

Boosting School Meal Participation – Tips from Districts

How many boxes can you check?

Pick-up Pizzaz

- Allow parents/guardians to pick up meals for children
- Expand service hours to accommodate working parents and distance learning schedules
 - Consider a parent survey to inform options for pick up days and times
- Partner with the school's transportation department to offer home-delivered meals by school bus or other district or school's authorized vehicle
- More ideas:
 - Invite local heroes to meal distribution sites (e.g. police, fire, EMT, elected representatives or other public figures)
 - Promote local produce with "Meet the Farmer" events at meal pick up
 - Organize theme days, prepare special meals using locally sourced produce and/or meats, and "Pop Up" events (e.g., Curbside BBQ, Taco Tuesday, Meatless Mondays)

Multiply Your Meals

- Serving breakfast and lunch will provide the highest SSO/SFSP reimbursement
 - Increase breakfast participation through [Breakfast After the Bell](#) (for onsite learners)
 - Weekend & holiday meals are [permitted](#) in CACFP, SFSP and SSO, with state agency approval
- Serve [NSLP Afterschool Snack](#) in conjunction with SFSP or SSO, with state agency approval
- Become a [CACFP At-Risk Afterschool](#) site to add supper and/or snack service, weekend meals
 - Enrichment must be offered and can take place at home. Ideas:
 - Distribute enrichment in to-go bags
 - Post enrichment activities to your website
 - Review No Kid Hungry's [enrichment activity list](#) for ideas!
- Contract to vend to community partners (childcares, private schools, homeless shelters, senior centers, etc.)

Appealing Eats

- Utilize the USDA DoD [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#)
- Utilize USDA [Foods in Schools](#) (commodities) program in scratch recipes
- Reduce packaging by providing ["bulk" foods](#)
- Change it up – See Resource section (below) for menu planning guides
- Keep it cool – pack frozen juice, water or fruit cups in grab & go meal packs

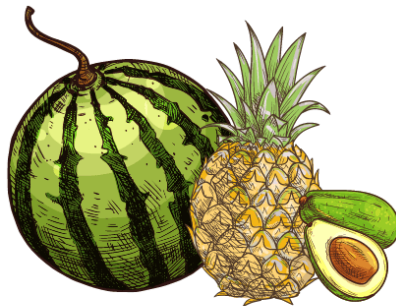
Communicate!

- Remind families about free meal pick up times and sites
 - Local newspapers -- Social media – Local radio PSA – Flyers posted at community locations – Message in food bank distributions – Telephone/text families – Signage at schools
- Include messages to students from school nutrition service staff in meal package
 - "We miss you!" (Include links to district's social media channels)
 - Provide nutrition education in the meal kit, coloring and activity sheets, Harvest of the Month, recipe cards for using foods at home, etc. (Check the Resource section)

- Check out SNA's [Marketing and PR Resources](#)
- New!** [School Meal Marketing Toolkit](#) (No Kid Hungry, October 2020)

GREAT NEWS!
¡BUENAS NOTICIAS!

free meals
comidas gratis



now available for all
children 18 & under

ahora disponible para todos
los niños menores de 18 años



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Sample graphic to promote school meals, courtesy of LunchAssist

Additional Supports

- Building partnerships and community
 - Partner with local food bank/pantry that can provide additional food
 - Partner with local organizations that can provide essential needs or little extras that families can pick up at the same time as meal distribution
 - Pet food – Diapers – Books – Toothbrushes – Craft supplies
 - Form or join a co-operative of districts for joint purchasing & community-building
 - Join the monthly [Community of Practice on Emergency Meal Service](#) for inspiration, support and guidance
 - Check out school nutrition social media groups such as “[School Meals That Rock](#)” and “[School Nutrition Professionals](#)”
 - Connect with your local Cooperative Extension for nutrition education resources
- Funding
 - Apply for [USDA Equipment Assistance Grant](#)
 - Apply for state and local disaster funding where available
 - Seek outside funding to supplement budget, such as donations or grants

Where Are We on Waivers?

To date, 70 waivers have been issued. Districts report that navigating changes in waivers has been challenging.

On 10/1/20 Congress authorized and appropriated funds for:

- ✓ School nutrition waivers through 9/30/21
 - Look for USDA and state agency extension announcements and guidance
- ✓ Pandemic-EBT program through 9/30/21
 - New: Adds Pandemic-EBT benefits for eligible children in childcare programs

Refer to [USDA Memo SP01-2021,CACFP 01-2021, SFSP 01-2021](#), “Questions and Answers” for details.

