



Summer Food Service Program



Child Nutrition Programs
Finance and Support Services
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500
Phone (907) 465-4788

Program Bulletin

To: SFSP Sponsors
Program Reviewers

Bulletin: 2020-3

From: Rhonda Biles
SFSP Program Specialist

Subject: COVID-19, SFSP Distance Training
and Other SFSP News

Date: March 24, 2020

USDA COVID-19 Waivers and Guidance:

- Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children (attached)
- Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver (attached)
- [Meal Service Time Flexibility Waiver](#)
- [Non-Congregate Feeding Waiver](#)
- [Activity Requirement in Afterschool Care](#)
- USDA COVID-19 Q& A 1 (attached)
- [USDA COVID-19 Q & A 2](#)

This guidance is available on the PartnerWeb and on the FNS Response to COVID-19 website:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19>

No Kid Hungry's Center for Best Practices- Information and guidance

- [Coronavirus](#)
- [FAQs on Child Nutrition Program Options Available During School Closures Due to Coronavirus](#)

Department of Education and Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs Waivers

- [DEED CNP Website](#)
- [Waiver Request for Alaska Statewide Non-Congregate Feeding/COVID-19](#)
- [Waiver Request for SFSP Unanticipated School Closure](#)

Important Note: Based on updated information received from the USDA on 3/23, sponsors who are operating the SFSP under the SFSP Unanticipated School Closure waiver any meals served on Saturday or Sunday are **not allowed** to be claimed for reimbursement. If this guidance changes, sponsors will be notified.

Food Safety Practices

Due to the nature of COVID-19, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Food Safety and Sanitation Program strongly encourages the following to protect employees and customers, and ensure consumer confidence:

- **Increase cleaning and sanitizing of all high touch points.** Do this frequently and make it visible to customers.

- ✓ Disinfect all high touch points, including door handles, payment systems and touch screens, shared pens, and utensils (including those for employees only and those available to customers).
- ✓ If surfaces are visibly dirty, clean the surface to remove any soil prior to disinfecting to make sure that your sanitizer can do its job.
- ✓ At a minimum, cleaning and sanitizing should be done **every ½ hour**, and more frequently based on the volume of customers.
- **Place hand sanitizer stations and wipes throughout store.**
 - ✓ Provide hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes for consumers to wipe down keypads and other high touch areas at checkout.
- **Keep customers adequately spaced.** In areas of high-volume traffic, utilize spacing tools for checks and lines – tape on the floor is an inexpensive tool.
- **Keep high-risk shoppers safe.** Make adjustments or other efforts to address seniors and other high-risk shoppers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
- **Ask customers who bring in reusable bags to bag their own items.**
- **If you utilize scannable loyalty cards, ask shoppers to hold their card while the market employee scans the card (rather than the employee handling the card).**

If you would like more detailed and thorough guidance, visit the below websites:

- [Coronavirus and Pandemic Preparedness for Food Industry](#) (FMI)
- [Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (FDA)
- [Preventing the Spread of COVID-19: Guidance for Food Establishments](#) (DEC)

OTHER SFSP INFORMATION

Annual SFSP Training

The annual SFSP distance training for sponsors (non-SFA) has been postponed. A new date is pending and will be determined as soon as more information is available in terms of what the landscape of the 2020 SFSP season looks like. All sponsors who have registered for the previously scheduled March 18 training will be notified. If you wish to be included in the next SFSP distance-training, please contact Jennifer Cherian and she will add you to the training roster.

An option if sponsors are not available to attend the distance-training is to take the eLearning courses available on the DEED website, located at the link below. You will need to request a new account, if you don't have one already.

- DEED eLearning webpage: <https://education.alaska.gov/elearning>

The SFSP training courses are:

Required (if not attending the distance-delivered training – date: TBD)

Summer Food Program's Administration Basics
 Summer Food Program's Meal Pattern Basics
 USDA Civil Rights Requirements and Child Nutrition Programs

Recommended

Procurement Training – Procurement Plans
 Procurement Training – Informal
 Procurement Training – Food Service Management Companies (FSMC)

The Procurement courses are not required, but highly recommended. Sponsors are responsible for following federal purchasing rules and these courses provide a great overview if you are not familiar with federal requirements.

Please note that the aforementioned annual distance training is for the 'regular' SFSP season, and not in relation to the COVID-19 SFSP waivers.

Comment Period Extended

The comment period for the proposed rule, [Simplifying Meal Patterns and Monitoring Requirements in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#), is extended to April 22, 2020.

The rule proposes changes to simplify meal pattern and monitoring requirements in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The proposed changes, including optional flexibilities, are customer-focused and intended to help State and local Program operators overcome operational challenges that limit their ability to manage these Programs efficiently. The original comment period for this rule ends on March 23, 2020. FNS is extending the comment period through April 22, 2020, to give State and local Program operators additional time to submit comments.

