Child and Adult Care Food Program: New USDA Waivers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued the first set of nationwide child nutrition program waivers based on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. The three nationwide 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. The waivers will do the following:

- allow meal pattern modifications when certain foods are not available due to the COVID 19 pandemic, and simplify food procurement rules, (https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/covid-19-nationwide-waiver-allow-meal-pattern-flexibility-child-nutrition-programs);
- allow non-congregate feeding in CACFP programs, including offering meals off-site, via “grab and go,” and through delivery (https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/cn-covid-19-non-congregate-feeding-nationwide-waiver);
- allow parents or guardians to pick up non-congregate meals for their children (https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/covid-19-nationwide-waiver-allow-parents-and-guardians-pick-meals-children);
- allow the suspension of meal times as needed in CACFP (https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/cn-covid-19-meal-times-nationwide-waiver);
- allow CACFP At-Risk programs to waive the activity requirement (https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/cn-covid-19-afterschool-activity-waiver); and
- allow state, sponsoring organizations and programs to waive onsite monitoring requirements to maintain program integrity and support social distancing. (https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/CN/nationwide-waivers-child-nutrition-monitoring)

Take Action

- State agencies need to quickly inform their regional office that they elect to use these waivers.
- 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.

These waivers are effective immediately, and remain in effect through June 30, 2020, or upon expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

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