

TO: All Sponsors of the Child and Adult Care Food Program

FROM: Vonda Ramp, M.S., R.D.
State Director, Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: March 24, 2020

SUBJECT: Waivers for CACFP During COVID-19 Closure

MESSAGE:

On March 20, 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released three nationwide waivers that impact the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). These waivers provide flexibility that many CACFP sponsors were requesting due to mandatory closures of licensed childcare facilities due to COVID-19. Many non-school aged children across the Commonwealth have access to meals through non-congregate meal programs being offered by schools; however, CACFP sponsors asked to also continue to feed the children who are normally in their enrollment, as well as adults enrolled in the adult portion of the CACFP.

The three nationwide waivers are as follows:

- COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #1, Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Service Time Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs
- COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #2, Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs
- COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #3, Nationwide Waiver of the Activity Requirement in Afterschool Care Child Nutrition Programs

Effective March 24, 2020, CACFP centers/institutions/providers with CACFP Sponsor acknowledgement may:

- Provide meals to participants in their enrollment even if closed due to COVID-19 closure.
- Provide those meals via grab and go service.
- Bundle meals to serve multiple days of meals at one time to limit exposure and maximize resources. Weekend meals may be provided but must be reflected on PEARS Site Application. Proper food safety protocols must be utilized. Grab and go meals should contain instructions regarding reheating and refrigeration.
- Claim no more than two meals and one snack or two snacks and one meal per participant per day. The PEARS Site Application must accurately reflect the meal types that are being served.
- Claim no more than one meal and one snack under the At-Risk Afterschool Program. Those meals may not overlap with other meals being provided by the sponsor through CACFP, or the Seamless Summer Option or Summer Food Service Program.



- Waive At-Risk Afterschool Programs from providing educational or enrichment activities during the COVID-19 closure.

In addition to the above, the following requirements must be met:

- Meal counts must be taken by participant and meal type each day. Meals may only be claimed for participants enrolled in the center/institution/provider. Meals served to non-enrolled participants may not be claimed.
- Sponsors may not claim meals for days the center/institution/provider was closed prior to March 24, 2020.
- Aside from the above-mentioned waivers, program requirements remain in place. USDA is currently discussing flexibility of the monitoring requirement. We will pass along information as it becomes available.

All CACFP Sponsors are eligible.

Pre-approval is not required to begin implementing the non-congregate meals. However, to claim meals for reimbursement during this time, sponsors **must** complete the attached CACFP Non-Congregate Meal Form for COVID-19 Closures including all active centers/institutions/providers. Claims will not be accepted for any center/institution/provider that is not accounted for on the CACFP Non-Congregate Meal Form for COVID-19 Closures. Sponsors may only serve at currently approved sites.

Sponsors must update PEARS Site Information for any center/institution/provider serving non-congregate meals during the COVID-19 mandated closure, update days meals served (or being provided to participants, if meals are being bundled), update meal types served, and/or number of days meals are served if adding meal service days, etc.

Operating days for centers/institutions/providers not serving during COVID-19 closures will be based on the date of mandated state closures. Sponsors may, but are not required, to update the PEARS Site Information for sites that are closed due to the COVID-19 closure.

Submit CACFP Non-Congregate Meal Form for COVID-19 Closures **by March 31, 2020** to RA-CACFP@pa.gov.