Please submit comments on the proposed rule via www.regulations.gov by April 22, 2020.

What You Can Do to Help Prevent Wasted Food

USDA's Team Nutrition initiative is pleased to announce the availability of a slightly revised "What You Can Do to Prevent Wasted Food" booklet for school meal programs. Team Nutrition has updated this publication to include new tips and resource links. School nutrition professionals, parents, students, teachers, and school administrators can use this booklet to help reduce, recover, and recycle food to lessen food waste.

View and download this colorful eight-page resource at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/what-you-can-do-help-prevent-wasted-food>.

Contact Information

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Commonly Used Acronyms

SFSP – Summer Food Service Program
CNP – Child Nutrition Programs
DEED – Department of Education and Early Development
WRO – Western Region Office
FNS – Food and Nutrition Services
FNSRO – Food and Nutrition Services Regional Office
USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [USDA Complaint Email](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov) (program.intake@usda.gov).

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Questions and Answers:

Child Nutrition Program Meal Service during COVID-19 Outbreaks

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) and institutions participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) may be dismissed or closed due to Federal, State, or local public health requirements for social distancing due to COVID-19. Under these circumstances, school food authorities (SFAs) and other eligible community organizations (CO) may continue to serve meals to children affected by school or child care closures through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

Please note, a school closure means closing the school and sending all the students and staff home. In a school dismissal, the school may stay open for staff while the children stay home. In this guidance, the term closure or dismissal is used to refer to schools that are closed or at which all students are dismissed.

The questions and answers below provide additional information regarding how these programs may operate an SFSP or SSO under COVID-19 conditions.

1. Which regulatory requirements for SFSP and SSO operations may be waived for COVID-19-related operations?

FNS may waive the requirement at 7 CFR 225.6(e)(15) that meals be served and consumed in a congregate setting, in order to support any social distancing requested by Federal, State, or local authorities. FNS may also waive the requirements at 7 CFR 225.6(d)(1)(iv) limiting the operation of the SFSP or SSO during an unexpected school dismissal during the school year to non-school sites. Requests to waive other operational requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, the SFSP or SSO will generally operate as it does during the summer months.

2. How must a State agency obtain FNS approval to allow an SFA or CO to operate during COVID-19 conditions using policy waivers?

Each State agency must submit an individual State waiver to FNS for review and approval before initiating an SFSP or SSO response that includes policy waivers. Once FNS has approved the State's waiver, the State may initiate program operations at any location in the State and at any time in the approval period specified in the waiver response. FNS encourages State agencies to submit their individual waivers well in advance of any anticipated operations so that they are ready to begin working with eligible service providers right away when COVID-19 conditions arise.

3. How does an SFA or CO receive approval to operate during COVID-19 conditions?

The SFA or CO must submit an application to the State agency for the State's approval. It is at the State agency's discretion what information to require in SFA or CO applications. However,

FNS suggests that a waiver request address the specifics of how the SFA or CO will operate the SFSP or SSO during a COVID-19-related dismissal, including:

- Name of school(s) covered by waiver request;
- At what point following school dismissal the meal service would start;
- What meal distribution method(s) the institution will use and how the waiver will target the children in the dismissed schools;
- How the meal distribution will target low-income children, if the school does not have 50 percent or more free or reduced price children enrolled;
- Methods for communicating with families; and
- How the SFA or CO will ensure proper operation of the program including meal content, meal counts, food safety, oversight, etc.

In order to assure a prompt response to school dismissals, SFAs and COs are encouraged to work with their State agency to approve their application in advance of a COVID-19 related school dismissal. It is important to note that while multiple organizations in a community may work to respond to COVID-19 related dismissals, a State agency may not approve waiver requests that would duplicate coverage. Therefore, it is critical that State agencies communicate with SFAs and COs to develop these waiver requests as soon as possible, and that communities identify the institution most able to respond to a dismissal at a particular school.

4. Is it mandatory that meals be provided during a school dismissal?

No. However, SFAs and COs are encouraged to ensure that the needs of low-income children are met during extended school dismissals.

5. Who is eligible to receive meals when school is dismissed due to COVID-19?

The SFSP/SSO COVID-19 waiver is targeted to children who attend schools that have been dismissed due to COVID-19. However, in eligible areas, meals may be served to all children 18 and under in the household if at least one child attends the dismissed school. If a child care center that participates in the CACFP is located in a dismissed school, students enrolled in that center are eligible for meals provided to children attending the dismissed school.

6. How do SFSP/SSO site eligibility requirements apply to COVID-19 meal service? Must all schools served be in low-income areas?

