



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

3101 Park  
Center Drive  
Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

DATE: February 15, 2013

MEMO CODE: SP 24-2013, SFSP 10-2013

SUBJECT: Demonstration Project for Non-Congregate Feeding for Outdoor  
Summer Feeding Sites Experiencing Excessive Heat

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

For summer 2013, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will initiate a new demonstration project allowing non-congregate feeding at certain outdoor summer meal sites experiencing excessive heat. The demonstration project utilizes authority provided in Section 749(g) of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Act, 2010 (PL 111-80) to develop and test alternative methods of providing access to summer meals for low income children. Under the demonstration project, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sponsors operating approved outdoor feeding sites without temperature-controlled alternative sites may operate as non-congregate sites on days when the area is experiencing excessive heat.

Under this demonstration project, non-congregate meal service shall be permitted only on days when the National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a Heat Advisory, an Excessive Heat Warning, or an Excessive Heat Watch for the area in which an approved outdoor feeding site is located. This demonstration project will evaluate the effect on SFSP participation when sponsors are permitted to maintain service to children who would otherwise lose access to meals when excessive heat makes impractical the operation of a congregate feeding site lacking a temperature-controlled alternative site.

FNS also may extend this demonstration project to other situations where exceptional circumstances make congregate feeding impractical at an approved meal site. Requests based on exceptional circumstances other than excessive heat will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved in advance by the FNS National Office.

## **Applying for Participation in the Demonstration Project**

Upon application to the SFSP for summer 2013, interested sponsors must notify their State agency of their intent to participate in the demonstration project and must identify those congregate feeding sites lacking temperature-controlled alternative sites that would be included in the demonstration project. Sponsors must select sites that are viable options for successful SFSP/SSO participation under the congregate feeding requirement on days when the area is not experiencing excessive heat. The demonstration project will simply allow maintenance of the meal service at those sites on days when excessive heat makes congregate feeding impractical. Outdoor sites with available temperature-controlled alternative sites will not be included in the demonstration project, and should serve meals at the temperature-controlled alternative site when the area is experiencing excessive heat.

Sponsors must be otherwise eligible to participate in SFSP or SSO and properly approved by the State agency in order to participate in the demonstration project. However, State agencies may not deny a sponsor application based solely on the sponsor's intention to participate in the demonstration project.

## **Participation Requirements**

Approved outdoor sites must comply with the congregate meal requirements on all other days of operation. Requirements pertaining to the number and type of meals that may be served each day continue to apply and sponsors must continue to provide all required components of a reimbursable meal. Because meals will be consumed off site and possibly at a later time during that day, sponsors should carefully consider all food safety issues and risks. Only one meal may be provided to each child present at the meal site. Meals may not be provided to adults or other children to take to children not present at the site. All meal counting, claiming, and State and sponsor monitoring and oversight requirements continue to apply.

Sponsors electing to participate in the demonstration project must submit with their monthly claims for reimbursement the following information:

- The specific dates on which participants were permitted to take meals off site; and
- The number of meals claimed that were taken off site by participants.

*Under Part 34 of the FNS-418, Report of the Summer Food Service Program for Children, and Part 18 of the FNS-10, Report of School Program Operations, States must indicate:*

- The number of sponsors electing to participate in the demonstration project and the number of sites affected;
- The number of days on which at least one sponsor participating in the demonstration project permitted participants to take meals off site; and
- The total number of meals claimed that sponsors permitted participants to take off site.

Regional Directors

State Directors

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State agencies are reminded to distribute this information to SFSP/ SSO operators immediately. Program operators should direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the appropriate State agency. State agency contact information is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cynthia Long". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cynthia Long

Director

Child Nutrition Division