Department of Education seeks USDA meal waivers in response to COVID-19

Would allow for meal service at schools and child care centers

Press Release

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Contact the Press Office

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CONCORD – The New Hampshire Department of Education is seeking three waivers from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. The purpose of these waivers is to support schools and communities in providing meals to children in areas experiencing school disruptions in response to COVID-19. At this time, no New Hampshire schools have opted for long-term remote instruction. Should a school decide to shift to long-term remote instruction, the buildings would be closed, but students would continue their education remotely. Should the waivers be granted, schools could use their building to provide meals with limited interaction.

- The first waiver would allow for an alternative or grab and go meals service that would limit participants' interaction and proximity to other participants and therefore decrease the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
- The second waiver would allow school in areas not designated as high need to cover meals provided to students under the Emergency School Closure provision of the Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Options.
- The third waiver would allow sponsors to provide reimbursable meals pending availability of meal pattern components.

Should these waivers be granted, all meals would be free to students at all locations, and families would be able to bring meals home to reduce contact between participants. The program would be similar to the Summer Meal Service Program, which provided nutritious meals to New Hampshire families at more than 100 locations last summer. Local school officials would determine where and how meals would be distributed locally.

Schools considering long-term remote instruction who wish to continue meal service should contact Cheri White, Administrator of the Office of Nutrition Programs and Services at 603-271-3860 or cheri.white@doe.nh.gov.

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