Press Release

For Immediate Release
September 1, 2020

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DOE thanks USDA for meal waiver extensions

Flexibility will allow schools to provide free meals to all students

CONCORD- The New Hampshire Department of Education thanks the U.S. Department of Agriculture for extending waivers granting flexibility for school meal service programs which will allow schools to continue to provide meals to all students as funds allow through the end of the year. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is extending a suite of nationwide waivers for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) through the end of 2020, or until available funding runs out. This includes:

- Allowing SFSP and SSO meals to be served in all areas and at no cost;
- Permitting meals to be served outside of the typically-required group settings and meal times;
- Waiving meal pattern requirements as necessary; and
- Allowing parents and guardians to pick-up meals for their children.

Collectively, these flexibilities ensure meal options for children continue to be available so children can access meals under all circumstances. USDA is taking this unprecedented action to respond to the needs of its stakeholders, who have shared concerns about continuing to reach those in need without enlisting the help of traditional summer sites located throughout communities across the US. While there have been some well-meaning people asking USDA to fund this through the entire 2020-2021 school year, we are obligated to not spend more than is appropriated by Congress.

"These waivers will allow New Hampshire schools to provide nutritious meals to any student at no charge as funds allow, both in school and remotely," said Governor Chris Sununu. "As schools work to overcome the disruption of COVID-19, this flexibility has been an important tool for them."

The New Hampshire Department of Education will be holding webinars with local food service program coordinators over the next two weeks about the waivers and how USDA will be reimbursing them for meals through December 31, 2020, or until funds are expended, whichever comes first.

"From the beginning of this crisis, USDA has given our schools tremendous flexibility to provide meals to students," added Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut. "Working together at the federal, state, and local levels, we are all committed to the health and well-being of New Hampshire students."

For more information, visit https://www.fns.usda.gov/coronavirus

Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through December 2020

- Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility Waivers – EXTENSION 2
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option - EXTENSION 7
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option – EXTENSION 4
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children – EXTENSION 4
- Nationwide Waiver of Meal Service Time Restrictions in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option – EXTENSION
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option – EXTENSION
- Nationwide Waiver to Waive First Week Site Visits in the Summer Food Service Program – EXTENSION
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities in the Summer Food Service Program – EXTENSION

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