



Food and
Nutrition
Service

DATE: March 06, 2020

Braddock
Metro Center

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1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria
VA 22314

SUBJECT: Child Nutrition Program Meal Service during Novel Coronavirus Outbreaks

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Agencies
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

This memorandum outlines how schools, child care institutions, and community organizations may continue to provide reimbursable meals to low-income children during school closures related to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Section 13(c)(1) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1761(c)(1)), codified at 7 CFR 225.6(d)(1)(iv), authorizes the provision of Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) meal service to children during unanticipated school closures.

Based on the exceptional circumstances relating to the declaration of a public health emergency due to COVID-19 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, effective January 27, 2020, and pursuant to the waiver authority granted at section 12(l) of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA), the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is providing additional flexibilities in an effort to address concerns regarding the loss of meals for low-income children.

Specifically, FNS has the ability to waive the requirements for serving meals in a congregate setting and the requirement to serve meals at a non-school site for COVID-19-related SFSP or SSO meal service operations. Please note that these waivers are being provided only for school closures related to COVID-19.

State agencies must submit to FNS an individual waiver request for statewide use prior to any COVID-19 SFSP or SSO operations. Once approved, the State agency may apply the waiver flexibilities for SFAs, institutions, and sponsors that have indicated they intend to serve meals during a COVID-19-related closure and that have satisfied any additional requirements set by the State agency.

State agencies are not required to provide meal service during school closures. However, FNS appreciates the willingness of State agencies and Program operators to consider continuing their meal service operations to ensure children receive the meals they need during COVID-19 conditions. State and local agencies should periodically check the FNS website for updates on our efforts to address the COVID-19 situation. State agencies are reminded to distribute this memorandum to Program operators. Program operators should direct any questions concerning this guidance to their State agency. State agencies with questions should contact the appropriate FNS Regional Office.



Angela M. Kline
Director
Policy and Program Development Division
Child Nutrition Programs

Attachment