School’s Out, Food’s In!

Summer Meals 101: Back to Basics & USDA Update

April 26, 2022
Today’s Agenda

Welcome and introductions
Overview of summer 2022 operational requirements for SFSP/SSO
  • Paige Pokorney, Program Manager, Center for Best Practices, Share Our Strength
USDA Update
  • Alice McKenney, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
  • Andrea Farmer, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
Audience Q&A
Additional Resources
No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength. We are committed to ending childhood hunger in the United States by helping launch and improve programs that give kids the food they need to thrive.
No Kid Hungry’s Center for Best Practices provides information, tools, and resources designed to end childhood hunger.

bestpractices.nokidhungry.org
THANK YOU!
Paige Pokorney
Program Manager,
Center for Best Practices
Share Our Strength
Back to Basics

Comparison of SFSP/SSO waiver vs. non-waiver operations
SUMMER MEALS: THE BASICS

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally-funded, state-administered, and locally-sponsored program of the USDA that allows children to access nutritious meals free of charge when school is out. Schools have the option of serving summer meals through the SFSP or National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

Program details (SFSP+SSO):

• Serves children 18 and under
• Meals are served at no cost…no sign-up or ID required
• Meals are consumed on site (congregate meal requirement)
• Open sites must be located in an area eligible community
• Up to two meals/day (for most sites)
Who Sponsors SFSP/SSO?

SFSP
Both schools and non-profit organizations (e.g. YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, food banks, local government agencies etc.) can sponsor SFSP

SSO
Only schools can sponsor SSO
Program Differences – SSO vs. SFSP

Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
- Sponsorship available only to School Food Authorities (SFAs)
- Extension of existing NSLP sponsor agreement
- NSLP/SBP rules and meal patterns apply
- Meals served are reimbursed at the NSLP/SBP ‘free rates’
- Meals are open to all children 18 and younger

Less paperwork, school-year meal patterns, only schools can operate

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Sponsorship available to School Food Authorities (SFAs), government entities, and nonprofit organizations
- Simplified meal pattern
- Highest per-meal reimbursement of any Child Nutrition Program
- Meals are open to all children 18 and younger

Higher per-meal cash reimbursement, flexibility in the meal pattern, available to non-school sponsors
USDA Waiver Authority

Usual Program Provisions

• Cannot issue nationwide waivers
• Cannot approve state waiver requests that increase federal costs
• Cannot approve state waiver requests related to the meal pattern / nutritional quality

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

• Allowed to issue nationwide waivers
• Allowed to issue waivers that increase federal costs
• Allowed to issue waivers on the meal pattern requirements if related to supply chain issues caused by COVID-19
Congregate (Group) Meal Service

Usual Program Provisions
• Congregate meal service required (children must be served and eat on site in a supervised setting)

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities
• Non-congregate meal service allowed
• Parent pick-up on child’s behalf was allowed with verification of eligible child
Meal Times

Usual Program Provisions

• Only one meal may be served during each service time and service times must be established for each meal

• SFSP: three hours between the beginning of one meal service, including snacks, and the beginning of another meal service. Four hours between lunch and supper if no snack is served.

• SSO: breakfast must be served in the morning; lunch must be served 10am-2pm; supper service must begin before 7pm and end by 8pm; snacks must be adequately spaced between meals

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

• No federal mealtime restrictions, allowing states to approve more than one meal to be served at a time

• Sites could distribute meals for multiple days at one time, generally up to one week

• Meal distribution or delivery times had to be established
Site Eligibility

Usual Program Provisions

• Sites (including mobile stops) must be pre-approved by the state agency
• Sites must meet applicable health & safety standards
• **Open sites**: located in eligible areas with $\geq 50\%$ free/reduced-price eligible based on school or census data ([Averaged Eligibility Map](#))
• **Closed enrolled sites**: $\geq 50\%$ of those enrolled must be documented as free/reduced-price eligible

*Different for camps and migrant sites*

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

**SAME, except**

• In summer 2021, area eligibility was waived for all programs and sites.
Area Eligibility

For an open site to be eligible to run SFSP or SSO, they must be located in an “area eligible” region (>50%).

Two primary sources of data can be used to determine area eligibility*:
- School data
- Census data – Averaged Eligibility Map

Area eligibility must be determined every five years (regardless of transition from one CN program to another).

Once determined an approved site, the site’s area eligibility is locked in for five years.

