



United States Department of Agriculture

## **CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM**

### **Waiver for the National School Lunch Program Verification Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements**

**1. State agency submitting waiver request and responsible State agency staff contact information:**

Mississippi Department of Education  
500 Greymont Avenue, Suite F  
Jackson, MS 39202  
Scott Clements, Director  
Office of Child Nutrition  
[sclements@mdek12.org](mailto:sclements@mdek12.org)  
601-576-5000

**2. Region:**

Southeast Region

**3. Eligible service providers participating in waiver and affirmation that they are in good standing:**

Any Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) approved Program operator who meets all the following requirements:

- In good standing; and
- Approved by MDE to operate a Child Nutrition Program

**4. Description of the challenge the State agency is seeking to solve, the goal of the waiver to improve services under the Program, and the expected outcomes if the waiver is granted. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(iii) and 12(l)(2)(A)(iv) of the NSLA]:**

As Program operators continue to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to reduce administrative burden possible. Program operators are continuing to face extensive supply chain and staffing challenges as they work to transition back to normal operations. Our State Agency desires to provide administrative and operational flexibility, where possible, while maintaining program integrity in providing nutritious meals during COVID-19 response.

MDE is planning to provide extensive technical assistance and training in the coming months on several regulatory and operational aspects of the meal programs. A relief of these regulatory requirements will help the State Agency to better meet the needs of our Program operators.

**Challenges Without the Waiver**

- Program operators continue to face uncertainty in how to best streamline operations while continuing to respond to pandemic related challenges, especially supply chain disruptions and staffing shortages. Without these waivers, Program operators will spend an extraordinary amount of time completing activities related to regulatory burden rather than focusing on properly servicing students and children.
- Decreased Program participation as the public health emergency continues and COVID-19 cases continue to cycle through areas of the state as new variants arise.
- Food insecurity will continue to be an issue for students and children as the price of consumer goods has increased and families will have to make difficult decisions on how to utilize their financial resources.

**Goal of Waiver to Improve Services**

- The goal is to decrease administrative pressures for Program operators for this next transitional year. Program operators are working to transition back to normal operations, but the supply chain and labor shortages continue to plague their efforts. These waivers will allow for additional flexibility when needed during this next school year.
- By relieving administrative pressure, Program operators can focus on communicating changes to families, training staff to accept and approve meal applications, and navigate the ongoing COVID-19 related challenges.

- Continued flexibility of meal service options; non-congregate meal service, parent/guardian meal pickup, meal service times, and offer versus serve provide Program operators the flexibility needed to continue to provide meals in response to COVID-19.
- Maintain Program operator and site program participation and minimize hunger in local communities.
- Allow MDE staff to focus on targeted technical assistance and training for Program operators as they navigate all the supply chain and labor shortage challenges related to the pandemic.

#### **Expected Outcome of Waiver**

- Program operators will have an opportunity to transition back to normal operations over a longer period which helps to assure success.
- Program operators will implement flexibilities, as needed, to minimize the negative impact on program participation that are still caused by COVID-19 challenges.
- Simplify Program administration for the Program operators, so they can focus on the highest priority needs of their program/sites.

#### **5. Specific Program requirements to be waived (include statutory and regulatory citations). [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(i) of the NSLA]:**

Please see attached checklist.

#### **6. Detailed description of alternative procedures and anticipated impact on Program operations, including technology, State systems, and monitoring:**

If approved, there are no significant impacts on technology, state systems, or monitoring.

#### **7. Description of any steps the State has taken to address regulatory barriers at the State level. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:**

There are currently no State level regulatory barriers related to this specific issue.

#### **8. Anticipated challenges State or eligible service providers may face with the waiver implementation:**

MDE does not anticipate that the establishment of this statewide waiver will pose any challenges at the State or Program operator level.

#### **9. Description of how the waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government. If there are anticipated increases, confirm that the costs will be paid from non-Federal funds. [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(iii) of the NSLA]:**

The waiver will not increase the overall cost of the program to the Federal Government.

