



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

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Comptroller's Office Discovers More Examples of Phony Feeding Sites

Problems Found within Two Memphis-area Organizations

The Tennessee's Comptroller's Office, with the cooperation of the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS), continues to reveal organizations engaging in deceptive schemes within the Summer Food Service Program for Children (SFSP). This program is a federally funded program administered by DHS.

Comptroller auditors reviewed Open Door, Inc. and Alumni Music, Inc., both based in Shelby County, during the summer of 2020 to see if these SFSP sponsors were serving meals to children. Auditors visited 21 different feeding sites, eight Open Door sites and 13 Alumni Music sites, and found that these sponsors were not feeding children at 17 of them.

Additionally, auditors determined that Open Door claimed reimbursement for days when children were not served. Auditors have questioned \$79,771 in reimbursements paid to Open Door in 2020.

Although the majority of the sites visited by auditors were not feeding children, auditors did observe a supper service on July 23, 2020 at Alumni Music's Giving Back feeding site. The meal contained a slice of bologna, one pineapple chunk, a package of crackers, ten cheeseballs, and approximately 2-3 ounces of punch and milk (see photo). The reimbursable rate for supper for the 2020 SFSP program was \$4.15 per supper.



Alumni Music submitted meal reimbursement claims to DHS for June and July 2020. DHS initially reimbursed them \$49,325 for the June claim, but subsequently disallowed \$41,784 and requested repayment based on their independent desk review. DHS denied all of the July 2020 meal reimbursement claim, totaling \$141,403.

Furthermore, auditors noted that Alumni Music personnel had connections to former SFSP sponsors that had previously been terminated from the SFSP program for serious deficiencies. Interestingly, auditors also documented connections between Open Door and Alumni Music, including overlapping feeding sites in the same strip mall or apartment housing which is not allowed according to program guidance.

“Although these problems are concerning, we recognize that DHS has taken several steps to improve its administration, oversight, and monitoring of the Summer Food Service Program,” said Comptroller Jason Mumpower. “DHS is taking proactive steps to uncover and remove bad actors from these programs, which are fully supported by taxpayer dollars. I encourage department leaders to continue strengthening these efforts.”

“We appreciate the partnership with the Tennessee Comptroller’s Office to ensure this vital nutrition benefit gets to those eligible to receive it and the program is operated within the bounds of all applicable rules and regulations,” said DHS Commissioner Clarence H. Carter.

To view this State Audit Special Report click [here](#).

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