

## CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM STATE WAIVER REQUEST

- **State agency submitting waiver request and responsible State agency staff contact information:**

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development  
Child Nutrition Programs  
[Jo Dawson](#), Program Manager  
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- **Region:** Western Region
- **Eligible service providers participating in waiver and affirmation that they are in good standing:**

All Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Child Nutrition Program (DEED CNP) School Food Authority (SFA) sponsors approved to operate the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program (NSLP/SBP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in good standing.

- **Description of the challenge the State agency is seeking to solve, the goal of the waiver to improve services under the Program, and the expected outcomes if the waiver is granted. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(iii) and 12(l)(2)(A)(iv) of the NSLA]:**

In Alaska, continuing to operate under the SFSP during the emergency disaster declaration provides a continuity of services, maintains COVID-19 safety measures, and mitigates administrative burdens and meal service inefficiencies. Many SFAs in Alaska will be operating credit-recovery, summer school programs in their schools this summer as a result of school closures during the academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently under the Nationwide Waiver COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #59, SFAs are permitted to operate as closed-enrolled programs under the SFSP. This waiver has an expiration date of June 30, 2021. Alaska school districts are struggling to come up with feasible options to safely continue their summer school programs in July and August. Switching from operating under SFSP to operating under NSLP from one day to the next is a massive undertaking that involves program administration staff as well as meal service staff and would place staff and participants at greater risk of exposure to COVID-19, as well as break the continuity of the meal service program. SFAs have been operating under the SFSP the entire school year with COVID-19 safety protocols in place and changing to NSLP operations beginning July 1, 2021 would disrupt established meal service processes. It would be a challenge to maintain social distancing measures when serving both enrolled summer school children, as well as the community-at-large. Allowing operations of SFSP eliminates the need to collect meal payments, including cash payments, at meal sites, which

speeds up service of meals, thereby reducing contact and potential exposure to COVID-19. Also, providing meals in shifts would be a burden on already stretched staffing resources.

The goal of this waiver request is to continue to utilize current COVID-19 safety measures, establish a continuity of services, minimize the administrative burden on SFA sponsors, and reduce competition and potential duplication of services provided by successful area non-profit agencies planning on providing summer meals to community children this summer.

By extending the option for SFAs to operate the SFSP at closed-enrolled summer school sites, meals can be provided safely and efficiently and reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure. Additionally, the heavy administrative burden that is inherent to the process from changing from one child nutrition program to another during meal service operations, will be eliminated and allow for program continuity without a break in services, as well as reduce the need to compete with neighboring non-profit agencies who plan on administering an open summer meal program.

- **Specific Program requirements to be waived (include statutory and regulatory citations). [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(i) of the NSLA]:**

The Alaska DEED CNP is requesting to waive statutory provision of Section 13(c)(l) of the NSLA (42 U.S.C. 1761(c)(1), (d), and (e)), 7 CFR 225.6(b)(1) and (e)(1), and 7 CFR 225.14(d), to allow SFAs to operate under SFSP at summer school, closed enrolled sites.

- **Detailed description of alternative procedures and anticipated impact on Program operations, including technology, State systems, and monitoring:**

Alaska DEED/CNP will provide information and instructions to the SFA sponsors on SFSP closed-enrolled meals services, and will ensure all applicable waivers are in place prior to summer meal service operations.

Program sponsors would be required to meet the following criteria in order to be approved by the state agency for summer 2021 SFSP:

- Be in good standing
- Participated in SFSP in current year or prior two years
- Sponsor must ensure that the site supervisor is available at the site to document the number of meals served and ensure the integrity of meal service
- Meals served in sealed containers such as sealed sack lunch bags must contain all required meal components

- **Description of any steps the State has taken to address regulatory barriers at the State level. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:**

No barriers have been identified at the state agency level. There are currently no state-level regulatory barriers related to this specific issue. The state agency will continue to be in

contact with SFA program sponsors with closed-enrolled sites.

- **Anticipated challenges State or eligible service providers may face with the waiver implementation:**

Alaska DEED CNP does not anticipate this waiver will present any challenges to the state agency or sponsoring organizations. The challenge Alaska DEED CNP and sponsors may face if the waiver is not approved include:

- Increased administrative burden
- Lack of program continuity, and
- Competing with established area non-profit SFSP sponsors.

- **Description of how the waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government. If there are anticipated increases, confirm that the costs will be paid from non-Federal funds. [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(iii) of the NSLA]:**

Alaska DEED CNP does not anticipate that this waiver will increase the overall cost of the program to the Federal government. The waiver will allow program sponsors and Alaska DEED CNP to continue meal service operations during the summer months.

- **Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:**

To be in alignment with the other COVID-19 waivers, the Alaska DEED CNP requests this waiver to be effective through September 30, 2021, or until the end of the sponsor's summer meal service operations, whichever is earlier.

- **Proposed monitoring and review procedures:**

Alaska DEED CNP will work with approved sponsors on the application and reporting on this waiver. Monitoring will include documentation of SFA closed-enrolled sites. Implementation of this waiver will be monitored by state agency staff during both the application process and through Administrative Reviews.

- **Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNS);**

DEED CNP will report to FNS by the following information by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2021:

1. The number of SFA sponsors that operated summer school closed-enrolled sites
2. The number of meals served at SFA closed enrolled school sites

- **Link to or copy of the public notice informing the public about the proposed waiver [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:**

[Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs](https://education.alaska.gov/cnp)  
(<https://education.alaska.gov/cnp>)

• **Signature and Title of requesting official:**



Name: [Jo Dawson](#)

Title: Child Nutrition Programs Manager

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

**TO BE COMPLETED BY FNS REGIONAL OFFICE:**

*FNS Regional Offices are requested to ensure the questions have been adequately addressed by the State agency and formulate an opinion and justification for a response to the waiver request based on their knowledge, experience and work with the State.*

**Date request was received at Regional Office:**

Check this box to confirm that the State agency has provided public notice in accordance with Section 12(I)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA

**Regional Office Analysis and Recommendations:**