#### **10. Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:**

The anticipated statewide implementation start date is upon approval from USDA and is to remain in effect through dates identified on the attached checklist.

#### **11. Proposed monitoring and review procedures:**

Monitoring of Program operators' performance under the requested waivers will follow administrative review regulations for each program. This practice will be consistent with 7 CFR 210, 215, 220, 225, and 226 review requirements.

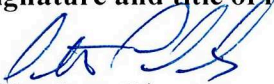
**12. Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNS):**

No later than October 30, 2023, MDE will report to USDA the number of Program operators that used this waiver.

**13. Link to or a copy of the public notice informing the public about the proposed waiver [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:**

[www.mdek12.org/OCN](http://www.mdek12.org/OCN)

**14. Signature and title of requesting official:**



Title: State Director

Requesting official's email address for transmission of response: [sclements@mdek12.org](mailto:sclements@mdek12.org)

**TO BE COMPLETED BY FNS REGIONAL OFFICE:**

*FNS Regional Offices are requested to ensure the questions have been adequately addressed by the State agency and formulate an opinion and justification for a response to the waiver request based on their knowledge, experience, and work with the State.*

**Date request was received at Regional Office:**

- ☐ Check this box to confirm that the State agency has provided public notice in accordance with Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA
- ☐ Regional Office Analysis and Recommendation



## Summer 2022 and SY 2022-23 Child Nutrition Programs 12(l) Waiver Checklist

**State Agency:** Mississippi Department of Education

**Date:** May 26, 2022

*\*Longest effective dates are in italics; actual effective dates are contingent on date of approval*

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### Seamless Summer Option (SSO):

*The waivers in this section apply to SSO for summer 2022. However, FNS expects that flexibilities under the waivers in this section will only be implemented by Program operators when congregate meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- ☒ Waiver 1: Non-Congregate Meal Service during Summer 2022 [42 U.S.C. 1753(b)(1)(A) and 42 U.S.C. 1761(a)(1)(D)] (*May 1, 2022-September 30, 2022*)
- ☒ Waiver 2: Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup during Summer 2022 [42 U.S.C. 1761(f)(3), 7 CFR 210.10(a), 7 CFR 220.2, and 7 CFR 220.8(a)] (*May 1, 2022-September 30, 2022*)

### National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP):

*The following waivers are intended to provide needed flexibility to support school food authorities (SFAs). FNS expects that flexibilities under the waivers in this section will only be implemented by Program operators when congregate meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- ☒ Waiver 3: Non-Congregate Meal Service [42 U.S.C. 1753(b)(1)(A) and 42 U.S.C. 1773(b)(1)(A)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 4: Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup [7 CFR 210.10(a), 220.2 (Breakfast), and 220.8(a)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 5: Meal Service Times [7 CFR 210.10(l) and 220.8(l)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 6: Offer Versus Serve [42 U.S.C. 1758(a)(3) and 7 CFR 210.10(e)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)

### School Year Administration (NSLP/SBP/SFSP):

*The following waivers allow State and local Program operators to overcome administrative challenges resulting from COVID-19 and to appropriately allocate their limited staffing resources to ensure safe service of meals to children as they respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. FNS expects Program operators will only use these flexibilities for the duration and extent that they are needed.*

- ☐ Waiver 7: Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment [42 U.S.C. 1758b(b) and 7 CFR 210.31(e)(2)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 8: Food Service Management Company (FSMC) contract duration [7 CFR 210.16(d), 7 CFR 225.6(h)(7)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 9: Administrative Review Onsite Requirements [7 CFR 210.18] (*End of PHE\*\* – June 30, 2023*)

- Onsite Requirement for SFA Onsite Reviews by February 1 [7 CFR 210.8(a)(1) and 220.11(d)(1)] (*End of PHE\*\* – June 30, 2023*)
- Onsite Requirement for Afterschool Care Reviews [7 CFR 210.9(c)(7)] (*End of PHE\*\* – June 30, 2023*)
- Onsite Requirement for Periodic Onsite Visits when Utilizing an FSMC [7 CFR 210.16(a)(3) and 220.7(d)(1)(iii)] (*End of PHE\*\* – June 30, 2023*)

