***Child Nutrition Program Waiver Request***

***Maine Child Nutrition DOE***

***Submitted March 20, 2020***

**1.State agency submitting waiver request and responsible State agency staff contact information:**

Maine Child Nutrition Department of Education, Walter Beesley walter.beesley@maine.gov 207-624-6875

Walter Beesley

Child Nutrition DOE

136 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0136

**2. Region:** NERO

**3. Eligible service providers participating in waiver and affirmation that they are in good standing:** This would be for eligible summer sponsors and seamless summer.

**4. Description of the challenge the State agency is seeking to solve, the goal of the waiver to improve services under the Program, and the expected outcomes if the waiver is granted. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(iii) and 12(l)(2)(A)(iv) of the NSLA]:** This request is for the ability to provide meals during an unanticipated school closure pandemic outbreak that caused a school(s) to close. Most of Maine schools are closed. Schools have had to convert their entire meal service distribution model in an extremely short time frame. Households with children are grappling with: a sudden need to remain home from work to provide immediate and safe childcare; a severe shortage of food and other grocery supplies coupled with a critical need to have multiple days-worth of food supplies at home; and, lack of access to reliable and readily accessible transportation. Maine is rural with extensive bussing routes across the state. With no student bussing available the meals must go to the students. This means many students will not have access to meals because of area eligibility. Maine would like to have flexibility to wave site eligibility during this time.

**5. Specific Program requirements to be waived (include statutory and regulatory citations). [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(i) of the NSLA]:** Maine requests a waiver of area eligibility in SFSP [42 U.S.C. 1761(a)(1)(A)(i)(I)] that defines area eligibility as an area where at least 50% of the children have been determined eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

**6. Detailed description of alternative procedures and anticipated impact on Program operations, including technology, State systems, and monitoring:**  Meals would be provided to all students once approved by State Agency. We anticipate no impacts on technology, state systems, or monitoring.

**7. Description of any steps the State has taken to address regulatory barriers at the State level. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:** educate DOE and local administrators of current methods under Federal and State regulations. There are currently no state level regulatory barriers that would impact this issue.

**8. Anticipated challenges State or eligible service providers may face with the waiver implementation:** Maine does not anticipate that establishing this statewide waiver will pose any challenges at the State or sponsor level since school food authorities providing services under the waiver would have a reduction in administrative burdens associated with maintaining accurate meal count records. communication and education about the availability of the program during outbreak. Rather this will reduce barriers for our children. Maine will provide guidance and instructions including how to file claims for reimbursements.

**9. Description of how the waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government. If there are anticipated increases, confirm that the costs will be paid from non-Federal funds. [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(iii) of the NSLA]:**

Establishing this statewide waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government since the Programs would be operating in the same situations where the School Nutrition Programs are closed due to COVID-19. There are no additional staff costs to implement this waiver.

**10. Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:** Whereas Maine schools are mostly closed the waiver would start immediately through September 30th, 2020 or whichever comes first.

**11. Proposed monitoring and review procedures:** District will contact CN/DOE of their intent to utilize waiver. DOE staff will monitoring implementation of this waiver.

**12. Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNS):**  Maine DOE will report to FNS the required numbers and information.

**13. Link to or a copy of the public notice informing the public about the proposed waiver [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:** this was shared in a DOE webinar to all districts and interested parties.

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition>

**14. Signature and title of requesting official:**

Director Child Nutrition **Title**: Requesting official’s email address for transmission of response:

walter.beesley@maine.gov

**TO BE COMPLETED BY FNS REGIONAL OFFICE:**

*FNS Regional Offices are requested to ensure the questions have been adequately addressed by the State agency and formulate an opinion and justification for a response to the waiver request based on their knowledge, experience and work with the State.*

**Date request was received at Regional Office:**

 **Check this box to confirm that the State agency has provided public notice in accordance with Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA**

 **Regional Office Analysis and Recommendations:**