



Arizona Department of Education

Health and Nutrition Services Division

HNS# 14-2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Sponsors of the Child and Adult Care Food Program in Child Care Centers, Head Start Programs, Adult Day Care Centers, and Emergency Shelters

From: Melissa Conner, Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services

Date: March 27, 2020

Subject: Revised Guidance for CACFP Participation During Unanticipated School Closures due to COVID-19

This revised guidance replaces and updates HNS 12-2020. USDA has released 6 nationwide waivers to support meal service for children and students in need during school closures due to COVID-19. The following two waivers apply to operators of the CACFP:

- Meal pattern flexibility
- Allow meals to be served in a non-congregate setting

The following questions and answers outline requirements for requesting use of the waivers, as well as additional guidance for operations during this time.

MEAL PATTERN FLEXIBILITY WAIVER

1. What does the meal pattern flexibility waiver allow me to do in my CACFP operation?

This waiver allows sponsors to request a waiver from the State Agency to claim meals served that do not meet the meal pattern beginning on March 25, 2020. ADE will review and approve these waiver requests on a case-by-case basis. USDA and ADE still expect program operators to maintain and meet the nutrition standards for each meal to the greatest extent possible. These waivers will be approved for specific meals, dates, and requirements; they will not be blanket approvals for use across the entire menu.

2. How do I request a meal pattern waiver?

Sponsors must complete this [meal pattern waiver request](#) for each day a flexibility is requested. Sponsors will need to indicate the flexibility requested, by meal service, and report how many meals were impacted by the shortage/flexibility.

Centers will continue to take meal counts for meals served that do not meet the meal pattern. Once a Meal Pattern Waiver is submitted for that meal, the meals can be included in the monthly meal count summary and claimed for reimbursement, unless ADE notifies you otherwise. ADE maintains the authority to deny a meal pattern waiver request on a case-by-case basis and will notify the sponsor of any denial.

3. How will I know if my waivers are approved so I can claim those meals?

ADE will review the requests before April 10th and notify you via email if they are approved to be included in your March claims. ADE will also request additional information as needed so that we can approve as many requests as possible, while also maintaining program integrity and highest meal quality possible.

4. I thought dry, nonfat milk wasn't creditable? Did something change?

Under normal operations, dry, nonfat milk is not creditable. However, CACFP regulations at 7 CFR 226.20 (e) and (f) allow for this type of milk to be creditable in emergency situations. This milk option is creditable for all age groups during the national emergency period due to COVID-19.

5. How do I order the dry, nonfat milk from the Dairy Council of Arizona?

Email Pat Johnson at pjohnson@dairycouncilofaz.org to request an order form. They Dairy Council of AZ will provide a 50-pound bag of dry milk for \$60, and it can be reconstituted to make 63 gallons of milk.

6. Are meal pattern flexibilities available for infants?

No. Infants must continue to receive breastmilk or iron-fortified formula. Infants who are developmentally ready for solid foods must also be served food in accordance with their established eating patterns.

7. Do I need to notify ADE if I stop serving meals in family-style meal service?

You do not need to notify ADE of this change. ADE aligns with Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) guidance to suspend of family-style meal service and a shift toward the provision of unitized or pre-plated meals and snacks. Handwashing and frequent cleaning are also recommended.

NON-CONGREGATE MEAL SERVICE

8. What does the waiver for non-congregate feeding (grab and go) allow me to do in my CACFP operation?

The nationwide waiver allows for meals to be served to enrolled children at CACFP centers in a grab and go distribution method. This option is available for centers who:

- have closed but would like to continue providing meals to the children they serve, or
- are open, have additional food available and would like to continue serving meals (in grab and go setting) to enrolled children who are not in attendance due to COVID-19.

9. How do I apply for the waiver to do non-congregate feeding?

Send an email to the CACFP Inbox (CACFP@azed.gov) with the following information:

- Sponsor and site(s) name
- Dates and meals you'll be serving in non-congregate setting
- Schedule for meal service
- Notification sent to families
- Description of meal distribution method, and
- Description of how accurate point of service meal counts will be maintained.

The following requirements continue to apply:

- Meals may only be served to *enrolled* participants
- Meals served may not exceed 2 meals and 1 snack.
- Children must be present to receive meals.

10. If I decide to operate a non-congregate meal service for children that are enrolled but not currently in attendance at my center due to COVID-19, can I provide multiple grab-and-go meals at one time?

No. USDA has not authorized multiple meal distribution at one time for CACFP operators.

11. Do children need to be present to receive meals in a non-congregate setting?

Yes. Children need to be present when meals are distributed.

ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

12. I am going to close my facility and I am not continuing meal service. What does ADE need to know?

Send an email to the CACFP Inbox (CACFP@azed.gov) with the following information:

- Sponsor and site(s) name
- Closure dates
- A copy of the notice sent to families.

Sponsors are to inform families that they can receive meals for children up to age 18 at nearby schools. The list of sites serving meals is available through local school district websites and is available on the [ADE website](#) under the School Meals tab.

13. What should I do if my facility has to close but I still have food available and want to help my enrolled families?

Please follow the guidance listed in question 8 for facility closures and question 2 for non-congregate meal service. You can combine the information in one email.

14. We have multiple centers and all have low attendance. If we consolidate and only offer care at one location, can we transfer the children's eligibility status?

Yes. For multi-site facilities who are consolidating operations due to low attendance, participant eligibility can transfer with the participants.

Meals must be documented at the point of service where they are served, and that site is responsible for maintaining documentation of eligibility and attendance (the children must be on a roster at the facility, and sign in/sign out records must also be available at that facility).

All participating sponsors are encouraged to continue visiting the [HNS memos webpage](#) for updated guidance regarding CACFP operations during these unanticipated closures.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

UPDATED with HNS 6-2-2020