

Welcome!

We'll get started soon. While we wait for other attendees to join, please answer this question in the chat box:

What questions do you have on the non-congregate summer meals IFR or guidance?



The Interim Final Rule on Non-Congregate Summer Meals: What It Means for You This Summer

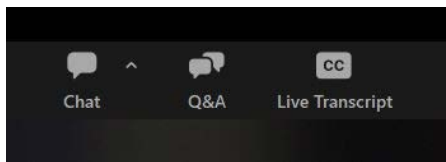
Thursday, March 14, 2024





Things to Know as We Begin

- The slide deck will be shared via email after the webinar along with the recording.
- To engage with other attendees, please use the [chat box](#).
- If you have questions for the speakers, please enter those into the [Q&A box](#).
- Closed captioning is available.





Agenda

- Opening
- Speaker Introductions
- Background on Non-Congregate
- Interim Final Rule Overview
- No Kid Hungry Summer Meals Eligibility Map
- Commenting on the IFR
- Q&A

Speakers



Carolyn Vega
Associate Director,
Policy Analysis



Zach Tilly
Senior Policy
Manager



Regis Whaley
Senior Program
Manager



Background on Non-Congregate Summer Meals



The Summer Hunger Gap

- Summer is the hungriest time of year
- Traditional summer meals programs – SFSP & SSO – have long failed to meet the need
 - In 2019, just **one in seven** kids eligible for free or reduced-price school meals got a summer meal



Addressing the Gap

- Pilots to address the gap go back more than a decade
- New models were tested more broadly in response to COVID-19
 - Meal program flexibilities wound down in Spring/Summer 2022
 - Pandemic EBT ended after Summer 2023



Permanently Closing the Gap

- In December 2022, Congress permanently authorized two new summer nutrition options nationwide:
 - Non-Congregate Summer Meals in Rural Areas: First available in summer 2023
 - Summer EBT: Begins summer 2024

Both new options will work alongside traditional summer meals programs



What's in the Law



Non-Congregate Summer Meals Basics

- Non-congregate is available only in:
 - Rural areas
 - With **no** congregate service
- Option for usual area eligibility rules or “conditional sites”
- Usual healthy, safety, sanitation & meal pattern rules apply
- Meals may be provided for up to 10 days at a time (up to usual daily per child limits)



Non-Congregate Administration

- Regulations
 - Implementation permitted in 2023 with past pilot guidance
 - USDA directed to issue an interim final rule by December 2023
- State Agencies
 - Optional opt-in for 2023 but included in usual summer Management & Administration Plan for 2024 and beyond
 - Agencies expected to identify areas with no congregate service and encourage non-congregate service in priority areas



What's in the IFR

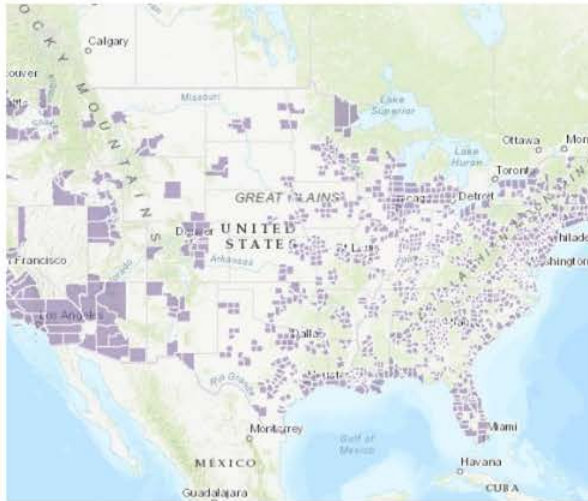


Program & Sponsor Eligibility

- Available through both SFSP & SSO
- Available to public & private non-profit organizations and school food authorities
- New sponsors permitted to do non-congregate
- States cannot deny a sponsor in good standing solely because of intent to provide non-congregate service