Note: Only school data can be used to determine eligibility in CACFP At-risk (Afterschool Meals).
Meals Reimbursed

Usual Program Provisions
• Per child per day, up to:
  • Breakfast + lunch/supper OR
  • Any one meal + snack

Note: Different for camps and migrant sites

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities
• Same except:
  • Sites permitted to serve for multiple days at the same time
Days of Operation

Usual Program Provisions

- Allows weekend service and service up to seven days per week
- Allows service on holidays during summer break or intersession breaks for year-round schools
- Cannot be used during planned school closures or non-school days during the regular school year (like spring break)

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

- In spring 2020, service during planned school closures and non-school days was permitted
- In SY20-21, serving meals through SFSP/SSO was permitted on any day regardless of school operating status
- In SY21-22, schools were permitted to serve meals through SSO on school days and during unanticipated closures. Use of SFSP was limited to unanticipated school closures without virtual instruction
Unanticipated School Closures

Usual Program Provisions

• Available from October through April
• Sponsor must be approved within current or past two calendar years for state to waive application
• States may opt not to conduct pre-operational visits to sponsors operating during closures
• States need a waiver for schools to be sites

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

SAME except:

• Unanticipated school closure operations could continue through the end of SY19-20

Note: During SY21-22, SFSP waivers could be used during unanticipated school closures if the school was without virtual learning
Participant Eligibility

Usual Program Provisions

• Free meals for all children & teens ages 18 and under at open or closed enrolled sites
• Open sites operate on a drop-in basis
• Closed enrolled sites require advance enrollment

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

SAME

*Different for camps
Meal Requirements

Usual Program Provisions

- **SFSP**: See meal pattern on next slide
- **SSO**: Same as NSLP – see next slide
- **Offer Versus Serve (OVS)**: Except where waivers are granted, OVS is permitted only for school food authority sponsors

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

*Same except:*

- Meal pattern flexibility available if operators cannot source items needed to meet meal pattern requirements
- Operators did not need to offer multiple milk types and could serve meals without milk if emergency conditions prevent them from obtaining milk
- OVS offered to all sponsor types
- Bulk item distributions allowed
SFSP MEAL PATTERN

Simplified meal pattern with four meal components: (1) milk, (2) fruit and/or vegetable, (3) grain, and (4) meat/meat alternate.

USDA resources:
- Summer Food Service Program Nutrition Guide
SSO MEAL PATTERN

SSO uses the SBP/NSLP meal pattern

USDA resources:

- **Lunch/Supper Meal Pattern Chart**
- **Breakfast Meal Pattern Chart**
Procurement

Usual Program Provisions
• Operators must comply with applicable procurement standards and procedures for the size of the purchase or contract

COVID-19 Flexibilities
• Non-competitive procurement allowed (always allowable during public emergencies)
• In SY 2022-23, State agencies may request a 12(l) waiver for an extension of expiring FSMC contracts through June 30, 2023
Daily Records

Usual Program Provision

Meal counts, separated by meal type and by:

- First meals served to eligible children
- Second meals served to eligible children
- Meals served to adults performing food service labor (allowable cost but not reimbursed)
- Meals served to non-program adults, if any (neither allowable cost nor reimbursable)
- Excess or leftover meals
- Non-reimbursable meals
- Count of meals prepared or delivered, by type
- Menus

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

SAME
Site Monitoring

Usual Program Provisions

Except where waivers are granted, SFSP sponsors are required to conduct:

• A pre-operational site visit,
• A first week site visit, and
• A review of the site’s food service within the first four weeks of the site’s operations

Expired COVID-19 Flexibilities

• Desk audits could replace on-site visits and reviews
• First week site visits could be waived in certain circumstances
Alice McKenney & Andrea Farmer
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
POLICY UPDATE
Nationwide Waiver Authority

• Congress did not extend FNS’ nationwide waiver authority

• Current nationwide authority only permits FNS to issue nationwide waivers that apply to the 2021-22 school year

• FNS identified options for supporting schools and program operators in transitioning back to "normal" operations
12(I) Waiver Authority

Waivers **may be granted** provided certain conditions are met, including:

- Waiver request supports the purpose of the Program;
- Requester provides notice and information to public; and
- Waiver will not increase overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government.

