

Frequently Asked Questions from Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsors Related to COVID-19

1. **Can Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funds be used to continue serving children after center or school closure through a home delivery, meal pick-up, or other method?**

Updated 3/21/20: USDA issued a waiver late in the day on March 20, 2020 which allows the use of non-congregate feeding in the CACFP during COVID-19, and waives the enrichment activity requirements in the CACFP At-Risk After School Meals Program. If the center would like to use this option to continue feeding their regularly enrolled children or students, please see [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding for Child and Adult Day Care During Closure due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#) for instructions on how to implement this option.

2. **Will CACFP provide assistance to centers for the days the center has to close?**

Updated 3/21/20: USDA issued a waiver late in the day on March 20, 2020 which allows the use of non-congregate feeding in the CACFP during COVID-19, and waives the enrichment activity requirements in the CACFP At-Risk After School Meals Program. If the center would like to use this option to continue feeding their regularly enrolled children or students, please see [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding for Child and Adult Day Care During Closure due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#) for instructions on how to implement this option.

No additional funds have been made available through the CACFP to support centers who are closed and who are not serving meals using the new non-congregate waiver.

3. If the at-risk afterschool program has to close, can we prepare suppers for students and families to take home under CACFP?

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Please note: At this time the CACFP may not be used to provide meals to other members of the child's household. CACFP funds may only be used to provide meals to enrolled children or students. If the center wants to provide additional meals, they must identify an additional source of funds to pay for these meals. If the household has additional children not enrolled, it is recommended that the household use an open summer meals site to receive meals for all of their children. Households may call 2-1-1, or contact their local public school to find out about open meal sites in their area.

4. If the childcare center is open to provide care to essential workforce personnel, can the center still provide meals and snacks to these children and claim for reimbursement under CACFP?

If the childcare center is still in operation and providing meals and snacks that meet meal pattern compliance to children enrolled, the center may claim and receive reimbursement for meals and snacks provided to these children. If the center has new children attending the center, the center must obtain an enrollment form and income eligibility form from the household prior to claiming meals and snacks for these children.

5. If CACFP funds cannot be used to continue meal service, what funding will be available and can CACFP sponsors access this funding? What types of programs will be accessing funding so we may direct food insecure families to these resources?

Updated 3/21/20: With the new nationwide waiver for CACFP, centers may continue meal service in the CACFP in a non-congregate setting. See [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding for Child and Adult Day Care During Closure due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#) for more information.

Households may also access an open summer meals site in their community to receive meals for children 18 years and under that reside in the household. Households may call 2-1-1, or contact their local public school to find out about open meal sites in their area.

6. What are we allowed to do with food already purchased for CACFP use but with school and center closure happening, we will not have children in the classroom to serve?

Food that has already been purchased for CACFP and will no longer be able to be used in the Program due to center closure may be donated to another Child Nutrition Program, a 501(c)(3) organization, or a local food shelf. Food may not be sent home with families.

7. If childcare, Head Start or other sites participating in CACFP are closed, can the children enrolled in these programs receive meals at their local school?

If the local school is participating as an open site in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), all children 18 years and under in the community can receive meals through these Programs. If the district is operating National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) or as a non-residential camp or closed-enrolled site in the SFSP/SSO, only children enrolled at that school and other children in their household are able to receive meals.

8. During school closures, will childcare centers be able to pick-up meals from a summer meals site and distribute to the children in the center?

Closed childcare centers may not pick-up meals from an open summer meals site to distribute to children enrolled in the center. Households can access an open summer meals site to pick-up the meals for any children 18 and younger in their household.

9. Could the childcare center apply to become a SFSP sponsor or a site under an existing SFSP sponsor?

CACFP sponsors that are in good standing can apply to become a SFSP sponsor or become a site under an existing SFSP sponsor. If the CACFP sponsor wanted to become a new SFSP sponsor, they would be required to apply with the State agency and have an approved application on file prior to providing meals to children and must follow the regulations set forth in [7 CFR 225](#).

10. In light of the COVID-19 outbreak is family style meal service still required in early learning programs?

Family style meal service is not a USDA requirement and the State agency does not require Sponsors to use this type of meal service. However, family style meal service may be required by other partnering organizations. Please check with applicable partners on these requirements.

In light of COVID-19 and to reduce the risk of transmission, you may consider changing the meal service style followed by providing meals and snacks in a pre-plated or unitized fashion. Pre-plated and unitized meals and snacks must provide all of the required meal pattern components in the minimum portion size, either on a plate or in an individually packaged unit (i.e. bagged lunch that is eaten on-site). Unlike family-style meal service, pre-plated or unitized meals must provide **all** components in the minimum portion size specified by the meal pattern at the same time and participants are not allowed to serve themselves.

11. Will there be leniency with meal pattern compliance during food shortages?

All meals and snacks served in the CACFP must meet meal pattern compliance in order to be claimed for reimbursement. USDA has not yet issued guidance for CACFP during COVID-19. If a Sponsor is experiencing temporary difficulty obtaining milk, on a case-by-case basis, the State agency may grant the meal service of breakfast, lunch, or suppers without milk during an emergency period. If a Sponsor is unable to obtain a supply of milk on a continuing basis, on a case-by-case basis, the State agency may approve service of meals without milk, provided an equivalent amount of canned, whole dry or fat-free dry milk is used in the preparation of the component (7 CFR 226.20(e)).

AOE has submitted a waiver to USDA on allowing flexibility with meal pattern compliance during food shortages on March 19, 2020. If USDA grants this waiver request, AOE will notify Sponsors of this flexibility via the CACFP listserv. Sponsors that may experience difficulty with meeting meal pattern requirements during food shortages in emergency situations, may request the use of this waiver on a case-by-case basis.

12. Are there flexibilities with the monitoring requirements for CACFP?

At this time, all CACFP regulations remain in effect. The Vermont Agency of Education does not have the authority to waive the monitoring requirements. However, the AOE has submitted a waiver request to USDA on March 16, 2020 to allow flexibility with these requirements. If USDA grants this waiver request, AOE will notify Sponsors of this flexibility via the CACFP listserv. Sponsors who would like to use this waiver, would be required to submit a waiver request and have it approved by the State agency.