For dismissed schools with 50 percent or more of their enrolled students certified eligible for free or reduced price meals, SFAs may develop meal distribution methods in which meals are available to all families with children enrolled in that school, with a focus on serving low income children. For dismissed schools with less than 50 percent free or reduced price enrollment, meal distribution methods must more directly target the households of enrolled children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Schools should use current free/reduced price certification information or, if necessary, depending on the timing of the school dismissals, immediate prior year eligibility certifications.

7. How many meals per child may be offered each day? May supper be provided? Can meals be distributed for more than one day?

The maximum number of meals that may be offered remains the same as under SFSP or SSO: up to two meals, or one meal and one snack, per child, per day, in any combination except lunch and supper. As discussed below, the State agency may approve a distribution approach that includes meals for multiple days. The State agency should consider the capacity of the SFA or CO to execute such an approach effectively, including meeting food safety requirements.

- 8.** Will there be any separate reporting requirements for meals served to children under the SFSP/SSO COVID-19 waiver or will the standard meal count reporting procedures apply?

Separate meal counts and records must be maintained for meals served under a COVID-19 waiver. To receive reimbursement, total meals must be reported to the State agency for submission to FNS.

- 9.** How can a school with less than 50 percent free and reduced price eligibility target low-income children without overtly identifying those children as eligible for free or reduced price meals?

This will depend in large part on how the SFA or CO intends to provide meals. The waiver request should describe their method of meal distribution. For example, meal distribution sites might be located in areas that are easily accessible to low-income children while avoiding identification of individual children as low income.

- 10.** What are the requirements for the meals?

The meals must meet the regular menu planning requirements of the SFSP or SSO. Offer versus serve (OVS) will not apply and all meals must be unitized, meaning a complete reimbursable meal that meets the requirements of the menu planning method used, including milk, must be distributed. Shelf-stable milk may be used. USDA commodity foods may also be used. If availability of milk or other meal components becomes an issue, FNS will work with the State agency to provide the needed waivers or flexibility.

- 11.** Are we required to accommodate documented special needs?

Yes. This should be addressed in the SFA or CO's waiver request.

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Food and
Nutrition
Service

DATE: March 25, 2020

Braddock
Metro Center

CODE: COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #4

1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria
VA 22314

SUBJECT: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the
Child Nutrition Programs¹

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Issuing Agency/Office:	FNS/Child Nutrition Programs
Title of Document:	Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs
Document ID:	
Z-RIN:	
Date of Issuance:	March 25, 2020
Replaces:	N/A
Summary:	(1) FNS waives, for all States, the requirements to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements during the public health emergency due to COVID-19. (2) This waiver applies to State agencies administering and local organizations operating the: National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program. (3) This document relates to 7 CFR 210.10(b) and (c), 220.8(b) and (c), 225.16(d), and 226.20.
Disclaimer:	The contents of this guidance document have the force and effect of law as authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the Act) (P.L. 116-127).

Pursuant to section 2202(a) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the Act) (P.L. 116-127) and in light of the exceptional circumstances of this public health emergency, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is granting a nationwide waiver to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This waiver applies to the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program (the Child Nutrition Programs).

¹ "Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. §801 et seq.), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs designated this waiver as *not major*, as defined by 5 U.S.C. § 804(2)."

Section 2202(a) of the Act permits the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a waiver for all States for the purposes of providing meals under the Child Nutrition Programs, with appropriate safety measures, as determined by the Secretary.

Under Program regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(b) and (c), 220.8(b) and (c), 225.16(d), and 226.20, Child Nutrition Program meals must meet meal pattern requirements. However, FNS recognizes that, in this public health emergency, appropriate safety measures are necessary. Therefore, FNS waives, for all States, the requirements at 7 CFR 210.10(b) and (c), 220.8(b) and (c), 225.16(d), and 226.20, to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements during the public health emergency.

Consistent with section 2202(a)(2) of the Act, this waiver is automatically available to all States that elect to use it, without further application. State agencies must inform their Regional Office if they elect to be subject to the waiver. However, in order to participate under this waiver, local Program operators must contact the State agency for approval to utilize this waiver.

When reviewing requests from local Program operators, the State agency should consider requests that are targeted and justified based upon disruptions to the availability of food products resulting from unprecedented impacts of COVID-19. FNS expects and strongly encourages Program operators to maintain and meet the nutrition standards for each Program to the greatest extent possible. FNS stands ready to provide technical assistance and to offer alternatives to help stakeholders meet meal patterns. As a reminder, Federal procurement regulations at 2 CFR 200.320(f) allow procurement by noncompetitive proposals when there is a public emergency.

