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MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL Child Nutrition Sponsors

FROM: Pat Cook and Katherine Stewart, Consultants
Nutrition Education Programs
Office of Child Nutrition and School Health

SUBJECT: Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations

The Office of the Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued the final rule regarding Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations. This final rule implements executive branch policy that religiously affiliated or "faith-based" organizations should be able to participate in USDA programs in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Constitution, including the religious clauses of the first amendment. State or local governments receiving USDA assistance cannot discriminate for or against a religious organization based on its religious character or affiliation in selecting service providers.

Consistent with constitutional church-state guidelines, a "faith-based" agency that participates in USDA programs may continue to carry out its mission and retain its institutional identity provided it does not use USDA assistance to support inherently religious activities.

A copy of the Federal Register Notice is attached, in accordance with a dissemination request from USDA.