

October 14, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

On Monday, August 31, 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) unexpectedly announced nationwide waivers to allow the continuation of free meals to all students through the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Using these programs is optional for schools and school districts; some may decide to continue to use the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to feed children.

The nationwide waivers allow schools and school districts to serve meals in a similar manner to how students were served meals beginning in mid-March. Through these programs, meals are served at no charge to all students. As of October 9, 2020, USDA extended the nationwide waivers allowing these programs to operate through June 30, 2021. However, the USDA FNS reserves the right to withdraw any or all of the nationwide waivers subject to the availability of funding.

As situations continue to change due to the virus, we ask for your patience while schools and school districts determine which program(s) they determine will work best for serving school meals this fall.

Regulatory flexibilities including the allowance for meals to be served in a setting outside of the cafeteria, the allowance for parents and/or guardians to pick up meals on students' behalf due to safety concerns, and for meal service times that are convenient (i.e. outside the regulatory required times of meal service), among others, can continue no matter which program(s) your school or school district chooses.

The Department of Public Instruction School Nutrition Team continues to work closely with the USDA so that children receive nutritious school meals during this time.

Sincerely,



Jessica Sharkus, RD, CD
Director-School Nutrition Team