Federal Waivers to Serve School Meals During COVID-19 School Closures Extended to August 31

May 15, 2020

Tallahassee, Fla. – Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the extension of three nationwide waivers through **August 31, 2020**, giving child nutrition program operators including the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)** the flexibility to continue feeding children during COVID-19.

"Providing Florida's children with reliable access to healthy, nutritious meals is critical to ensuring that no child goes hungry," said **Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried**. "We thank the USDA for extending these waivers and helping us continue to provide schools with options to serve meals. During these difficult times, we're continuing to work in support of Florida's students and families."

Background: In March, FDACS was approved for a federal waiver (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2020-Press-Releases/Florida-Granted-Federal-Waivers-to-Serve-School-Meals-During-COVID-19-School-Closures) to provide flexibility for schools, childcare institutions, and community organizations to feed children during the current

institutions, and community organizations to feed children during the current COVID-19 school closures. On March 15, Commissioner Fried activated the department's Summer BreakSpot (https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/education/article241213466.html) and Seamless Summer Option programs. Since then, FDACS has approved approximately **1,600 Summer BreakSpot sites** statewide and has provided **over 3.5 million meals** to Florida students in accordance with CDC social distancing recommendations. On March 18, Commissioner Fried activated the 2-1-1 hotline (https://floridapolitics.com/archives/324061-nikki-fried-activates-hotline-to-find-meals-for-kids-during-school-closures) through which Floridians can call or text to find free children's meals near them.

Today's announcement extends three key flexibilities that allow current operations to continue serving meals without disruption throughout the summer. The following waivers are extended through August 31, 2020:

- **Non-Congregate Feeding:** Allows meals to be served to children outside of the normally required group setting to support social distancing.
- **Parent Pickup:** Allows parents and/or guardians to pick up meals and bring them home to their children.
- **Mealtimes:** Waiving requirements that meals be served at certain standard times to allow for grab-n-go options and allows for multiple days-worth of meals to be provided at once.

Summer BreakSpot Sites: Floridians can call 2-1-1, text "FLKIDSMEALS" to 211-211, or visit **SummerBreakSpot.FreshFromFlorida.com** (https://www.fdacs.govhttps://summerbreakspot.freshfromflorida.com/) to find free meals for children under 18 during the current COVID-19 school closures. Users should contact listed locations to confirm opening dates and times. For best results, users should enter their home address, and select their address from the drop-down results.

FDACS is the state agency that funds Florida's school lunch program, through $1.3 billion in federal funding. In the 2018-19 school year, Florida's school

$1.3 billion in federal funding. In the 2018-19 school year, Florida's schools served 286,734,316 school lunches, of which 245,782,422 were free or reduced lunches. These schools served 2,908,335 Florida students, of which 2,089,852 were students receiving free or reduced lunches.

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Press Releases

2022 Press Releases (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2022-Press-Releases)

2022 Press Releases (Spanish) (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2022-Press-Releases-Spanish)

2021 Press Releases (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2021-Press-Releases)

2020 Press Releases (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2020-Press-Releases)

2019 Press Releases (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2019-Press-Releases)

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