

# Serving Meals on Weekends and Holidays During COVID-19

Schools and community sponsors operating the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Afterschool Meal Program can receive federal funding for providing meals on weekends, school holidays, and school breaks during this school year. As COVID-19 continues to disproportionately impact families with children, this remains an important but currently underutilized opportunity to reduce hunger and support good nutrition during COVID-19 and to support program operations while drawing down additional federal reimbursements.

Schools and nonprofit sponsors should consult with their [State child nutrition agency](#) prior to serving meals on weekends and holidays in order to ensure that the meals are reimbursed.

## Weekend and Holiday Meals: Leveraging Key Nationwide Waivers

**Summer Meals Operations:** Allows SFSP and SSO to operate through June 30, 2021.

- *What does this mean for serving meals on weekends or school breaks?* School districts and sponsors can operate both SFSP/SSO and CACFP at the same time, meaning children can receive up to three meals and one snack per day, including days when school is not in session.

**Non-Congregate Feeding:** Meals may be picked up or delivered to be consumed offsite.

- *What does this mean for serving meals on weekends or school breaks?* Meals served do not need to be consumed at a program site on non-school days. Meals can be picked up and taken home or delivered.

**Area Eligibility:** Sponsors operating SFSP/SSO and the Afterschool Meal Program can feed children in communities that do not meet the area eligibility threshold normally required to set up a meal site.

- *What does this mean for serving meals on weekends or school breaks?* Schools as well as summer and afterschool programs that were not eligible previously may now be able to serve summer and afterschool meals.

**Meal Service Time:** Meals can be served outside traditional times to maximize flexibility for meal pick up. State agencies may approve plans that include pick up of meals for multiple days.

- *What does this mean for serving meals on weekends or school breaks?* Up to one week of meals can be provided at one time, ensuring full coverage over weekends and during spring break.

Learn more about the [waivers](#) that are available through June 30, 2021.

## Best Practices for Meal Service on Non-School Days

- **Consolidate service sites.** Having enough sites in a community to ensure access is important, but when adding weekend or holiday meals, schools and community sponsors may want to consider streamlining operations by consolidating meal service to popular meal pick-up sites.
- **Prep meals earlier in the week.** Sponsors have reported success prepping weekend and holiday meals in advance alongside the normal school day meal service work to reduce labor costs.
- **Consider capacity and storage limitations.** Some families may not have the ability to transport, store, or heat multiple days' worth of meals. Operators should adjust meals as needed to meet families' needs.
- **Use a survey or registration form to determine interest and participation.** When starting meal service on weekends and holidays, schools and community sponsors may want to engage the community to determine the need and to reduce food waste.
- **Consider offering a "pantry-style" meal kit for the holidays.** Program operators may provide bulk food items that contribute to multiple meals for children. A sample holiday menu is available [here](#).

The **National School Lunch Program** and the **School Breakfast Program** cannot be used to serve meals on non-school days.

## Spotlight on Weekend and Holiday Meal Service

### **Central Point School District #6**

Central Point School District #6 in Oregon distributes breakfasts and lunches on Thursday afternoon for consumption on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Meals served over the weekend include heat-and-eat options that are easy to prepare, such as build-your-own pizzas. During the week of Thanksgiving, families can pick up seven days' worth of meals at one time. By serving meals on the weekend, Central Point School District #6 has been able to maintain the same numbers of breakfasts and lunches served during a normal school year as well as maintain hours for staff.

**It Pays to Serve on Weekends and School Breaks!** A typical school year runs for 180 days, which means that weekends and school breaks adds up to more than 90 days' worth of reimbursable meals in many areas.

### **YMCA of Central Massachusetts**

YMCA of Central Massachusetts works collaboratively with their local school district to deliver meals during the week through SFSP and CACFP to families that can't make it to stationary pick-up sites. The YMCA uses volunteers to deliver meals on Fridays to families across the community. They also work with local colleges and nonprofit organizations to collect math kits, books, and materials for science activities to provide alongside the meals in order to meet the CACFP enrichment activity requirement. For the week of Thanksgiving, the YMCA is delivering meals for the entire week on Monday.

## Afterschool Suppers and Snacks: Enrichment Requirement on Non-School Days

In order to participate in the CACFP Afterschool Meal Program, meal sites must offer an educational or enrichment activity to all participants. During COVID-19, activities may be conducted [virtually](#) or in other non-congregate ways, such as online homework assistance, activity packets, electronic games and books, or other e-learning activities. Programs serving weekend meals must provide weekend enrichment activities, either in person or virtually, on the weekend days for which meals are served. *Children are not required to participate in or complete the activity in order to receive an afterschool meal or snack.*

## Frequently Asked Questions: Weekends and Holidays

- **Can sponsors operate SFSP or SSO concurrently with the CACFP Afterschool Meal and Snack Program on the weekend?** [Yes](#). SFSP or SSO and CACFP can operate concurrently on non-instruction days, as long as the two programs serve different meals and do not exceed the number of meals and snacks allowed per child, per day, per program.
- **Can school food authorities operating SFSP/SSO serve weekend meals to all children through age 18, regardless of whether the children are enrolled at the school?** [Yes](#). Schools operating open SFSP sites must serve all children who request a meal. Schools can also choose to operate closed enrolled sites that serve only enrolled students.
- **Can CACFP sites/sponsors that did not serve weekend meals prior to COVID-19 expand to provide weekend meals?** [Yes](#). Sites can participate even if they did not operate on weekends prior to COVID-19. An enrichment activity is required.

## Resources

- FRAC's webinar recording: [Serving Meals on Weekends and Holidays During COVID-19](#) (Nov 5, 2020)
- FRAC's [Summary of USDA's Nationwide Child Nutrition Waivers in Response to COVID-19](#)
- FRAC's [How it Works: The Afterschool Meal Program: Serve Meals on Weekends, School Holidays, and School Breaks](#)
- LunchAssist & Center for Ecoliteracy: [Sample Menu for Holiday Meals During COVID-19](#)
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service:
  - [Child and Adult Care Food Program: Providing Multiple Meals at a Time for Children During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)
  - [Summer Food Service Program: Providing Multiple Meals at a Time During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)