

## Summer Food Service Program Waiver Extension (December 31, 2020)

### Frequently Asked Questions

As of 9/2/2020

**Are these waivers for if your school doesn't open before Dec 31? I thought if we had kids actively learning then we had to switch to NSLP and the summer program would be done at that time.** No, the Summer Food Service Program can operate while school is in session. This is a new waiver extension that supersedes the prior Summer extension.

**Can you please clarify? Is this through December 30th or the first day of school?** This is through December 31, 2020 or until federal funding runs out, if earlier.

**We are set to go with the regular lunch program. Would we benefit more if we did the summer program? We did do it in the spring. If I can go back that would be great.** There are benefits to the program like a streamlined meal pattern, a simpler accountability system, higher reimbursement rates, and any child 18 and under can receive reimbursable meals at open summer sites. USDA food PAL benefit is lower however. Maine DOE Child Nutrition has a document that compares the two programs on the Child Nutrition website.

**I didn't have a summer program. Am I still able to use the new waivers? Do I need to open SFSP sites?** You can submit a Summer Food Service Program application. Open sites using the waiver must have a documented plan. If you must establish eligibility using this waiver, you must operate open sites meaning, any child 18 and younger can access meals from the site. Alternatively, you can try to establish a closed enrolled site for your participants if you qualify. Maine Child Nutrition staff can work with you on this as claiming may look different depending on the number of children who qualify for benefits.

**But would we be able to feed the kids under this program if we are in school currently or only if we are all remote? We currently are serving 50 percent of the students two days a week in school and the other three days are remote days. The two day do we need to use the NSLP or can we feed the students through the Summer Program all five days?** The waivers allow you to operate SFSP whether students are learning remotely or in person. However, you can choose to operate NSLP if you prefer that option.

**Should we still be sending F/R applications out?** Yes. This is still required by regulation and for all the reporting purposes for many other programs. Currently the waivers expire December 31, 2020 or until federal funding runs out, if sooner. This means part of the school year will be NSLP, so you will need that information. We are awaiting further USDA guidance on the impact of these waivers on reports like the ED 534.

**We have a few families who are remote and a small group that has decided to homeschool. I know I'm required to prepare meals for the school and remote but will not the homeschoolers. With the USDA**

**extending Summer Food through December 31,2020, will I need to have an open site and prepare for all children 18 and younger or are we okay since we are going back to school?** We are awaiting USDA guidance on whether you have to operate open sites. Currently it is open sites.

**So can we now just stay on summer meals for all? Both students that are attending in person and remote?** Yes, until December 31, 2020 or until federal funding runs out, if sooner. Site information sheets in NEO will need to be adjusted to reflect the changes.

**With this new Guidance, I assume I need to fill out a new Summer application or can I go in and amend the start and closure date? We stopped meals on June 30<sup>th</sup>.** If you already have an approved SFSP application, you will need to revise to reflect new operations. October 1 starts a new fiscal year for SFSP; we are awaiting USDA guidance on how to handle this situation.

**We are not eligible for summer feeding with less than 50% free and reduced. We did use the SFSP this spring to feed the children in our community until the end of the school year (June 16). Would we be able to go back to the SFSP from now until December?** Yes, you can edit your site information sheets in NEO for the 2020 SFSP application. If you are operating sites in areas that would not normally qualify (over 50% free/reduced), then you can use the area eligibility waiver with a plan in place to target children in need. This must be a documented plan. If you must establish eligibility using this waiver, you must operate open sites meaning, any child 18 and younger can access meals from the site.

**Can you let me know if I need to reapply for my sites?** If you have an approved SFSP application with site information sheets, you should go in and edit accordingly.

**I am doing breakfast in the classrooms and need to know instead of having a physical tick sheet If I can set up a google doc for teachers to report in number of eaters?** Student information must be kept confidential. Not sure if google docs is considered secure. Does not have to be a tick sheet it can be a different method taking into consideration security.

**Can we use classroom rosters, for meal counts or do we need to use summer tick sheets?** Meal counting must take place at the point of service. Tick sheets are an option or using a roster that gets checked off as each student receives meals. Have a plan in place for consistent documentation of meal counts at point of service and maintain documentation to validate the number of meals on the claim. Daily counts should be consolidated into a monthly consolidated count.

**With some students in and some out, can we count them all the same? This would eliminate POS and we could use tick sheets.** Using the Summer plan, meal counting must take place at the point of service. Tick sheets are an option for both remote and in person learners. Have a plan in place for consistent documentation of meal counts at point of service and maintain documentation to validate the number of meals on the claim. Daily counts should be consolidated into a monthly consolidated count.

**October 31 numbers, are we still using that date?** Yes currently no waiver for 10/31 numbers.

**Verification, is it going to be due on 11/15, if our temp out date is not until 10/27?** Temp out date? Awaiting USDA guidance.

