



COVID-19

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Non-congregate Meal Waiver for Home Delivery

Questions and Answers

Q. The meal site is currently approved under the SFSP, may meals be delivered directly to the child's (*) home?

** child refers to any eligible SFSP meal participant*

Yes. USDA FNS has recognized that in this public health emergency, waiving the congregate meal requirements is vital to ensure appropriate safety measures for the purpose of providing meals and snacks. Waiving Program requirements under regulations at 7 CFR 226 supports access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and gives any SFSP sponsor the ability to deliver meals directly to the child's home. The waiver is effective March 20, 2020 and remains in effect through June 30, 2020 or upon expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

If the SFSP Sponsor determines there is a need and it is logistically feasible to deliver meals directly to homes, it may do so with State agency approval, adherence to all federal confidentiality requirements, and with all necessary Federal waiver approvals. The delivery plan with designated times for distribution, when approved by the State agency, would fulfill the requirements to establish meal service times.

Q. What funding is available for meal delivery?

There is no additional reimbursement for home delivery or mobile meals delivery, but related expenses such as delivery service fees, would be considered an allowable cost under the SFSP. Delivery costs could also be paid with non-program funds such as State or local funds, or private donations.

Q. Who is eligible to receive home-delivered meals?

SFSP Sponsors may opt to use a home-delivered meal model for any approved open site under SFSP agreement. All children, age 18 and under, are eligible to receive meals if permission for home delivery is obtained from parent/guardian.

Q. What are the requirements for initiating home meal delivery to a household?

SFSP Sponsors must first obtain documented consent from the child's parent/guardian that they want to receive home delivered meals. When multiple children live in the same residence, the sponsor should confirm the correct

number of meals are delivered to the correct location. It is critical to protect the confidentiality of children and their households throughout this process. The privacy information of the household is not authorized without first obtaining documented consent. The SFSP Sponsor must be the entity that makes the first contact about meal delivery and must notify the household if contact information will be shared with an external organization, for example, a local non-profit that will provide meal delivery. Once the Sponsor receives documented consent from the parent/guardian to release contact information, the Sponsor may share the information with other organizations involved with meal delivery.

If the Sponsor is using a private vendor for meal delivery, they must have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the vendor concerning the confidentiality requirements. The MOU should include information such as what will be disclosed, how the information will be used, how the information will be protected from unauthorized uses and disclosures, and penalties for unauthorized disclosure. The Sponsor must ensure data is handled appropriately at all times and by all organizations involved with meal delivery to safeguard household confidentiality.

Q. How many home-delivered meals per child may be delivered at once?

The maximum number of meals that may be offered each child remains the same: up to two meals or snacks in any combination excluding the combination of Lunch & Supper, per child, per day. FNP may approve a distribution approach that includes meals for multiple days, up to one week at a time. The Sponsor must develop a delivery plan noting the number of meals and the designated times for distribution, and when approved by FNP, it would fulfill the requirements to establish meal service times.

Q. Are there any flexibilities in the meal pattern for home-delivered meals?

USDA granted flexibilities for the SFSP meal pattern through April 30, 2020 or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier. This impacts non-congregate meal sites as well as home-delivered meal models. Sponsors must contact the State Agency for approval to participate in this waiver. If requesting a flexibility to the SFSP meal pattern Sponsors should include justification based upon disruptions to the availability of food products from the impacts of COVID-19. Any meal pattern flexibilities granted will be on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Do home-delivered meals need to be shelf-stable?

No. The type of meal offered will depend on the resources and capacity of the household. If meals are prepared as ready-to-eat meals and the sponsor has the capacity to deliver meals in a way that meets State or local food safety requirements, they may do so. Home-delivered meals must continue to meet all meal pattern requirements of the SFSP meal pattern.

Q. Does someone need to be present for home meal delivery?

No. As long as the Sponsor has obtained written consent to deliver meals and has verified the current address, the child/parent/guardian does not need to be present at the time of delivery. If the meals are shelf-stable, no one need be present, as long as the address has been verified. Please consider state and local food safety requirements and best practices minimizing potential tampering, theft, and weather issues.

Requirements for SFSP Reimbursement

Q. Does the SFSP Sponsor need to notify FNP of their home delivery method?

Yes. The Sponsor must first obtain written consent from each eligible child's parent/guardian and develop a delivery plan. The plan will need to be uploaded into the Sponsor's SFSP agreement in the online security portal. Once submitted, FNP will review and require the Sponsor to electronically attest to specific criteria ensuring compliance with safety protocols for the children, staff delivering meals, and the food, and a meal counting process for eligible children.

Q. Does the Sponsor need to update the site application(s)?

Yes. FNP will provide additional guidance during the approval process. If the Sponsor does not communicate its decision to offer home delivered meals and receive prior approval from FNP, claims for these meals will not be processed.

Q. Can DESE identify which sites are approved to have a home delivery method?

Yes. The site will have the prefix "HD" for home delivered meals. Upon approval, the DESE consultant will modify the site name to indicate it opting for home delivery. Only these sites are authorized to claim home delivered meals after March 25, 2020.

Q. Does the Sponsor use the current food vendor under contract?

Yes. FNP highly recommends that the Sponsor continue to work with their FY19 vendor/caterer who was approved in the Sponsor's application packet. For additional guidance, please contact your DESE consultant.

Q. Is the Sponsor permitted to continue to self-prepare meals?

Yes. Under Governor Baker's social distancing protocols, gatherings are limited to less than 10 people. The Center retains the responsibility to abide by the current requirements set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and any local restrictions regarding COVID-19.

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