



Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education



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MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS
FROM: DCCECE / HNU
DATE: MARCH 23, 2020
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act Nationwide Waivers

This is an important notice regarding the recent COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act Nationwide Waivers:

COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act USDA approved three distinct National Federal waivers for Child and Nutrition Programs. They are the following:

1. Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-Congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs

Non-congregate feeding for all programs allows not only for summer meals SFSP to be "Grab & Go" meals but allows for Child Care Centers, Adult Care Centers and After school programs to provide a "Grab & Go" meal.

"Grab & Go Meals" must meet the regular menu planning requirements of the Child Nutrition Program. All meals must be unitized, meaning a complete reimbursable meal that meets the requirements of the menu planning method used, including milk, must be distributed. Shelf-stable milk may be used. USDA commodity foods may also be used. If availability of milk or other meal components becomes an issue, FNS will work with the State agency to provide the needed waivers or flexibility.

2. Nationwide Waiver to allow Meal Service Time Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Program

Mealtime waiver allows for flexibility to allow for meals being handed out (i.e. breakfast & lunch or Supper & Snack handed out together).

3. Nationwide Waiver of the Activity Requirement in the Afterschool Care (At-Risk) Child Nutrition Program

Enrichment and educational waiver remove the requirement for structure activities that would cause for social gatherings rather than the recommended social distancing.

To participate in these waivers, programs must provide a written plan to the state agency before serving meals that outlines the following:

- a. Each provider must submit a request to participate in these waivers.
- b. How meals are meeting the meal pattern for eligible USDA meals.
- c. Productions Records and Meal count sheets must indicate they are for COVID-19 and kept separate from regular Child Nutrition Program records. Records will be reviewed later for authentication of claim.

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Protecting the vulnerable, fostering independence and promoting better health

- d. How the sponsor is following the regulations for food safety as prescribed by the Arkansas Department of Health. There must be documentation that these requirements have been met (i.e. temperatures maintained, gloves worn, handwashing of all staff, etc.).
- e. Must describe the process of how meals are going to be distributed and the time of distribution.
- f. How each program is going to capture the number of meals served. Remember a **child must be present** for each meal that is handed out.
- g. Reports of numbers of children served will be submitted weekly to the State Health and Nutrition Unit and uploaded to the SNP system labeled, "COVID-19 (Dates of that week)."

If your program would like to participate, please submit your written plan to all of the following individuals:

Thomas Sheppard, Thomas.Sheppard@dhs.arkansas.gov

Pamela Burton, Pamela.Burton.DCCECE@dhs.arkansas.gov

Perry Hunter, Perry.Hunter@dhs.arkansas.gov

All plans will be reviewed, and approval will be granted if they meet waiver requirements. Reminder, you must have approval from the State Agency before you may participate in the program under these waivers.

Please keep this memo on file for quick and easy reference. A copy is also available on the resource library under HNP Mass Alerts and COVID-19 References. If you have any questions regarding this memo, please contact your Program Coordinator at: 501-682-8869.