



# Summary of USDA’s Nationwide Child Nutrition Waivers in Response to COVID-19

The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) gives the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) the authority to issue [nationwide waivers](#) to ensure access to meals through the child nutrition programs as communities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to issue waivers that increase cost. In order for a state to use a nationwide waiver, the State child nutrition agency must notify their USDA Regional Office that it elects to use the waiver.

Prior to implementing any of the following waivers or providing meals through the child nutrition programs, schools and other program operators should receive approval from their State child nutrition agency in order to ensure that the meals served will be reimbursed. If USDA has not issued a nationwide waiver to overcome a barrier to meal access that a State agency identifies, it can apply for a state waiver, and advocates, schools, program operators, and sponsors should encourage their states to apply for waivers that will support access to meals.

Waiver	Expires	Description	Programs
<b>Non-Congregate Feeding</b>	<a href="#">SFSP/SSO:</a> 12/31/20  <a href="#">NSLP, SBP, CACFP:</a> 6/30/21	Allows meals to be provided outside of a congregate feeding setting. Meals can be distributed at a site where families pick up the meals, as well as be delivered to children’s homes. USDA has provided additional <a href="#">guidance</a> on meal delivery. The State child nutrition agency needs to sign off on the distribution model. In addition, USDA has issued <a href="#">guidance</a> that gives State agencies the authority to approve methods that include providing meals for multiple days.	School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
<a href="#">Meal Service Times</a>	NSLP, SBP, CACFP: 6/30/21	Provides flexibility to the meal service time requirements by allowing meals to be served outside of the standard meal times. <b><i>SFSP/SSO is now included in <a href="#">Meal Service Times in SFSP and SSO below.</a></i></b>	SBP, NSLP, and CACFP
<a href="#">Activity Requirement in the Afterschool Nutrition Programs</a>	6/30/20	Eliminates the requirement to provide educational or enrichment activities when serving snacks through NSLP or meals and snacks through the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Program.  <b>August 21 update:</b> Programs may provide activities virtually or sent home with students.	NSLP, CACFP

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<b>Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children</b>	<b>SFSP/SSO:</b> 12/31/20  <b>NSLP, SBP, CACFP:</b> 6/30/21	Allows a parent or guardian to pick up meals to take home to children. State agencies are required to create a plan that ensures accountability and program integrity.	SBP, NSLP, SFSP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO), CACFP
<b>Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs</b>	<b>SFSP/SSO:</b> 12/31/20  <b>NSLP, SBP, CACFP:</b> 6/30/21	Waives the requirements to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements. While the waiver is available to all states, program sponsors must submit requests to their State agency for approval that demonstrate disruptions to the availability of food products.	SBP, NSLP, SFSP, CACFP
<b><u>Area Eligibility*</u></b>  <i>*State waiver, but extended nationally for all states</i>	12/31/20	USDA allowed states during unanticipated school closures to waive the requirement in the summer meals programs that "open site" meal service is limited to areas with at least half of the children in the area are low-income households.	SFSP, SSO
<b><u>Community Eligibility Deadline Waiver</u></b>	8/31/20	Extends the deadline to calculate the Identified Student Percentage from April 1 to anytime between April 1 and June 30; the deadline to notify state agencies from April 15 to June 15; the deadline for states to notify school districts that they are eligible or near-eligible from May to June 15; and the deadline for school districts to elect community eligibility from June 30 to August 31.	SBP, NSLP
<b>Monitoring Requirements for <u>School Food Authorities and State Agencies in the School Meals Programs</u></b>	Extended to 6/30/21	Waives for all school food authorities (SFAs) and State agencies the requirement that monitoring must be conducted on-site. SFAs and State agencies should continue monitoring activities remotely.	SBP, NSLP, SSO
Waiver	Expires	Description	Programs
<b>Monitoring Requirements for</b>		Waives for all sponsors and State agencies the requirement that SFSP monitoring be conducted on-site. This includes new sponsor,	SFSP

<a href="#"><u>Sponsors and State Agencies in SFSP</u></a>	Extended to 9/30/21	annual, and pre-approval reviews. Sponsors and State agencies should continue monitoring activities remotely.	
<a href="#"><u>Monitoring Requirements for Sponsors and State Agencies in CACFP</u></a>	Extended to 9/30/21	Reduces the number of site reviews CACFP sponsors must conduct from three to two; reduces the number of unannounced site reviews from three to one; waives the requirement that at least one site review must be conducted during meal service; and waives the requirement that no more than six months passes between site reviews. Waives the requirement for State agencies that CACFP monitoring be conducted on-site. Sponsors and State agencies should continue monitoring activities remotely.	CACFP
<a href="#"><u>60-Day Reporting Requirements for January and February 2020</u></a>		Waives the 60-day-claims-for-reimbursement deadline for January and February 2020. Deadlines are extended for 30 calendar days from the original required date of submission.	NSLP, SBP, CACFP, SFSP, and the Special Milk Program (SMP)
<a href="#"><u>Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessments</u></a>	6/30/21	Waives the requirement that school districts conduct an assessment of local school wellness policy by June 30, 2020; pushes deadline to June 30, 2021.	NSLP, SBP
<a href="#"><u>Food Service Management Contract Duration in NLSP and SFSP</u></a>	9/30/20	Allows SFA and SFSP sponsors to extend existing food service management company contracts through June 30, 2021.	NSLP, SBP, SSO, SFSP
<b>Extension of <a href="#"><u>Previously Rescinded SFSP Waivers</u></a></b>			
<a href="#"><u>Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites</u></a>	9/30/20	Waives the requirement that closed enrolled sites collect income eligibility applications to determine eligibility.	SFSP, SSO
<a href="#"><u>First Week Site Visits in SFSP</u></a>	9/30/20	Waives the requirement that SFSP sponsors visit each of their sites at least once during the first week of operation.	SFSP
<a href="#"><u>Offer Versus Serve (OVS) in SFSP</u></a>	9/30/20	Waives the requirement that the OVS option be limited to SFAs.	SFSP
<a href="#"><u>Meal Service Times in SFSP and SSO</u></a>	12/30/20	Waives the requirement that places federal limits on the amount of time that must elapse between meal services and the duration of a meal service.	SFSP, SSO

More waiver information and Q&As are available on USDA's [website](#).

FRAC will update this document as additional nationwide waivers are issued. For more information on efforts and opportunities to ensure children have access to nutritious meals during COVID-19 school closures, visit [FRAC's website](#).