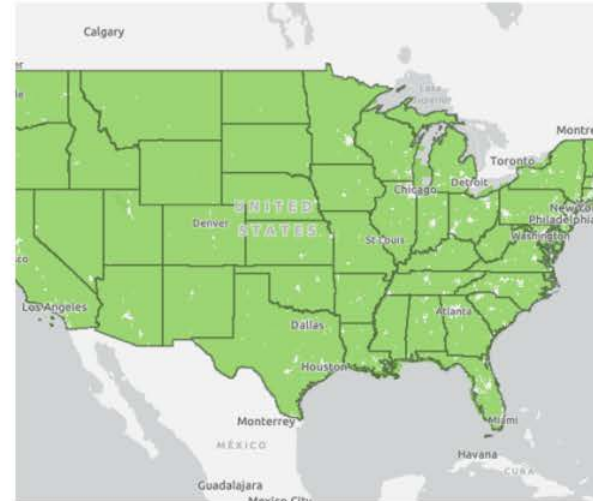
Defining Rural

Before the IFR



Unshaded = Rural; Purple = Urban

After the IFR



Green = Rural; White = Urban

fns.usda.gov/sfsp/rural-designation



Expanded Definition of “Rural”



2023 Definition

- Any area in a county not part of an MSA based on OMB's definition
- Rural pockets based on
 - RUCA
 - RUCC
 - UIC
 - Census Bureau (NCES)
- Rural pockets subject to USDA regional *concurrence*

New Definition

- Any area in a county not part of an MSA based on **OMB's** definition; non-metropolitan based on **RUCA**, **RUCC**, or **UIC**; not part of a Census Bureau-defined urban area (**NCES**); or not part of an urban area as determined by the Secretary.
- Rural pockets based on other available data subject to USDA regional *approval*

Defining “No Congregate Service”

- “No congregate service” is left to state agency discretion
- Agencies encouraged to consider factors like:
 - Any physical conditions or other barriers;
 - Congregate site capacity;
 - Sites serving the same children on different days/weeks, or for different meals on the same day; and
 - Sites appealing to specific age groups or to children with unique dietary requirements

Defining “No Congregate Service”

- “Hybrid sites” providing congregate & non-congregate service permitted if:
 - Providing meals for different days
 - Offering different meals
 - Covering different periods of time
 - Serving different groups of children at different times
 - Must demonstrate to satisfaction of the state agency that there is a system in place to ensure no duplication

Service Flexibilities

- States may only limit flexibilities on a case-by-case basis:
 - Parent/guardian meal pick-up
 - Multiple meal distribution (up to 10 days at a time)
 - Bulk meal item distribution (up to 5 days at a time)



Service Models

- Walk-up distribution
- Curbside pick-up / drive-thru
- Mobile meals
- Home delivery
 - Requires advance consent/opt-in & confirmation of contact info and number of eligible children
 - Available to both non-profit and SFA sponsors
 - Non-profits only need an agreement with the SFA if utilizing school data

Additional Details

- Meal service distribution / delivery times must be specified
 - **Not** required to serve breakfast in the morning or allow one hour between meal service distributions
- Second meals **not** permitted through non-congregate
- Usual area eligibility rules apply to distribution sites unless operating a “conditional site”

Conditional Sites

- Usual area eligibility rules apply *except* for conditional sites
- Conditional sites
 - Permitted only through rural non-congregate
 - Operate outside of areas that meet the 50% free/reduced-price eligibility threshold for open sites
 - Do not have to meet the 50% threshold through applications like closed enrolled sites
 - Receive reimbursement only for meals served to children determined eligible for free/reduced-price meals

Conditional Sites

- May obtain eligibility information *after* serving a meal as long as it is within the claim month
- May charge for meals served to ineligible children
- May use non-program / private funds to provide no-cost meals to ineligible children

Monitoring

- Follows usual SFSP/SSO rules
- Sites switching to non-congregate considered new sites for monitoring purposes