The Secretary **cannot waive** certain requirements, including:

- Nutritional content of meals served
- Federal reimbursement rates
- Provision of free and reduced price meals
Common Summer Waivers

- First week site visits
- Offer versus serve
- Meal service time restrictions
- Area eligibility for closed enrolled sites
COVID-19 Operational Waivers

SFSP and SSO State waivers that may be available through September 30, 2022:

• Non-Congregate Meal Service
• Parent Pick Up of Meals

**Note:** Meal service times is part of the rescinded memo waivers. If this waiver was requested and approved, it expires April 30, 2023.
Expired Nationwide Waivers

• Area Eligibility
• Waivers of meal pattern requirements
Area Eligibility

- The Secretary does not have authority to offer area eligibility waivers.
- Schools that operated regular NSLP during SY 2021-2022 **will** have school data to determine area eligibility.
- Schools that operated SSO during SY 2021-2022 may **not** have collected free and reduced-price applications, therefore no eligibility information is available to make area eligibility determinations for summer 2022.
- As a reminder, SFSP sites can use census data to determine area eligibility for summer 2022.
Area Eligibility

Option 1:
• Use School Year 2019-2020 free and reduced-price application data
• Area Eligibility determinations made with School Year 2019-2020 data will be valid for the next two program years (through summer 2024)

Option 2:
• Use a process like the schools Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
• Can only be used to qualify sites for area eligibility in summer 2022

Note: these options only apply to summer 2022 and SY 22/23 – these options are not available to use in future years without FNS guidance or approval.
Collection of Race and Ethnicity Data by Visual Observation and Identification (CACFP 11-2021, SFSP 07-2021):

Removes visual observation and identification as an allowable practice in obtaining race and ethnicity data from CACFP and the Summer Food Service Program participants
Research Studies

Recently Published
• Summer Meals Study 2018
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/usda-summer-meals-study

In Progress
• School Meals Operations Study (SMO-I and SMO-II)
Turnip the Beet 2021

- Recognition program for Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option sponsors striving to serve nutritious, appealing meals
  - Voluntary at both the State agency and sponsor levels
  - Updated questions and criteria in program year 2021

- Information on the 2022 Turnip the Beet award is available at https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/turnip-the-beet
• Summer Meals text number has changed!

• Now **914-342-7744** (no longer 97779)
Program Monitoring & Operational Support Division Update
State Agency Oversight Waivers and Plans

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency created need for flexibilities

FNS provided waivers to State Agencies
State Agency Oversight Waivers and Plans

Includes waiving onsite monitoring requirements

State agencies and sponsors
State Agency Oversight Waivers and Plans

13 SFSP waiver requests approved for FY22
State Agency Oversight Waivers and Plans

Many States Requested

Plans Included
Moving Forward

Continue to work closely with FNS

Looking to the future

FNS appreciates your effort!
Questions?
New Resource!

Communicating with Parents and Families About Changes to Summer Meals 2022 Operations

Available at: bestpractices.nokidhungry.org

Click “Latest Resources” on the orange navigation bar!
New Resource!

SFSP & SSO Requirements - Comparison Chart of Usual vs. COVID-19 Waiver Operations

Available at: bestpractices.nokidhungry.org

Click “Latest Resources” on the orange navigation bar!

### Comparison of Usual Summer Meal Program Provisions vs. Expired Flexibilities Permitted in Response the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Additional Resources

**Staffing Up: Strategies for Working Through Labor Shortages and Challenges** (resource – [related webinar](#))

**Tips for Staffing Summer Meals Programs** (resource)

**Tips for Navigating Supply Chain Disruptions** (resource)

**Materials for Communicating with Your School Community** (sample language in English and Spanish)

**Rural Communities Leading the Way: Introducing Local Foods to Meal Service** (resource)

From SNA: [Supply Chain Resources](#) (website)

From USDA: [Planning for a Dynamic School Environment](#) (website)
School’s Out, Food’s In!

*Summer Webinar Series*

**March 30 @3pm EST** – Planning for Summer Meals: Strategies to navigate no-waiver operations

**April 13 @1pm EST** – Reaching Hard to Reach Communities: Leveraging Innovation and Partnership

**May** – Promoting Your Summer Meals Program: Strategies and Tips to Promote Your Summer Meals Program

**June** – Evaluating and Incorporating Feedback into Your Summer Meals Programs: Tips and Promising Practices

**July** – Thinking 365: Transitioning Your Summer Meals Program to an Afterschool Program through CACFP At-risk
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www.bestpractices.nokidhungry.org
THANK YOU

Paige Pokorney, MPH
Program Manager,
Center for Best Practices
ppokorney@strength.org