**Do you have to be below 50% to qualify for the SFSP extension?** No. If you received approval during the SY 2020 Unanticipated Closure to operate SFSP, you can continue. As a reminder, if you had to use the area eligibility waiver to establish sites, you must ensure you have a documented plan in place to target children in need. This plan must continue.

**Can we still use the latest waiver ending December 31st if we stopped the Summer Feeding Program on June 12, [2020]?** Yes, if you were approved to operate in the Spring of 2020, you can edit your information in NEO to operate.

**The superintendent asked me to find out if our harvest break would qualify under the USDA Waiver for summer meals?** Yes, under the SFSP, reimbursable meals can be served on non-instructional days.

**Are we allowed to offer meals on Saturdays and Sundays until 12/31/20 also?** Under the SFSP, weekend meals can be provided. The extensions are until 12/31/2020, contingent on federal funding.

**Do we go back to Summer since we have started school and are following the NSLP?** It is your choice whether you want to operate the SFSP or NSLP.

**Does this mean we now reopen to all children 18 and under?** We are awaiting further guidance on this from USDA.

**Since we are back on Summer Feeding, I assume that means we count the meals the same way we do in summer?** Meal counting must take place at the point of service. Tick sheets are an option if you found that worked for you. Have a plan in place for consistent documentation of meal counts at point of service and maintain documentation to validate the number of meals on the claim.

**Can districts still operate ala carte?** You are still able to operate an ala carte program if that works for your district. Make sure to follow CDC guidance on safety guidelines.

**With the USDA news yesterday, can you tell me if we can feed ALL the kids in ALL 5 of my schools for free, or just the kids in the 3 schools that qualify for a free open summer meals site?** If you create a plan to ensure meal benefits through SFSP are targeting children in need, you can use the area eligibility waiver to qualify additional sites that do not typically qualify. You must have a documented plan in place and inform DOE Child Nutrition of the waiver use.

**Can we operate SFSP for the fall if we didn't operate over the summer?** Yes, if you were approved to operate in the Spring of 2020, you can edit your information in NEO to operate. If you need to complete a new application, this can be done in NEO. Please work with Maine DOE Child Nutrition staff to get started. As a reminder, if you are using the area eligibility waiver to qualify sites, you must have a documented plan to target meal benefits to children in need.

**Should I be putting my POS systems away and bringing out the tick sheets?** Yes

**Is POS necessary or recommended for in school accountability?** Need documentation, summer tick sheets are acceptable for summer.

**Can we use the summer tick sheets when we hand a meal out rather than using our POS?** Meal counting must take place at the point of service. Tick sheets are appropriate if they work for your district. Have a plan in place for consistent documentation of meal counts at point of service and maintain documentation to validate the number of meals on the claim. Daily counts should be consolidated into a monthly consolidated count.

**We CAN continue serving free meals under SFSP through Dec 31? This program would be much easier to manage in feeding the community. If so, I assume we would need to edit our site applications?** Yes, you will need to update your information on your site information sheets in NEO.

**Do we continue to run our NSLP and charge kids?** It is the district's choice if they want to operate NSLP or use the SFSP waivers. If you are establishing sites in non-eligible areas, you can use the area eligibility waiver as long as you have a documented plan in place to target meal benefits to children in need.

**We are allowed to serve all students no matter their status free meals until 12/31/2020. Is that correct?** If you operate the SFSP under the waiver extensions, you can provide free meals to any child 18 and under at your approved open meal sites. You must update your application in NEO. The SFSP waiver extensions are until December 31, 2020, contingent on federal funding.

**CACFP At-Risk – how can we switch to CACFP At-Risk once SFSP waiver ends? We have operated CACFP- At Risk in the past and were planning on doing so once SY began. What applications are needed/the process?** Please work with the Maine DOE CACFP team. There is a method to do at risk and summer under the waivers.

**Are they looking only at schools that are at 50% F/R or will this cover all schools?** There is an area eligibility waiver that allows sites to operate in areas that are under 50% free and reduced. The district can use the waiver with a documented plan in place to target children in need.

**Do we have to be an open site, feed all 18 and below?** Yes, at open sites, meals are for any child 18 and under.

**Do we have to offer and feed all kids in the community? Like our daycare center or younger children that do not attend school?** Open sites are available to all children 18 and younger. Day care cannot claim a meal if provided with the summer program. Contact our office for more help.

**Do we have to apply for all those waivers, or do they all come as part of the extension?** You must update site information sheets or apply for the SFSP in NEO. Maine DOE Child Nutrition is working on a plan to capture districts using waiver. More information to come.

**Is it okay to have people call in their name and the number of children they are picking up for? This curbside number has been such a moving target over the last five and a half months, and since we are passing meals out in the morning we don't have time to be caught without enough meals to meet the demand.** A pre-order system can be a good way to plan how many meals will be needed. If you are operating open sites, be aware that any child 18 and under can access to program. Plan accordingly. Pickup must be parent or guardian if the child is not able to pick up meals.