USDA Resources

- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summer>
- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/non-congregate>
- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/rural-designation>
- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt>
- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sun/style-guide>

The logo for "SUN MEALS" features the word "SUN" in large, bold, multi-colored letters (orange, yellow, green, blue) and "MEALS" in orange below it. To the right is a circular icon with a sunburst border containing a fork and a knife.The logo for "SUN MEALS TO-GO" features the word "SUN" in large, bold, multi-colored letters (orange, yellow, green, blue) and "MEALS TO-GO" in green below it. To the right is a circular icon with a sunburst border containing a fork and a knife.The logo for "SUN BUCKS" features the word "SUN" in large, bold, multi-colored letters (orange, yellow, green, blue) and "BUCKS" in blue below it. To the right is a circular icon with a sunburst border containing a fork and a knife.

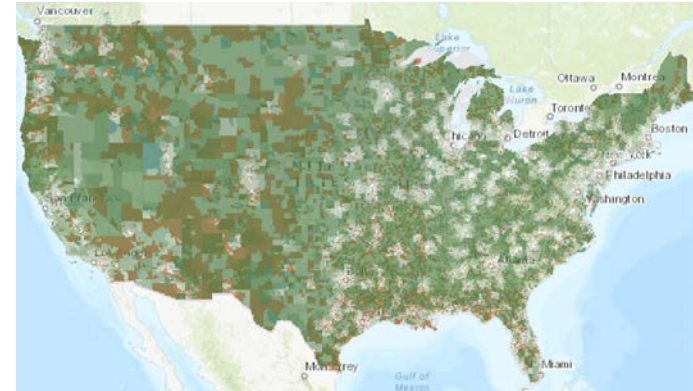


Summer Meals Eligibility Map



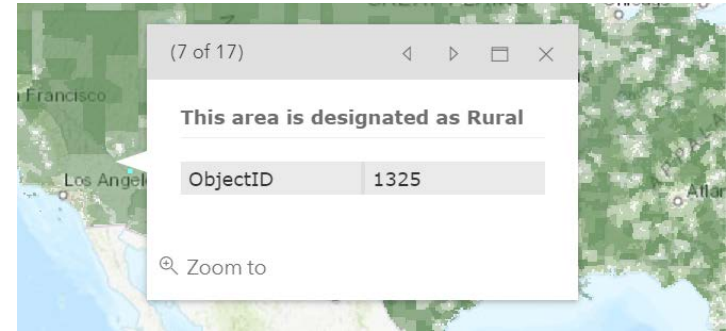
Summer Meals Eligibility Map

- Two layers
 - Non-Congregate Summer Meals Rural Eligibility Map
 - Averaged Eligibility Map
- Available here:
<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/Averaged-Eligibility-Map>



Non-Congregate Summer Meals Rural Eligibility Map

- Derived from USDA's [rural designation map](#)
- To check rurality:
 - Turn on only the “USDA Rural Designations” layer
 - Search for an address
 - Click the area containing the address
 - Look for the pop-up





Commenting on the IFR



Important Dates

- IFR published Dec. 29, 2023
 - Took effect immediately
- Comments due Apr. 29, 2024
- Final rule: TBD
- Effective date of final rule: TBD

The Comment Process

- Review the IFR:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/29/2023-28488/establishing-the-summer-ebt-program-and-rural-non-congregate-option-in-the-summer-meal-programs>
- Check out our tips on submitting a comment:
<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/how-comment-federal-regulations>
- Submit a formal comment:
<https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/FNS-2023-0029-0001>



Q&A





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<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/Summer-Meals-Eligibility-Map>

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Your Feedback is Appreciated!

At the conclusion of this webinar, a 5-question survey will open in your browser window.

Please take a moment to complete it.





Thank You for Attending!

Carolyn Vega, MPH, RD

Associate Director, Policy Analysis

No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices

Share Our Strength

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