Check your State agency requirements for waiver approval, implementation and program integrity requirements.

Nationwide waivers in effect now through 6/30/2021 allow:

- ⇒ SSO and SFSP operations
 - In lieu of NSLP/SBP, during distance, hybrid, or in-person learning
 - You can use a tally sheet or other method of meal counting and may claim all meals as free, but you do not need to track eligibility or where child attends school
- ⇒ Area Eligibility for all SFSP/SSO & CACFP At-risk operations
- ⇒ CACFP At-risk Supper/Snack and NSLP Afterschool Snacks
 - When offered concurrent with SFSP/SSO
- ⇒ Offer vs. Serve Flexibilities
- ⇒ Non-congregate Feeding in SFSP/SSO
- ⇒ Meal Service Time Flexibility in SFSP/SSO
- ⇒ Parents and Guardians Pick Up Meals for Children, and, Home Delivery, for SFSP/SSO
- ⇒ Meal Pattern Flexibility for SFSP, SSO, NSLP, SBP and CACFP
- ⇒ Food Service Management Contract Duration in the NSLP and SFSP

Awaiting information on:

- ⇒ Verification requirements
- ⇒ Administrative Review

See the No Kid Hungry - Share Our Strength [Summary of Waivers and Memos](#) for updates, details and hyperlinks.

Overview of Federal School Meal Programs

School Year Meal Program Options:

- The National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP) provide meals for all children enrolled in participating schools. Children may be eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals. All children attending schools that participate in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 receive breakfast and lunch at no cost.
- The CACFP At-risk Afterschool Program and NSLP Afterschool Snack Program may be used to provide snack/supper at eligible schools.
- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) provides an extra serving of fruit or vegetable to every child in participating schools.

Summer Meal Program Options:

- The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) provide meals and snacks for children at eligible sites.

Resource Re-cap

Back-to-School Planning Tools

- Center for Ecoliteracy & LunchAssist [COVID 19 Menu Planning Strategies](#)
- Center for Ecoliteracy [COVID-19 Return to School Planning Resources](#)
- LunchAssist [Reopening Checklist](#)
- LunchAssist [Waiver Toolkit](#)

Resources for Food Service

- Chef Ann Foundation [Recipes and Menus](#)
- LunchAssist [Sample 5-Day Meal Kit with Bulk Foods](#)
- LunchAssist [Bulk Produce Calculator](#)
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation/National Drinking Water Alliance [Increasing Drinking Water Availability in Schools](#) During COVID-19 and Beyond
- Farm to School Network [Local Food in COVID-19 Response and Recovery](#)

Resources for Food and Nutrition Education

- Action For Healthy Kids [COVID-19 Resources: Physical Activity Nutrition and More](#)
- Center for Ecoliteracy [Abundant California](#) and [Nourishing Students](#) resources
- The Edible Schoolyard Project [Edible Education for the Home Classroom](#)
- LunchAssist [Healthy Plate Coloring Sheet](#) and [Family Mealtime Recipes](#)
- FoodCorps [Video Lessons](#) and [COVID-19 Resources](#)

More Resources for School Nutrition Programs during COVID-19

- [Afterschool Nutrition Programs](#): learn more in this new report. (FRAC. October 2020)
- [Back-to-School Meal Service Toolkit](#) Meal service options. (No Kid Hungry. July 23, 2020)
- [Calling all Districts! USDA Summer Meals Can Keep Kids Healthy](#). Best practices for SSO/SFSP meal service. (Nutrition Policy Institute & Stanford. Updated June 20, 2020)
- [Considerations for Schools](#) includes general recommendations for COVID-19 mitigation strategies when schools are open. (Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Ongoing updates)
- [Resources for Schools to Support Healthy Menu Development](#). A collection of healthy school meal cookbooks and recipes. (Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). June 2020)
- [School Nutrition Association's COVID-19 Resource Page](#): Clearinghouse of school nutrition resources, including policy updates, COVID-19 back to school resources, SNA Back to School webinars (free to all), and industry and allied partner resources.
- [School Reopening Plans](#): FRAC Tracker. An overview of available state plans for reopening schools in the fall with a focus on meal services. (Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). Ongoing updates)

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