and trigger a response to the Food Research and Action Center's prior efforts in getting the USDA to address this deterrence. A national

USDA memo was executed in November 2012. Impact then worked with DACS and DOH to conduct a workshop about the state's implementation of these changes at the Florida School Nutrition Association conference in early 2013.

- Under state regulations, AMP sponsors were required to secure a full childcare license even though this is not required by the federal program and all food and safety issues are already addressed by the AMP. Impact crafted legislative language to exempt AMP sponsors from this redundant requirement and amended it to the must-pass Early Learning bill. Impact organized statewide and regional after-school program providers to support this change through public hearings and bill amendment sponsorship negotiations. The bill—with our amendment—passed the Florida Legislature and was signed into law on June 28th.