

Q&A Non-Congregate Meal Program Services

SFSP/SSO Waiver

March 18, 2020

Q1. What is the process to be approved to serve non-congregate meals?

A. Program Sponsors must submit an application to Child Nutrition Programs for approval. In order to assure a prompt response to school dismissals, sponsors 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, the State agency may not approve waiver requests that would duplicate coverage. Therefore, it is critical that State agencies communicate with sponsors 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.

Q2. Are meals only allowed for students who are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price meals?

A. No, The SFSP/SSO COVID-19 waiver is targeted to children who attend schools that have been dismissed due to COVID-19; all meals are free to children. The waiver does require that schools either be at least 50% enrolled be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or directly target low-income families. A sponsor may serve all children in the community.

Q3. Are all school districts required to provide meals

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

Q4. How many meals may be provided by the sponsor?

Meal service options include one meal, two meals (not to include both lunch and supper), or one meal and one snack

Q5. May parents pick up meals on behalf of the students?

A. No, however the State agency submitted a waiver request on March 13, 2020 to USDA FNS for approval; as of 3/18/20 this waiver has not been approved.

Q6. May other children in the community receive meals provided by the school district, such as students returning from boarding schools, Head Start children, or other younger children?

A. Yes. We encourage sponsors to maintain meal counts that include information about children not normally served. All meals are free.

Q7. Can I use my Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) produce that has been delivered or is scheduled for delivery during the school closures?

A. If at all possible cancel all produce orders that have not been delivered to your school/district. If you currently have FFVP produce at the school/district you can use it in any child nutrition program meals

that your school/district are serving during the school closures. You can claim the expenses on your March and April FFVP claim. Do not order additional food items with these funds.

Q8. Can a school operate a feeding site that is currently not on NSLP under the SFSP option?

A. Yes, however all staff responsible for the feeding and preparing of food must have SFSP training; full SFSP training is available through DEED eLearning at <https://education.alaska.gov/ELearning>.

Q9. What Free & Reduced Price Rate (F/RP) would we use if we are a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) site/district?

A. There are multiple ways you can list your site percentage, you can use the Free and Reduce Price Report which lists each sites individual ISP and includes the 1.6 CEP multiplier, or you could look on the No Kid Hungry Mapper for each site to see if they are in a census area eligible location (<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/Averaged-Eligibility-Map>)

Q10. Can meals be served on Saturday and Sunday and reimbursed?

A. Yes, under the SFSP meal program weekend meals are allowed. You would continue to follow the plan you submitted on your wavier as to which meals and follow the SFSP meal pattern. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/meal-patterns>

Q11. Can we serve Family Meals?

A. No; this program only provides meals to children.

Q12. What happens if a school resumes to a distance delivery model?

Schools that have an enrollment of 50% or more students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals may maintain the SFSP/SSO option; schools that have an enrollment less than 50% of free or reduced-price students will resume NSLP and meal counting/claiming will be done by category of eligibility.

Q13. Why are these approved under Summer meals?

The option to serve meals in the USDA programs during an unanticipated school closure is currently only available in the summer program; we used this option after the 2018 earthquake.

Q14. The approval letter indicates we may operate under SFSP or SSO, what is the difference?

There are several differences, we do encourage you to review the full comparison chart to decide which mode you prefer:

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/SFSP_SeamlessComparisonChart.pdf.

Do note that the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) is a little easier to add in the database; the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) will require much more information to be entered, but the SFSP has a slightly higher reimbursement rate. We cannot reimburse meals until the database is up-to-date.