

Nebraska Department of Education
Office of Nutrition Services
Meal Service During School Closure Due to COVID-19
Questions & Answers (3-23-2020)

1. Do schools and other sponsors of USDA Child Nutrition Programs need to apply to NDE to operate using the meal service flexibilities issued by the USDA?

Answer: No. The three nationwide waivers outlined below have been approved for implementation under Section 2202 of H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act related to Child Nutrition. Schools and other sponsors do not need to seek approval from NDE to utilize these flexibilities.

a. Waiving of the non-congregate requirement across all child nutrition programs: This waiver applies to the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

b. Waiving of the meal service time requirements across all child nutrition programs: This waiver applies to the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

c. Waiving of the requirement for an educational or enrichment activity when serving an afternoon meal or snack under the National School Lunch Program or Child and Adult Care Food Program: This waiver applies to afterschool snacks in the National School Lunch Program and at-risk afterschool meals and snacks in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

2. Are schools required to provide meals during unanticipated school closure, such as COVID-19?

Answer: No. SFA's are encouraged to ensure the nutritional needs of students are met. Your community may have meal service locations that are approved to provide meals at Open sites through the Summer Food Service Program. You may locate this list of sites by visiting the Summer Food Service Program web page. NDE encourages SFAs to share local meal site locations with students' households.



3. If the SFA considers school to be in session and IS offering online/virtual/distance learning, what meal options can the SFA offer meals through?

Answer: The following are 3 options available for providing meals due to COVID-19 unanticipated school closures:

- Option 1: All SFAs have the option to continue serving meals through the National School Lunch/Breakfast Programs
- Option 2: >50% free and reduced eligible students - participation in the Summer Food Service Program as an open site(s), which serves meals to all children in a community ages 1 through 18 years
- Option 3: <50% free and reduced eligible students - participation in the Summer Food Service Program as a closed enrolled site(s).

4. If my SFA is choosing to serve meals through the School Meals Program are we required to follow the School Meals Lunch Meal Pattern?

Answer: Yes. At this time, the USDA has not offered flexibility on meal pattern requirements, including the vegetable subgroup.

5. For SFAs continuing to serve meals through the School Meals Program, are SFA's required to serve meals that meet the different grade group portion sizes?

Answer: No. The SFA may use the grade group portion sizes meeting the meal pattern requirements for the most common grade group (K-8) being offered meals.

6. If the SFA offered both breakfast and lunch prior to the unanticipated school closure, can the SFA choose to provide only lunch?

Answer: Yes. The SFA is encouraged to provide both breakfast and lunch.

7. Is the SFA required to accommodate documented special needs for children enrolled in their school, who choose to participate in meal service?

Answer: Yes.



8. Can meals be offered for several days at once? What food safety considerations should be made?

Answer: Yes. Multiple days of meals can be provided at one time (up to one week). Things that must be considered in doing so include:

- All food components must be served in unitized packaging for each meal service. For example: Each breakfast and lunch must be packaged separately (unitized). There is no offer versus serve and therefore all food components in the required portion sizes must be included in each unitized breakfast and lunch.
- Does the household have the food storage capacity to safely store food for multiple days of meals? NDE recommends providing shelf-stable/ready-to-eat foods that will maintain quality when stored for multiple days.

9. May a parent/adult pick up meals for children in their household without the children being present?

Answer: Yes. The SFA must ensure reimbursable meals are for eligible children, who attend schools that have been dismissed due to COVID-19. The SFA may use its own discretion on ensuring this requirement is met. The SFA must ask the parent/adult to identify the children's names for who they are picking up meals for. The SFA may also require at least one child in the household be present when meal(s) are picked up.

10. What are the requirements for an SFA with less than 50% Free and Reduced Eligible Students to operate a Closed Enrolled Summer Food Service Program due to COVID19?

The SFA must survey all households asking whether enrolled students in the household intend to participate if meal service is offered. Survey methods may include completing an online questionnaire or other method the SFA uses to ensure all households have been contacted and each household can respond to the SFA.

- Based on household responses, the number of students planning to participate in meal service is determined.
- If the number of free/reduced students based on current school year eligibility, plan to participate, and is 50% or more, the SFA may choose to participate as a Closed Enrolled site(s) in the SFSP.
- SFA's may use a printed list of student names documenting a reimbursable meal was provided to each student.
- If a meal is provided to a "non-enrolled student" their name must be added to the roster. The roster is marked indicating the child received the meal.
- Closed Enrolled SFSP site serve meals free of charge to all children. All meals claimed/submitted for reimbursement are paid at the SFSP free rate of



reimbursement. The SFA is required to maintain daily meal count documentation using a roster with children's name for each feeding site.

11. Can an SFA drop off meals at a site and leave before the end of meal service?

Answer: No. The SFA is responsible for ensuring an accurate point of service meal count and must remain at the site until meal service/distribution is complete.

12. What are some methods to provide non-congregate meals?

- "Grab and Go" a child/household come to feeding site and takes the meal(s) to another location for consumption.
- "Drive Up" a household may drive up to the feeding site, picks up the meal(s) and drive away to another location for meal consumption.

13. Can an SFA estimate the number of meals served or use the number of meals prepared when submitting the claim for reimbursement?

Answer: Reimbursement claims can only include reimbursable meals actually served to eligible children.

14. How are meals claimed for SFSP Open Site(s) >50% F/R Eligible and SFSP Closed Enrolled >50% F/R Eligible?

Answer: All children ages 1 through 18 can receive meals free of charged. The meals claimed are reimbursed at the free rate of reimbursement for both Open and Closed Enrolled SFSP sites. SFSP Meals are claimed monthly through the SFSP. This is a different claim than the National School Meals Program Claim.

15. How do SFA's, who were operating the School Meals Program earlier in March but because of unanticipated school closure are now participating in the SFSP, claim meals in March?

Answer: SFAs will submit two March claims - one for reimbursable meals served through the National School Meals Program and the second for reimbursable meals served through the SFSP.

16. How are meals claimed for schools continuing to provide meals through the National School Meals Program due to unanticipated school closure?

Answer: Meals will continue to be counted and claimed by free, reduced, and paid eligibility. The process of claiming meal reimbursement will be the same as when school was in operation.

17. Are SFAs allowed to serve reimbursable meals on the weekends and non-school days?



Answer: Yes, SFAs operating Open or Closed Enrolled SFSP meal sites can serve meals on weekend and non-school days. This information must be indicated on the SFSP site application(s).

