
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) From Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors During COVID-19

Volume 2

1. Can I provide meals to families during center closure and claim these meals for reimbursement under CACFP?

USDA granted a nationwide waiver on March 20, 2020 to allow meals and snacks to be served non-congregate style and claimed in the CACFP. However, CACFP Sponsor must still request to use this waiver with the State agency, update their CACFP Application Packet, and have approval from the State agency prior to implementing non-congregate meal service. Please refer to the [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding for Child and Adult Day Care During Closure due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#) that was released on March 21, 2020 on how to apply.

2. Do Sponsors need to request the waiver for non-congregate feeding?

Yes. Sponsors must request from the State agency the use of the non-congregate feeding waiver, update and re-submit their CACFP Application Packet, and have State agency approval prior to implementing this option. Please refer to the [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding for Child and Adult Day Care During Closure due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#) that was released on March 21, 2020 on how to apply.

3. If the childcare center wanted to change the type of meals and snacks being offered during COVID-19, do we have the option to request this change?

Yes. Sponsors have the discretion on what meals and snacks are provided. Child care and adult day care centers may serve and claim up to two meals and a snack or two snacks and a meal per day. The Sponsor would be required to update their site applications to reflect meal type changes and have State agency approval prior to implementing this change. Please see these [instructions for how to modify your application packet](#) to accommodate non-congregate feeding due to COVID-19.

4. Can we serve children that are not enrolled in any of our approved CACFP sponsored childcare centers?

No. Sponsors may only claim meals and snacks provided to children that are enrolled in their sponsored childcare centers. This also applies to adult day care centers.



5. Can SFA's that are approved to participate in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Programs serve supper and/or snacks to students during school or center closures?

USDA granted a nationwide waiver on March 20, 2020 to waive the enrichment activity requirements in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program. SFA's that have an approved CACFP application on file with the State agency may request to provide one meal and/or a snack under the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program at sites that have already been approved to participate in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program. Please refer to the [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding for Child and Adult Day Care During Closure due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#) that was released on March 21, 2020 on how to apply.

6. If the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program wanted to provide a meal and/or a snack during center or school closures, does this only apply to sites that currently participate?

Sponsors may only continue offering the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program at site locations that have been previously approved to participate. New sites may not be added during this time as the waiver only applies to current, participating sites.

7. Can CACFP meals be given out with the SFSP meals either grab-and-go style or through bus delivery?

Yes. CACFP meals and/or snacks can be distributed at the same time as SFSP meals. However, Sponsors must track the number of meals and snacks served in CACFP separate from SFSP for claiming purposes. Meals and snacks will be claimed at the respective site location for grab-and-go sites and home/bus delivery will claim meals and snacks at the site where the meals were prepared for At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program Sponsors.

8. Can multiple meals be distributed at one time? Can multiple days' worth of meals be distributed at one time.

Yes. Sponsors may provide multiple meals at one time or offer multiple days' worth of meals at one time. Sponsors must email child nutrition programs to alert us that you plan to do this, and tell us your plan for ensuring that duplicate meals will not be served. For example, if you plan to distribute on Mondays and Wednesdays and distribute 2 days' worth of meals on Monday and three days' worth on Wednesday, that would be acceptable. Generally, we are capping requests to distribute multiple days of meals at one time at 5 days' worth of meals,

due to food safety and storage concerns. However, if you have a reason you need to distribute more than 5 days' worth of meals at a time, please let us know and we will approve on a case-by-case basis.

If distributing for multiple days at a time, please include food safety labeling such as temperature instructions and expiration dates.

9. How should meal counts be taken when multiple meals are provided at one time?

Sponsors must still take point of service meal counts during non-congregate style meal service. There are a variety of ways Sponsors can document meal counts such as check-off sheets, rosters, etc. Sponsors may use a single meal count sheet to reflect that multiple meals were sent out at one time, however the sheet must clearly show which days and which meals were claimed. For example, if one column is checked off to include breakfast and lunch on both Monday and Tuesday, the column should be very clearly labeled to show what meals are being claimed. The count sheets should still show daily totals for each meal. These count sheets will then be consolidated to a monthly count for breakfast and for lunch before claiming for reimbursement.

