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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**Mayor Fulop Announces the 2021 Summer Food Service Program to Ensure All Jersey City Youth has Access to Free, Healthy Meals During Summer Recess**

*52 Sites Citywide will Serve 225,000 Meals to Kids*

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** announced today the start of this year’s Summer Food Service Program, providing free, healthy meals to all children, ages 18 and under, to ensure there is no gap in healthy food access during the summer months when school is out of session.

The federally funded, state-administered summer program is run locally by Jersey City’s HHS to serve nutritious breakfast and lunch to children and teens in low-income areas from June 28<sup>th</sup> through August 27<sup>th</sup>. The City is prepared to meet an increased demand compared to previous years with a total of 225,000 meals to be served throughout the 8-week program.

“It is critically important that we continue to support Jersey City families who are in need of food assistance, especially in our underserved communities,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “This year we anticipate an even greater need as the pandemic has created tough circumstances for many of our residents. I encourage anyone in need to take advantage of these free meals. No registration is necessary. No questions asked.”

The Summer Food Service Program is a federal program of the Food and Nutrition Services, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The City of Jersey City is prepared to meet an increase in demand this summer, as we have seen with other meal programs offered to local residents throughout the pandemic. In fact, at the height of the pandemic, HHS saw a 300% increase in demand for Meals on Wheels services.

“This year, we will have more than 50 City-sponsored sites,” said **Stacey Flanagan, Director of the Jersey City Health and Human Services Department**. “We are pleased that the USDA is continuing to allow flexible operating options like “grab and go” and parent/guardian pick up, so that we can safely serve as many families as possible while we continue to manage through this ongoing public health crisis.”

Anyone in need of a meal can visit one of the 52 sites with locations spanning the City, including schools, parks, community centers, health clinics, and other certified and safe sites. To find a nearby meal site, please visit the USDA map [here](#).

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