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POLICY UPDATE



6.4.2020 SNA Calls for Quick Action to Keep School Meal Programs Viable

SNA has sent a [letter](#) to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue urging the immediate extension of COVID-19 emergency feeding waivers through the end of the SY 2020-2021. This letter has been sent to all of Congress and contains a request that school meals be provided for all students at no charge. This letter also includes essential information regarding ongoing financial and operational barriers as schools work to continue providing critical meals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Full [press release](#).

4.27.2020 USDA Announces Farmers to Families Food Box Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), in conjunction with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE), published Frequently Asked Questions for non-profit organizations seeking to receive food through the Farmers to Families Food Box Program. The Frequently Asked Questions are available on the AMS website [here](#). Additional questions may be submitted to USDAFoodBoxDistributionProgram@usda.gov.

4.27.2020 SNA Advocates for Funding to Offset Losses

SNA joined 37 allied organizations in a letter to the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees advocating for funding to help offset financial losses for school meal programs due to COVID-19 closures. The letter urges Congress to provide \$2.6 billion to mitigate a portion of the estimated, significant loss that school nutrition programs have and will continue to experience. Funding must be provided to make programs financially solvent and to maintain the integrity of these essential programs as the recovery process begins, with many more children relying on school meal programs. Read the [complete letter](#).

4.29.2020 USDA Releases New COVID-19 School Nutrition Guidance

USDA FNS has released a new series of waivers and guidance for school meal service during COVID-19 school closures.

- [Nationwide Waiver to Waive First Week Site Visits in the SFSP](#): Waives requirements that sponsors visit each of their sites at least once during the first week of operation under the program for sites that have operated successfully in the previous year and sponsors that successfully participate in the CACFP or the NSLP.
- [Nationwide Waiver of Food Service Management Contract Duration in the NSLP and SFSP](#): Waives food service management company (FSMC) contracts duration requirements for all state agencies, SFAs and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors.
- [Nationwide Waiver of Local School Wellness Assessments](#): Waives requirement for schools unable to complete a triennial assessment of the local school wellness policies by June 30, 2020.
- [Nationwide Waiver of Annual Review Requirements for State Agencies in the CACFP](#): Waives requirement to complete CACFP monitoring onsite through September 30, 2020. State agencies electing this option are encouraged to prioritize reviews of these institutions next year.
- [Nationwide Waiver to Extend Unanticipated School Closure Operations](#): Waives the October through April time limitation for implementation of SSO and SFSP during unanticipated school closures and allows State agencies that elect this option to permit SFAs to operate under unanticipated school closure requirements through June 30, 2020.

Questions or comments?

Send them to SNA's Government Affairs and Media Relations Coordinator, Hailey Frye, at hfrye@schoolnutrition.org

- [Reporting COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Data](#): Each COVID-19 school nutrition program waiver requires that State agencies and local program operators provide certain summaries and descriptions of their use.

4.30.2020 SNA Comments on DGA Committee

SNA submitted comments on the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) Request for Comment. In the comment letter, SNA referenced previously provided testimony sharing that school nutrition professionals provide the foundation for meals at schools, with the potential to reach 50 million students nationwide. SNA strongly supports sound, evidence-based guidelines and the guidelines must be practical and framed such that students will choose to eat nutritious meals at school that in turn will influence their choices throughout their lives. SNA also asks that the DGAC remain aware of the operational and budgetary constraints. Read the [complete letter](#).

5.9.2020 USDA Approves \$1.2 Billion in Contracts for Farmers to Families Food Box Program

USDA approved \$1.2 billion in contracts to support American producers and communities in need through the [USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program](#). “This is a new, innovative approach to provide critical support to American farmers and families, and USDA moved as expeditiously as federal procurement rules allow to stand up the program and solicit offers,” said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Additional information on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, including webinars and an FAQs, is available on the AMS [website](#).

5.13.2020 SNA Advocates for Kitchen Infrastructure and Equipment During COVID-19

SNA joined 21 allied organizations in a letter to the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees to advocate for funding for school kitchen infrastructure and equipment. School nutrition departments are dedicated to serving meals to their communities during the pandemic, which will continue to result in many additional, unformidable costs to be incurred, which may not be reimbursed by USDA. These additional costs include personal protective equipment, storage, delivery, and distribution of meals. This letter urges Congress to include \$200 million in funding for school kitchen equipment grants in the next COVID-19 response bill. [Read the complete letter](#).

5.13.2020 USDA Announces Equipment Assistance Grants for SFAs

FNS announced that it’s awarding \$30 million in competitive [equipment assistance grants](#) to eligible School Food Authority’s (SFAs) that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This distribution of funds was provided through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020. State agencies will award subgrants to local educational agencies and schools to purchase the equipment needed to serve healthier meals, improve food safety and help support the establishment or expansion of the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

5.13.2020 Federal Register: School Food Purchase Study IV

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has published the [notice](#) “Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request-School Food Purchase Study IV.” This proposed collection invites the public and related agencies to provide comments regarding the data surrounding national estimates of food acquisitions for both food purchases and USDA Foods made by School Food Authorities (SFAs) that participate in school nutrition programs. All written comments must be received by July 13, 2020.

5.13.2020 School Meals Operations Study: Evaluation of the School-Based Child Nutrition Programs

FNS published the [notice](#) “Agency Information Collection Activities: School Meals Operations Study: Evaluation of the School-Based Child Nutrition Programs.” This collection is a revision of a currently approved collection for the School Meals Operations (SMO) to include supplemental administrative data regarding the CN COVID-19 waivers. All written comments must be received by July 13, 2020.

Questions or comments?

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5.15.2020 USDA Extends Four Nationwide Waivers for School Nutrition Programs

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the extension of four nationwide waivers: [Non-Congregate Feeding](#), [Parent Pickup](#), [Meal Pattern Waiver Extended](#) and [Meal Times](#). These waivers provide operators of child nutrition programs the flexibility and support needed to continue to feed children during the COVID-19 pandemic. All three waivers have been extended until August 31, 2020. Check out SNA's [Summary of USDA FNS Waivers and Guidance](#) for full details on waivers and extensions.

5.21.2020 Proposed Rule: Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

The USDA posted the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) [Final Rule](#) in the Federal Register. CFAP provides assistance to agricultural producers impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. This rule establishes provisions for direct payments to producers of eligible commodities to help offset sales losses and increased marketing costs.

5.21.2020 Federal Register: Final Rule on Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

USDA posted the [final rule](#) for the "Coronavirus Food Assistance Program." This final rule implements the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which will assist producers that have been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The CFAP will provide financial assistance to offset the losses and increased costs for agricultural producers and farmers. This rule establishes direct payments for producers of eligible commodities such as USDA Foods and specifies all eligibility requirements, payment calculations, and procedures to apply. This rule is currently in affect.

5.23.2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Reschedules Meeting and Extends Comment Period

The 2020 [Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee](#)'s (DGAC) webcast only meeting, initially scheduled for Monday, June 8, will now take place on Wednesday, June 17, at 11:00 AM EDT. The meeting will include updates on the Committee's draft conclusion statements, deliberations and decisions regarding their draft advisory report. In addition, the [public comment period](#) has also been extended until June 10, 2020.

5.26.2020 Information Collection: Micro-Grants for Food Security Program

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service posted [notice of intent](#) to collect information for the Micro-Grants for Food Security Program (MGFSP) in the Federal Register. As authorized in the Farm Bill, the MGFSP is intended to increase the quantity and quality of locally grown food in food insecure communities. The information collected is needed to certify that grant participants are complying with applicable program regulations. Comments on this information collection are due by July 27th, 2020.

Questions or comments?

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