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Free summer meals for kids available from YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga starting May 27

Meals provided on first-come, first-serve basis across Tennessee Valley

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (May 23, 2025) — The YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga will begin its Free Summer Food Program for area kids starting May 27, and CARTA is easily connecting families to those meals through the Read & Ride program.

The YMCA program is designed to provide children up to 18 years of age with the nutritional support they need to maintain good health and reach their fullest potential. Meals are available to all children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Children across Bradley, Hamilton, Polk, Rhea, Sequatchie counties, and Walker and Catoosa counties in North Georgia are eligible to participate in this first-come, first-serve meal program.

"We're grateful to the YMCA for once again running the Free Summer Food Program and to CARTA for connecting families to these food sites through the Read & Ride program," said **Mayor Tim Kelly**. "There are over 70 locations participating in the YMCA's Free Summer Food Program between Memorial Day and when kids go back to school in August. No child should ever go hungry, which is why we encourage anyone needing meals for their kids this summer to stop by and pick up food."

City community centers, libraries, YMCA sites, community partner locations and local schools are participating in the program. Specific dates, times, locations, and what meals or snacks are available can be [viewed online](#). The program will run through early August.

"We are excited about our continued partnership with the City of Chattanooga, especially all of the library branches and community centers," said **Paula Irwin**, Executive Director of the J.A. Henry Community YMCA, which is the non-profit's branch that prepares, packs and delivers 300,000 meals annually to feed children.

"With the Read & Ride program, we know that many more families will have access to our summer food program sites and be able to receive these meals and snacks for their children, providing a really crucial resource for our Chattanooga neighbors."

CARTA's route map is available to [view online](#).

"The fare-free Read & Ride program supported by CARTA and the Chattanooga Public Library is another way we're connecting opportunities for residents and supporting the YMCA for its Free Summer Food Program was a no-brainer," said **Charles Frazier**, Chief Executive Officer of CARTA.

The YMCA is also partnering with the city, library and CARTA to provide approximately 1,500 five-day passes to the YMCA for children enrolled in Ride & Read.

About the Y

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga is a leading nonprofit serving 45,000 members and program participants across Southeast Tennessee and North Georgia. The Y has eight facilities, two preschool centers, 80 program sites, 1,000 team members and a \$25M annual operating budget. Its mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. For more info, visit www.ymcachattanooga.org or ymca.org or follow the Y on social media: **Facebook** [@ChattanoogaYMCA](#), **Instagram** [@ymcachattanooga](#) or **LinkedIn** [@ymca-of-metropolitan-chattanooga](#).

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