



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 28, 2021

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Kyle L. Guerrant, Deputy Superintendent *KG*
Finance and Operations

SUBJECT: Child Nutrition Program Meals Through June 30, 2022 -
MEMO #COVID-185

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended nationwide waivers for specific requirements to help schools and other child nutrition program sponsors continue to provide meals to children and to maintain accountability during the summer of 2021 and through the 2021-2022 school year.

Child nutrition professionals have connected children with nutritious meals throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Since March 13, 2020, Michigan child nutrition professionals have worked hard to adapt their meal service to meet the needs of children in their communities, often with fewer staff and greater complexity.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is committed to supporting schools in serving the most nutritious meals possible as they transition back to regular school meal program operations during the upcoming school year.

As we look ahead to next school year, we know that even as the nation and our state continue to recover, child nutrition professionals will continue to face challenges in their work. Schools will need flexibility to provide meals to virtual learners. Flexibility will also allow schools to continue with classroom meals, outdoor meals, and other meal service models that support social distancing for in-person students. Childcare and community meal program sponsors will need additional flexibilities to support their return to a new, better normal.

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To support a successful summer and the 2021-2022 school year and to promote afterschool and childcare meals, USDA has released a set of waivers and flexibilities to increase funding, support access, and balance operational needs with the goal of providing nutritious meals.

Summer 2021 Waivers Lasting Until September 30, 2021:

- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibilities for Summer 2021 Operations](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-Congregate Feeding for Summer 2021 Operations](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children for Summer 2021 Operations](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility Waivers for Summer 2021 Operations](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver of Meal Service Time Restrictions for Summer 2021 Operations](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities in the Summer Food Service Program for Summer 2021 Operations](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites for Summer 2021 Operations](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Waiver First Week Site Visits in the Summer Food Service Program for Summer 2021 Operations](#)

School Year 2021-2022 Waivers Lasting Until June 30, 2022:

- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow the Seamless Summer Option through School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program Reimbursement Rates in School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-Congregate Meal Service for School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver of Meal Time Requirements for School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children for School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child and Adult Care Food Program for School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools in School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver of Area Eligibility in the Afterschool Programs and for Family Day Care Home Providers in School Year 2021-2022](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements in the School Meals Programs – Revised – EXTENSION 3](#)
- [Nationwide Waiver of Monitoring Requirements for Sponsors in the Child and Adult Care Food Program – EXTENSION](#)

Under the nationwide waiver to allow the seamless summer option through school year 2021-2022, all school food authorities that opt into the waiver are permitted to serve and claim meals through the seamless summer option, regardless of their location. All school food authorities and schools may use this waiver. Further, USDA has increased meal reimbursement rates for [Seamless Summer and Family Day Care Home](#) providers in school year 2021-2022, in recognition of the increased costs that are incurred when providing safe meals during the pandemic. The availability of the seamless summer option will provide maximum administrative flexibility for schools and access for children.

In addition, as more children return to in-person learning and childcare, it is important to ensure that they receive high-quality, nutritious meals that help them succeed in the classroom. For school year 2021-2022, schools will be returning to the national school lunch program meal pattern, which emphasizes healthy eating with a focus on fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and sensible calorie levels. Continued COVID-19 safety protocols at some schools may require school nutrition professionals to continue using alternative meal service models that allow for social distancing.

MDE expects that the meal pattern flexibilities provided for this school year will be pre-approved through its Office of Health and Nutrition Services, and that schools will seek to meet the nutrition standards to the greatest extent possible.

The return to school and work also means a return to afterschool and childcare for many families, and childcare providers will also need flexibility to provide safe meals to children. Similar targeted meal pattern flexibility is available for childcare providers in school year 2021-2022 with required MDE pre-approval.

While many waivers provide flexibility for an extended timeframe, it is expected that schools and childcare providers will use the flexibilities for only the duration and extent that they are needed. Program operators should continue to refer to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the latest information on mitigation and prevention measures, including those around food and drink consumption. For example, schools may refer to the webpage Safely Distributing School Meals During COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/safely-distributing-meals.html>.

Child nutrition programs play an essential role in the health and development of our children. Local program operators and their teams have worked tirelessly to make sure that children have access to nutritious meals despite the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. MDE appreciates their efforts and will continue to do its part to support them.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors