COVID-19 Update

Child Nutrition Program Meal Service during COVID-19 Outbreaks
September 11, 2020

Sent by listserv to SFSP Sponsors and posted at www.kn-eat.org, Summer Food Service Program, What’s New

On August 31, 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the Nationwide memorandum “COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #56” allowing for the continuation of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) as late as December 31, 2020 or as long as funding is available. USDA also extended several complementing waiver flexibilities to support the operation of the SFSP as late as December 31, 2020, including:

- Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility Waivers
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children
- Nationwide Waiver of Meal Service Time Restrictions in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option
- Nationwide Waiver to Waive First Week Site Visits in the Summer Food Service Program
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities in the Summer Food Service Program

This guidance is available on the FNS Response to COVID-19 website: https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19.

School Food Authorities (SFAs) have the option to serve and claim meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), NSLP’s Seamless Summer Option (SSO), or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), dependent upon eligibility. SFAs can only operate and claim all meals through one of these programs; a single district cannot elect to serve and claim meals through more than one program at the same time, except for the Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) At-Risk Snack. Through SSO and SFSP, all meals served by SFAs will be offered at no charge and will be claimed at the “Free” rate. Community-based organizations operating the SFSP have the option to continue meal service through the SFSP if they choose and a need is identified in the community. Community-based organizations should work with their local school district(s) to identify where meal service gaps may exist in their community and serve to meet those needs.

Q. How can these waivers be elected?
A. Sponsors previously approved to implement the SFSP must update the Waiver Application for Non-Congregate Meals due to COVID-19 in KN-CLAIM under Summer Food Service Program, PY 2020. KSDE staff will add site applications in KN-CLAIM based on the sites listed on the Waiver application. Once the SFSP Waiver Application has been submitted and is in Pending Approval status, SFSP Meals service can begin at the sites listed on the Waiver Application; however, Sponsors must still complete the site applications for each of the sites in KN-CLAIM ASAP, but not later than September 30. A KSDE Child Nutrition Consultant will review and follow-up with any questions.
General Questions & Answers for Summer Food Service Program Sponsors

Q. Will all meals continue be served at no charge and claimed at the free rate during School Year (SY) 2020-2021?
A. On August 31, 2020, USDA released a nationwide waiver allowing the operation of the SFSP to continue through as late as December 31, 2020 or as long as funding is available. SFSP meals will be offered free to all children aged 1-18 and all meals claimed at the applicable “free” rate.

Q. Do all sites need to be considered area eligible?
A. No. USDA has extended the area eligibility waiver through December 31, 2020; sites do not need to be considered area eligible to operate. SFSP sponsors can add new non-area eligible sites for the fall if needed.

Q. Are sites allowed to be added or modified for service into the school year?
A. Yes. SFSP sponsors will be allowed to submit amendments to add sites, remove sites, and modify site characteristics to reflect meal service operations during the fall months.

Q. Can I serve meals for the weekend or vacations?
A. Yes. If you are operating the SFSP, meals can be served for non-instructional days including weekends and vacations (for up to 7 days per week).

Q. What meals can SFSP Sponsors serve and claim for?
A. SFSP Sponsors are able to claim up to two meals or snacks per day, in any combination except lunch and supper.

Q. If we are implementing a pre-ordering system for meals, can the pre-orders that were collected a day in advance of meal service be used as meal counts for claiming purposes?
A. No. Meal counts will still need to be taken at the point of service as children are served in person or students, parents, or guardians pick up meals.

Community Organizations Specific Questions & Answers

Q. Can a new community organization be approved to operate SFSP?
A. For existing sponsors, School districts will be prioritized first in terms of expansion of sites through SFSP. New SFSP sites from community organizations will be considered once school district approvals are completed.

Q. How can I support my local school districts this year?
A. Community-based sponsoring organizations are encouraged to reach out to their local school districts to identify where meal service gaps may exist, and work to complement the meal service opportunities provided by the SFAs.
Q. During the summer we sponsor several SFSP sites at our local schools. Can I continue to sponsor these sites during the school year?

A. Community based organizations should reach out to their local district(s) and discuss where the SFA intends to operate a meal site, and determine if the school would like the site to be operated by the SFA or remain under the community organization's sponsorship. Community organizations should complement the meal service site plan of their local school districts.

KSDE is awaiting further guidance and clarifications from USDA on implementation of the SY 2020-2021 nationwide waivers. Please note: Questions and answers are subject to change in the event guidance is released by USDA or further nationwide waivers or policy announcements are released. KSDE will continue to update guidance as necessary.

As always, if you have questions or require technical assistance contact your area Child Nutrition Consultant or the Topeka office.

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