

Child and Adult Care Food Program: USDA Waivers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a series of child nutrition program waivers, based on authorities granted in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, as extended by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act. These waivers will support Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) providers and programs in maintaining access to nutritious meals for children in the current COVID-19 public health emergency. Below is a list of nationwide child nutrition waivers applicable to CACFP.

- **Non-Congregate Feeding Waiver:** Allows non-congregate feeding in CACFP programs, including offering meals offsite, via “grab and go,” and through delivery, extended through June 30, 2022 (fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-2).
- **Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-Up Waiver:** Allows parents or guardians to pick up non-congregate meals for their children, extended through June 30, 2022 (fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-5).
- **Meal Times Waiver:** Allows CACFP meals to be served to children outside traditional times to maximize flexibility for meal pick-up, extended through June 30, 2022 (fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-1).
- **Waiver of Area Eligibility in Afterschool Programs and Family Child Care Homes:** Allows schools and afterschool care providers to serve At-Risk afterschool meals and snacks to students at the free rate regardless of their location. The waiver also allows family child care homes to automatically receive the highest (Tier 1) reimbursement rate regardless of their location. This waiver is effective through June 30, 2022 (fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-93).
- **Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver:** Allows specific meal pattern modifications when certain foods are not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic and simplifies food procurement rules, extended through June 30, 2022 (fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-4).
- **Monitoring Requirements Waivers:** Allows State agencies and sponsoring organizations to conduct virtual monitoring activities via a desk audit or other means to maintain program integrity while supporting social distancing. These waivers remain in effect until 30 days after the end of the public health emergency (fns.usda.gov/cn/child-nutrition-monitoring-nationwide-waiver).

Take Action

- Providers, programs, sponsors, advocates, and State agency staff can work in partnership to implement these waivers to provide meals to all participants in a safe and accessible manner. See FRAC’s [Food and Nutrition Resources During COVID-19](#).
- Promote the area eligibility waiver using FRAC’s communications toolkit: [Maximizing the CACFP Area Eligibility Waiver for Family Child Care Homes](#)
- View USDA’s map of [child nutrition waivers by state](#).

For updates and additional information on COVID-19, please see [FRAC’s website](https://frac.org/covid19). (frac.org/covid19)