

## **Child Nutrition Program Recommendations for Operations During a Pandemic**

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to serve children when school is not in session and may function as intended during the summer months, teacher strikes and other temporary school closings. The SFSP is not designed to meet the food needs of children during emergencies such as the one we now face.

Currently discussed waivers related to congregate feeding requirements and even meal component/nutritional requirements are helpful but not sufficient. A fully functioning Child Nutrition program during this emergency must take into consideration the precautions and best practices being recommended as well program participants affected through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), not only the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

SFSP program rules that need to be waived or adjusted in addition to those noted in current legislation and current state waivers:

- Point of Service Meal Counts – for reimbursement under and Child Nutrition Program, counts must be taken at the point of service. If every child must attend in person, every day to receive a meal then the precaution and safety provided by closing schools will be eliminated.
- Under existing Child Nutrition Program rules, meals are provided as single-serve, prepared meals. There are no provisions or exceptions to provide multiple meal types or multiple days' worth of meals at one time. By providing a bulk meal service of several meals for several days at one time the exposure and contact resulting from meal service could be reduced.
- Under existing Child Nutrition Program rules, prepared meals are the only option. Prepared meals, packed individually are labor intensive and will require additional manpower and time to prepare. With largescale infection possible, as well as potential for broad mandated quarantines, there may be operational challenges around food preparation and packaging.
- The SFSP provides reimbursement for up to two meals per day. In this situation children could be missing more than just School Breakfast and Lunch. Children in childcare settings could be receiving up to three meals per day and with the addition of At-Risk CACFP children could be receiving up to four meals per day.

Recommendations:

- Allow for parent, caregiver or proxy food pick-up for children.
- Allow pick-up or delivery of multiple meals at a time.
- Allow flexibility to provide meal components as bulk food items rather than prepared meals.
- Increase allowable reimbursable meals per day to four (Breakfast, Lunch, Supper and a Supplement/Snack).
- Decrease the threshold for area eligibility to 40% free/reduced lunch or 40% income eligible using census track data.
- Increase reimbursements by adding an additional rate for home delivery. Typical SFSP reimbursement rates include reimbursement for the meal and a separate administrative reimbursement.