



Feeding Kids When Schools Are Closed Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)



With many school systems closed to help limit the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working to make sure no child goes hungry. Our Department has issued waivers in all 50 States and the territories, allowing for flexibilities in our programs that make it easier for States and local partners to serve children.

Flexibilities Provided During COVID-19

USDA is allowing State Child Nutrition agencies to waive the following program requirements during the public health emergency:



Meal Service Time Requirements: allows program operators the flexibility to adjust the times meals and snacks are provided in order to streamline operations. Learn more: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/cn-covid-19-meal-times-nationwide-waiver>



Congregate (Group) Meal Requirements: supports social distancing by allowing meals to be provided as grab n' go to a parent or guardian or for meals to be delivered. Learn more: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/cn-covid-19-non-congregate-feeding-nationwide-waiver> and <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/covid-19-nationwide-waiver-allow-parents-and-guardians-pick-meals-children>



Meal Pattern Requirements: provides flexibility in meeting dietary specifications and in providing required meal components when there are food supply issues. Learn more: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/covid-19-nationwide-waiver-allow-meal-pattern-flexibility-child-nutrition-programs>



Educational or Enrichment Activity Requirements for Afterschool Meals and Snacks: allows children to receive afterschool snacks without having to participate in an education or enrichment activity onsite. Learn more: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/cn-covid-19-afterschool-activity-waiver>



Area Eligibility Requirements: allows summer meal programs to operate in areas that may not meet area eligibility requirements (i.e., where less than half of the children in the area are in low-income households). Learn more: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/child-nutrition-area-eligibility-waiver>

Innovative Meal Service Solutions

▶ Meal Delivery

School food authorities (SFAs) may deliver meals to students in certain areas or directly to students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. The SFA may be able to use a mail or delivery service or utilize school staff, volunteers, or community organizations to deliver meals. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) operators also may deliver meals to children or adult participants enrolled for care in their programs, using distribution plans similar to SFAs. More information about how to receive State agency approval, Federal confidentiality requirements, and necessary Federal waiver approvals is available in this Questions & Answers document: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/covid-19-meal-delivery>

▶ Emergency Meals-to-You

SFAs may apply to their State agency to participate in the Emergency Meals-to-You delivery service. This is an innovative Summer Food Service Program meal delivery service made possible through a collaboration between USDA and the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, McLane Global, PepsiCo, and others to deliver millions of meals a week to students enrolled in rural schools closed due to COVID-19.

Learn more: <https://mealstoyou.org/>

▶ “Summer” Meals Program

SFAs and community organizations may operate the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or the Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program (SSO) when school buildings are closed unexpectedly due to COVID-19. This is true even if schools continue to offer online or at-home learning experiences. Families can find a site near them using the Meals for Kids Site Finder at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids>

Links to Resources

[Practice Safe Hygiene and Cleaning](#)

[Grab n' Go Recipes](#)

[Pantry Recipes for Child Care and Homes](#)

[Online Learning for School Nutrition Professionals](#)

[Digital Nutrition Resources for Kids](#)

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

State agencies may submit a proposal to USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to provide P-EBT benefits to households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures that last at least 5 consecutive days. If the proposal is approved, eligible households will receive benefits (food dollars) on an EBT card. Learn more: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/state-guidance-coronavirus-pandemic-ebt-p-ebt>

Find Child Nutrition Program updates related to COVID-19 at

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19>