Sponsors are required to ensure duplicate meals are not served. For consistency and meal tracking purposes, it is suggested that all households receive the same amount of meals at a time and be on the same pick-up or delivery schedule.

10. Do meals need to be non-perishable?

Meals do not have to be non-perishable, however, please keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold during distribution. Provide labeling to instruct the households about how to handle the foods correctly and when to dispose of them if they are not eaten. USDA guidance does require that meals be shelf stable if they are to be delivered and no one will be present to receive the delivery.

11. Can we serve meals on weekends?

Sponsors may serve meals on weekends if the center or program typically operates on the weekend. If you are not approved to provide care during the weekend, you may not provide and claim these meals served to participants.

12. Do children/older adults have to be present with the household to pick-up meals or receive delivery?

Children or older adults do not have to be present with the parent or guardian picking up meals to take home to the household. Sponsors must ensure that meals are only distributed to parents or guardians of eligible children or older adults, and that duplicate meals are not distributed to any child/older adult. If children or older adults are not present, please verbalize to households and include a label on the meals indicating that they are intended for consumption by the enrolled participants.

13. If we sponsor multiple sites, can we limit production to one site, but provide meals for multiple locations?

Yes. If Sponsors want to limit food production to one facility and distribute meals to approved site locations for pick-up, Sponsors may do this by updating their site applications and submitting for approval. Households would be required to pick-up meals and snacks from the center location their child is enrolled in. Meals and snacks may only be provided to children enrolled in the childcare center. Please see these [instructions for how to modify your application packet](#) to accommodate non-congregate feeding due to COVID-19. This applies to Adult Day Programs as well.

14. If we offer meals non-congregate style, are we required to portion out each serving for each meal or can we provide families with packaged items like bread and peanut butter?

Meals must be served in a unitized fashion. A unitized meal is when all meal components are packaged in the minimum portion sizes specified by the meal pattern, delivered, and served as a unit. Unitized meals may or may not include milk as a unit but is still required to be served. For example, the milk could be provided in a pint serving size rather than portioning out 4-8 oz. fl. milk for each meal. It would not be allowable for Sponsors to offer other components in this manner. Please refer to [Serving Meals Non-Congregate Meal Style in the CACFP during Center Closures](#) for further information on how to serve meals non-congregate style.

15. How do I protect my staff from the virus?

Foodservice staff should work in small groups with little close interaction and keep a 6- foot distance, if possible. Instead of working together in a small kitchen, consider moving worktables out into other areas of the center to spread out workspaces.

Instruct staff to stay home when they are sick, and make sure you have enough staff coverage planned that no one feels pressure to come in when they are sick.

If you need to have a regular check-in or planning meeting with a large number of staff, consider doing it outside or in a large room and remind staff to stand apart from each other. Consider ways to conduct check-in and planning meetings via telephone, email, or video conference.

When delivering meals, ensure that a 6-foot distance is maintained between the delivery person and the recipient. Some centers are instructing households to leave coolers outside to place the meals in, when conducting home deliveries. When offering grab and go, some centers are having staff place the meals on cart or tables and step back before the recipient comes forward to take the meal. Clear signage can help tell recipients what to expect and where they should go. Tape can be used to mark off a 6-foot spacing on the floor or sidewalk.

Additional suggestions for safe distribution are included in the logistics sections of the [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding for Child and Adult Day Care During Closure due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#). Child Nutrition Programs has also issued [COVID-19 Food Service Health and Safety FAQs](#).

16. If an employee has been in close contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19, should they stay home?

Yes. If someone has been in contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19, they should stay home. Please see [What to Do if You Have Been in Contact with Someone Who May Have COVID-19](#) for more information.

17. Will there be leniency with meal pattern compliance during food shortages?

UPDATED 3/25/20: USDA issued a nationwide waiver to waive all meal pattern requirements at 7 CFR 226.20 during this public health crisis on March 25, 2020. Sponsors who are experiencing disruptions to the availability of food products resulting from COVID-19 can request the use of this waiver. Sponsors must contact the State agency requesting to use this waiver with a description of the circumstances and the meal pattern component affected. The State agency will approve these waiver requests on a case-by-case basis and Sponsors must have approval prior to serving meals that do not meet meal pattern compliance. This waiver is effective immediately and remains in effect until April 30, 2020 or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.