

**CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM STATE WAIVER REQUEST**  
**Waiver Request for Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association Head Start**

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

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development  
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**2. Region:** Western Region

**3. Eligible service providers participating in waiver and affirmation that they are in good standing:**

This waiver request is for the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) specific to facility review monitoring requirements for Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA), a Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsor in good standing.

**4. 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. [7 CFR §226.6(m)(6)(i)]:**

With a main administrative office located in Anchorage, AK, the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) operates three head starts located in Unalaska, King Cove, and Sand Point. All three head starts are located on the Aleutian Islands chain, an archipelago of more than 200 islands extending roughly 1,200 mi (1,900 km) from mainland Alaska. It can be reached by plane via Aleutian Airways or Alaska Airlines. A typical one-way fare from Anchorage to Unalaska (Dutch Harbor) is estimated to be around \$689.00. In the summer, Unalaska can be reached via ferry from Homer, with each trip taking three to three and a half days one-way. Suffice to say, the Aleutian Islands are considered to be among the most geographically isolated areas in the North Pacific.

APIA Head Start is scheduled to receive an administrative review and a facility review in FY26. It received its last onsite administrative review on January 20, 2023, with an onsite meal observation/facility review on January 24, 2023. For FY26, DEED, through its third-party reviewer, had already completed an onsite administrative review in Anchorage and was scheduled to conduct an onsite facility review in Unalaska on December 4-5. Portions of the facility review, including menu review and meal count verification, have already been completed as part of a desk audit.

Unfortunately, severe weather conditions impeded our reviewer's ability to travel from

Anchorage to Unalaska. As a result, our reviewer was unable to complete the other required portions of the facility review, including the onsite meal observation, during that time.

Since weather delays are not uncommon, especially through the winter and early spring, DEED seeks to complete the remaining components of the facility review virtually. The alternative is a costly flight on a future trip or a deferment of the review to the next year. However, since the facility review has already been partially completed, DEED aims to complete the review in FY26 in lieu of deferment.

By approving this waiver, the impact to the overall review schedule will be minimized while ensuring program integrity by completing the virtual sections according to the guidance provided in CACFP Policy Memo 07-2023. It reduces both costs and risks posed by unpredictable weather and its impact on monitoring schedules.

**5. Specific Program requirements to be waived (include statutory and regulatory citations). [7 CFR §226.6(m)(6)(i)]:**

DEED requests a waiver of the 10% facility review requirement included in a sponsoring organization review under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) [7 CFR §226.6(m)(6)(i)].

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

If approved, DEED will still perform an offsite facility review of the Unalaska Head Start via a live video and audio stream, including a virtual meal observation and a desk audit of any remaining required documents. In addition, DEED will initiate the household contact policy and reach out to a random sample of household contacts to confirm their children's attendance on the day of review.

If there are significant findings during the offsite facility review, or if the offsite review cannot be completed satisfactorily, the administrative review will be rescheduled to FY 2026-2027 school year. The sponsor was last reviewed during FY 2022-2023, with all corrective actions completed. However, DEED desires to complete the review during the current school year, rather than defer, since the administrative review has already been completed with no findings, and the only pending requirements are the onsite meal observation and verification of remaining records.

**7. Description of any steps the State has taken to address regulatory barriers at the State level. [7 CFR §226.6(m)(6)(i)]:**

No barriers exist at the state level.

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

DEED does not anticipate this waiver will present any challenges; if insurmountable challenges arise, DEED will cancel the administrative review and reschedule it during the 2026-2027 school year as an option of last resort.

**9. 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. [7 CFR §226.6(m)(6)(i)]:**

DEED does not anticipate this waiver will increase the overall cost of the program to the federal government; given the unusual situation, this waiver seeks to maintain program accountability without creating additional administrative cost at the state or federal level.

**10. Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:**

DEED requests this waiver to be effective immediately and through June 30, 2026.

**11. Proposed monitoring and review procedures:**

DEED's Child and Adult Care Food Program Coordinator shall monitor the implementation waiver and report to the Child Nutrition Program Manager. DEED will communicate with the Western Region Office (WRO) on an as needed basis.

**12. Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNS):**

DEED will report to FNS the outcome of the administrative review and its success or challenges implementing the waiver by September 30, 2026.

**13. Link to or copy of the public notice informing the public about the proposed waiver:**

<https://education.alaska.gov/cnp>

**14. Signature and Title of requesting official:**



Adrienne Schwartz  
Child Nutrition Programs Manager

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**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(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA**

**Regional Office Analysis and Recommendations:**