**Assuming the meal pattern is the summer meal pattern, can we do Offer Vs. Serve in Classrooms? I know there is a waiver that says we don't have to, but if we are putting three components into a sealed tray, can they turn down the fourth if they want to?** Yes, this is fine with the OVS allowance in SFSP. Please refer to Maine DOE Child Nutrition's resource on our website on safely utilizing OVS during this time and indicate you are using OVS on site information sheets.

**I have new staff that just started this year and have not trained for the SFSP. Could you recommend the best webinar to train them with. Can we use your webinar you did in May? Or will there be other training for this waiver?** Please train your staff on the topics relevant to their duties. All staff must receive the Maine DOE Child Nutrition USDA Civil Rights training on an annual basis. We are awaiting USDA guidance on the level of SFSP training needed for new sponsors starting during this time.

**Can the bill for the buses and drivers used to deliver meals between student's transportation be paid for by the School nutrition budget?** Yes, if meal delivery is the reason for the cost.

**Does the cafeteria have to be sprayed down after tables & chairs have been washed with sanitizer as they have always been done?** Follow CDC guidance on cleaning protocols.

**So, we will not be charging for meals until December 31?** If you operate SFSP under the waivers, children 18 and under are not charged for meals.

**Districts Running NSLP currently do we continue to charge paid families until we hear from you?** As of August 31, 2020, when the USDA waiver extensions for SFSP came out, it is the district's choice whether to operate NSLP or SFSP. If you are operating SFSP sites in areas that are not over 50% free and reduced, you can create a documented plan to target children in need in your community and use the area eligibility waiver.

**Districts that ran summer program during summer that changed to NSLP now can we change back to SFSP Now since we were approved for summer?** Yes, please update your site information sheets in NEO to reflect updated information.

**Do we have to create sites like we did in the Spring?** If you have a SFSP application from the spring, you can edit site information sheets to reflect new operations. If you have to add new sites, make sure they qualify or use the area eligibility waiver with a documented plan in place to target meal benefits to children in need.

**What about schools that are not considered income eligible?** Districts have the option to use the area eligibility waiver with a documented plan in place to target meal benefits to children in need.

**What about siblings not in school, do they get a free meal or just enrolled students?** With open SFSP meal sites, any child 18 and under can receive free meals.

**What will the reimbursement rate be?** Will be the summer 2020 rates.

**Do I still have to continue with my annual participation packet, or do I need to complete a summer application now?** You need to make sure you have an annual agreement packet complete for NSLP as

the waivers for SFSP expire on December 31, 2020, contingent on federal funding. You need to make sure you have a 2020 application for SFSP in NEO for SFSP operations in September using the waivers. We are awaiting USDA guidance on how to manage applications for SFSP October on as that is a new FY.

**Do I have to train my staff on the summer program, even if I trained them over the summer?** No, the training over the summer counts.

**If I didn't participate in SFSP during the closure or during the summer months, can I still complete a summer application?** Yes, you will need to work with Maine DOE Child Nutrition to receive approvals for SFSP in NEO.

**If I submitted a meal pattern waiver for NSLP, do I need to submit a different one for SFSP?** Yes

**Does the extension only apply to those that actually ran a true summer program, and not just because of the early closure last spring.** The extension applies to both scenarios.

**If our district had access to the extension would it be an option if any of our schools switched to strictly remote learning?** Yes

**Would a school choose between offering NSLP/SBP or the Summer Program?** Yes, you need to choose which program to operate. USDA has made it clear that they will not allow hybrid programs.

**With the new waiver extension are we able to continue feeding much like we did in the spring, where we can send multiple days home? 18 and under?** Yes, multiple days are allowed and all children 18 and under can be served. Maine DOE Child Nutrition is working to get a new waiver opt in/approval form for SFSP and will communicate when it is available.

**Does this include meals consumed on site (meaning can we claim at the summer rates) for in school learners or do we need to run the NSLP for in school students?** You can operate either the SFSP or NSLP. SFSP can be operated for both remote and in person learners.

**What do we need to do in NEO to take advantage of this?** You need an approved 2020 SFSP application with updated site information sheets reflecting services.

**Can private schools participate in this?** Yes, private schools can participate. If the school does not qualify as an open meal site, it can use the area eligibility waiver with a plan in place to target students in need. Alternatively, the school can choose to operate NSLP and claim accordingly.

**Under summer feeding can we serve breakfast, lunch and a snack to the same population of students?** No, with the SFSP, sponsors can only serve up two 2 meals (excluding lunch and supper). We are awaiting USDA guidance on if NSLP Afterschool Snack Service can operate in conjunction with SFSP.