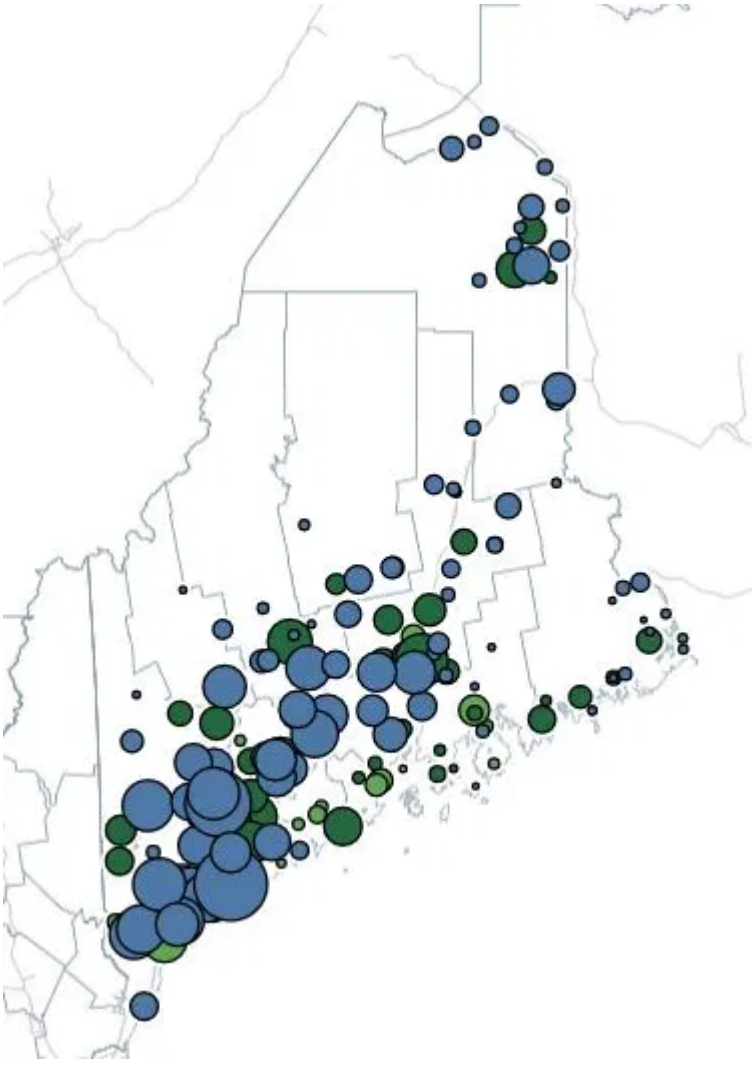
Maine DOE Newsroom

Maine Schools Providing Meals to Students During Extended Remote Learning; Interactive Map Now Available



Through a **waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture** (USDA), the Maine Department of Education is able to extend the USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) allowing school districts and community partners to provide meals to students during extended remote learning due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Through the SFSP, 160 district and community partners are preparing and providing meals and food for children. School districts and communities statewide are implementing many different methods to ensure every child (ages 0 – 18) in need of food is nourished during the current suspension of classroom-based instruction. These include approved locations for meal pick-up, utilizing bus routes to deliver meals, and providing baskets of food to families.

"Maine schools are going above and beyond to make sure that their students have access to food while schools are utilizing remote learning," said Maine Education Commissioner Pender Makin. "District and school leaders, teachers, and staff have collaboratively worked to meet the needs of students during this difficult and uncertain time, and we are so impressed with how quickly and efficiently it has all come together."

The Department's child nutrition team is processing SFSP applications on an ongoing basis. All school districts that are approved or in progress are serving meals. Many school districts that are ineligible (do not meet the 50% or more students receiving free or reduced lunch threshold) to participate in a SFSP have successfully partnered with regional school districts and community organizations to serve food to children. The interactive map will be updated daily. **The interactive map of schools providing meals can be viewed here.**

Districts interested in applying for the SFSP can do so by contacting the **Maine DOE's Child Nutrition Team.**

"It doesn't stop there. Many, if not most of our schools are distributing continued learning materials, educational packets, and other learning opportunities that keep students engaged while they are at home," added Makin.

The Maine DOE has been scheduling and hosting daily content and topic specific virtual meetings with educators all week to provide support and guidance regarding distance learning and school supports, and to help facilitate networking and resource sharing between educators. **Sessions are updated regularly on this webpage.**

For details, regarding which meal option(s) is/are available in your community, please reach out to your local school district.

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