State agencies should inform local Program operators of the availability of this waiver as quickly as possible, and work in partnership with them to determine if this waiver is necessary to ensure access to nutritious meals. The State agency must approve use of this waiver on a case-by-case basis, and must report to the FNS Regional Office when and where this waiver is in effect and for what food components.

This waiver is effective immediately and remains in effect until April 30, 2020 or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier. FNS is offering this flexibility in short term increments and will reevaluate the continued need for the waiver as the situation continues to evolve.

As required by section 2202(d), each State that elects to be subject to this waiver must submit a report to the Secretary not later than 1 year after the date such State received the waiver. The report must include:

- A summary of the use of this waiver by the State agency and local Program operators, and
- A description of whether and how this waiver resulted in improved services to Program participants.

FNS stands ready to provide assistance to areas impacted by COVID–19, and intends to continue supporting access to nutritious meals during this public health emergency.

FNS appreciates the exceptional effort of State agencies and local Program operators working to meet the nutritional needs of participants during a challenging time. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ang M Kline". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ang" being the most prominent.

Angela M. Kline
Director
Policy and Program Development Division



Food and
Nutrition
Service

Braddock
Metro Center

1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria
VA 22314

DATE: March 25, 2020

CODE: COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #5

SUBJECT: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children¹

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Issuing Agency/Office:	FNS/Child Nutrition Programs
Title of Document:	Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children
Document ID:	
Z-RIN:	
Date of Issuance:	March 25, 2020
Replaces:	N/A
Summary:	(1) Under this waiver, Program operators in a State with an approved waiver allowing non-congregate meal distribution during COVID-19-related operations may distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their children. State agencies must have a plan for ensuring that Program operators are able to maintain accountability and program integrity. (2) This waiver applies to State agencies administering and local organizations operating the: National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program. (3) This document relates to 42 U.S.C. 1761(f)(3), 7 CFR 210.10(a), 220.2 (Breakfast) and 220.8(a), 225.2 (Meals), 225.9(d)(7), and 226.2 (Meals).
Disclaimer:	The contents of this guidance document have the force and effect of law as authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the Act) (P.L. 116-127).

Pursuant to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the Act) (P.L. 116-127) and based on the exceptional circumstances of this public health emergency, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is establishing a nationwide waiver to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This waiver applies to the Child Nutrition Programs: National School Lunch

¹ Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. §801 et seq.), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs designated this waiver as *not major*, as defined by 5 U.S.C. § 804(2).

Program, including the Seamless Summer Option; School Breakfast Program; Child and Adult Care Food Program; and Summer Food Service Program.

Section 2202(a) and (b) of the Act permits the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a waiver for all States for the purposes of providing meals and meal supplements under the Child Nutrition Programs named above with appropriate safety measures with respect to COVID-19, as determined by the Secretary.

Under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act at 42 U.S.C. 1761(f)(3) and Program regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(a), 220.2 (Breakfast) and 220.8(a), 225.2 (Meals), 225.9(d)(7), and 226.2 (Meals) meals must be served to eligible children. The Act and cited regulations envision Program operators providing meals directly to children, not to parents and guardians picking up meals at non-congregate meal sites on behalf of their children. However, FNS recognizes that in this public health emergency, continuing to require children to come to the meal site to pick up meals may not be practical and in keeping with the goal of providing meals while also taking appropriate safety measures.

Therefore, under this waiver, Program operators in a State with an approved waiver allowing non-congregate meal distribution during COVID-19-related operations may distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their children. However, State agencies must have a plan for ensuring that Program operators are able to maintain accountability and program integrity. This includes putting in place processes to ensure that meals are distributed only to parents or guardians of eligible children, and that duplicate meals are not distributed to any child. State agencies may want to consult local Program operators when developing their plans as local Program operators are best situated to determine how to provide these assurances. This waiver is effective immediately and remains in effect until June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

Please note, this waiver also applies to guardians picking up meals for adult participants in CACFP Adult Day Care programs.

Consistent with section 2202(a)(2) of the Act, this waiver applies automatically to all States that elect to use it, without further application. State agencies must inform their Regional Office if they elect to be subject to the waiver. State agencies should inform local Program operators of the flexibilities provided by this waiver as quickly as possible, and work in partnership with local operators to provide meals to all participants in a safe and accessible manner.

As required by section 2202(d), each State that elects to be subject to this waiver must submit a report to the Secretary not later than 1 year after the date such State received the waiver. The report must include:

- A summary of the use of this waiver by the State agency and local Program operators, and
- A description of whether and how this waiver resulted in improved services to Program participants.

FNS stands ready to provide assistance to areas impacted by COVID-19 and intends to continue supporting access to nutritious meals during this public health emergency.

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Angela M. Kline
Director
Policy and Program Development Division