COVID-19 Update

Child Nutrition Program Meal Service during COVID-19 Outbreaks

March 27, 2020, 5:00 pm


We appreciate the 250+ folks who participated in the Town Hall meeting this morning. Your input and questions are important to us. Sincere appreciation for the hard work and extra efforts to feed children during this unprecedented time.

1. **Nationwide Meal Pattern Waiver**: USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has provided nationwide approval for States to locally waive specific meal pattern requirements as needed to support access to nutritious meals when certain foods are not available due to the novel coronavirus. Note: This is not a blanket waiver but to be used due to unavailability of product. Sponsors must submit a waiver request to KSDE and obtain approval prior to utilizing this waiver. **To apply for a waiver go to**: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SH2F6FS.

2. **Nationwide Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup Waiver**: FNS is allowing States approved for non-congregate feeding to waive the rule preventing parents and guardians from picking up meals for their children, as long as they protect accountability and integrity. Sponsors must submit a waiver request to KSDE and receive approval prior to utilizing this waiver. **Apply for this waiver in KN-CLAIM on the Waiver Application for Non-Congregate Meals Due to COVID-19 Question #9**.

3. **Nationwide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Data Waiver**: FNS is extending the deadlines for reporting SY 2019-20 student counts to establish SY 2020-21’s identified student percentage for CEP, as well as for the required LEA and State notifications and CEP election until June 15th.

4. Sponsors need to provide information to get the Sponsor Application and Site Application into approved status so that claims can be submitted. Site Applications need to be kept current so that correct site information is sent to USDA to publish so the public can locate sites near them. Your area Child Nutrition Consultant will be contacting you to provide tips and assist as needed. Be sure to let your consultant know if you make changes so that they will know to go in and approve.

5. Food Safety Questions from today will be addressed in a Q & As that will be released early next week. For additional Food Safety Q & As, please refer to Update #8.

6. Reminders:
   - Only 5 days or meals can be provided for a one week (7 day) period during the Summer Meals Programs due to Unanticipated School Closures.
   - You must receive an approval email from a Child Nutrition & Wellness team member before use of the Meal Pattern and/or the Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-Up Waiver(s).
• Shelter in Place orders vary by county and you must read the order to determine if feeding children is listed as an essential service. To date, it has been in all counties with this order. Determining whether meal service continues is a local level decision.
• Only need to keep rosters for one week for enrolled sites. Continue to keep daily meal counts by meal type.
• The Meals-To-You (MTY) Demonstration Project provides crucial nutrition to children in rural settings who may otherwise be unable to access federal nutrition programs. MTY was initially created as a common-sense response for rural communities where congregate meals are impractical. Due to the success of the model, emergency Meals-to-You (eMTY) is being offered as a response to COVID-19-related school closures. For information go to: https://mealstoyou.org/emergency-meals-to-you-school-districts/
• No Kid Hungry Emergency Relief Grants Available. No Kid Hungry is offering real time funding and assistance for schools and community organizations that are making sure kids have access to the meals they need as schools close due to coronavirus. No Kid Hungry is providing emergency grants to support these local efforts like home delivered meals, grab and go meals programs, school and community pantries, backpack programs, and other steps to help reach children and families who lose access to meals. They are providing $1 million in emergency grants on a rolling basis. If your organization needs funding to support these efforts, please submit your interest in receiving emergency grant funds: https://www.nokidhungry.org/coronavirus-grant-request
• The Families First Act provides emergency supplemental Food Assistance benefits for children eligible for free and reduced price meals in the form of a Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer or P-EBT. The Department for Children and Families (DCF) is submitting the plan for Kansas to make this possible for Kansas families. Watch future updates where I will share information as it becomes available from DCF.

7. Q & As from the Town Hall Meeting today will be provided early next week. Examples of possible ways to ensure integrity and accountability for Parent/Guardian Meal Pick have been submitted already by some Kansas Sponsors. These are being shared per your requests during the Town Hall meeting:
• Have a hotline for households to call and tell them what location and how many kids and if they want it day by day, for the week or until the end. They will verify school district students and take others on their word. A sticker will be printed with the family name, number of kids and an order number. When they come to pick up meals they will give their name or order number.
• We are looking at ordering permit like stickers with our logo and number of children for that family where the parent or guardian would have to first pick up meals from us with their children in the vehicle and would receive a “permit” based on the number of children in the vehicle. If they come back without the children then they would only be given the number that they have the “permit” for. We would start with our school locations only as they are the “drive thru” and then maybe start looking at our remote locations as well. To limit second meals, all locations are serving meals during the same short 1 hour time frame of 11:30-12:30 thus limiting parents from being able to make it from one location to the next given the wait time in the drive thru.
• Using a roster with family's names on it and mark off names. We only have one meal site so no chance for multiple meal pick up.
• Requiring written request from parents wanting to pick up meals that the family certifies how many children are in the household.
• We will be asking families to email us in a shared inbox with their request. They must give us their name and names of all children they are picking up for. We will review, record in a log we are keeping, and respond with approval. The parent will show us the approval email from their phone (or printed) in the line to collect their meals if children are not present.
• Family picture to verify # of children
• Parents/guardians must email our department BEFORE meal pickup sharing their name and names of students/children they will be picking up for. We are monitoring this information and keeping a roster for all of these requests. Once we have reviewed the request, we will respond with an approval email. The parent/guardian will need to show the approval email in the line to our distribution staff to pick up meals without their students being present.

We will provide additional guidance from USDA as it becomes available. As always, if you have questions do not hesitate to call or email your area Child Nutrition Consultant or the Topeka office.

Cheryl, Jill and Julie

For more information, contact:

Cheryl S. Johnson
Director, Child Nutrition & Wellness
(785) 296-2276
www.kn-eat.org
csjohnson@ksde.org

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3201
www.ksde.org

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