#### **Reporting Requirements (NSLP):**

*The following waivers allow State and local Program operators to appropriately allocate their limited staffing resources to meal service to best ensure safe service of meals to children as they respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- ☒ Waiver 10: FNS-874 Second (Independent) Review of Applications [42 U.S.C. 1769(c)(b)(6)(E)(iii) and 7 CFR 245.11(b)(2)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 11: FNS-640 Administrative Review Data Report [42 U.S.C. 1769c(b)(1)(c)(iv) and 7 CFR 210.18(n)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)

#### **Special Milk Program (SMP):**

*The following waivers are intended to provide needed flexibility to support schools and institutions in continuing to offer milk. FNS expects that flexibilities under the waivers in this section will only be implemented by Program operators when congregate milk service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- ☒ Waiver 12: Non-Congregate Milk Service [42 U.S.C. 1772(a)(1) and 7 CFR 215.1] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 13: Parent/Guardian Milk Pickup [42 U.S.C. 1772(a)(7), 7 CFR 215.7(d)(2)(i), and 7 CFR 215.13a(a)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)

#### **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP):**

*The following waivers are intended to provide needed flexibility to support schools in continuing to participate in the FFVP. FNS expects that flexibilities under the waivers in this section will only be implemented by Program operators when the FFVP elementary school is closed for in-person instruction and congregate meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- ☒ Waiver 14: Parent/Guardian FFVP Pickup [42 U.S.C. 1769a] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 15: Alternate Site [42 U.S.C. 1769a(a)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)

#### **Unanticipated School Closures:**

*The waivers in this section apply to SFSP and SSO during unanticipated school closures. FNS expects that flexibilities under these waivers will only be implemented by Program operators when congregate meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- ☒ Waiver 16: Non-Congregate Meal Service during Unanticipated School Closures in SY 2022-23 [42 U.S.C. 1753(b)(1)(A), 42 U.S.C. 1761(a)(1)(D), and 7 CFR 225.6(e)(15)] (*October 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023*)



- ☒ Waiver 17: Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-Up during Unanticipated School Closures (SFSP/SSO) [42 U.S.C. 1761(f)(3) and 7 CFR 210.10(a), 220.2 (Breakfast), 220.8(a), 225.2 (Meals), and 225.9(d)(7)] (*October 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 18: Meal Service Times for Unanticipated School Closures in SY 2022-23 [7 CFR 225.16(c)(1) and 225.16(c)(2)] (*October 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 19: Meals at School Sites for Unanticipated School Closures in SY 2022-23 [42 U.S.C. 1761(c)(1) and 7 CFR 225.6(d)(1)(iv)] (*October 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023*)

**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):**

*The waivers in this section apply to CACFP. FNS expects that operational flexibilities under these waivers will only be implemented by Program operators when congregation is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. FNS expects that monitoring flexibilities will only be implemented when pandemic conditions interfere with the ability of State agencies and sponsoring organizations to conduct reviews onsite.*

- ☒ Waiver 20: Non-Congregate Meal Service [42 U.S.C 1753(b)(1)(A) and 7 CFR 226.19(b)(6)(iii)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 21: Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-Up [7 CFR 226.2 (Meals)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 22: Meal Service Times [7 CFR 226.20(k)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 23: State Agency Onsite Monitoring Visits [7 CFR 226.6(b)(1) and 226.6(m)(6)] (*End of PHE\*\* – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 24: Sponsoring Organization Onsite Monitoring Visits [7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii)] (*End of PHE\*\* – June 30, 2023*)

**Additional Flexibilities (NSLP/SBP):**

The following waivers provide needed flexibility and allow State and local Program operators to overcome challenges resulting from COVID-19. FNS expects Program operators will only use these flexibilities for the duration and extent that they are needed.

- ☒ Waiver 25: Paid Lunch Equity [42 U.S.C. 1760(p)(2) and 7 CFR 210.14(e)] (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*)
- ☒ Waiver 26: Use of Prior Year Eligibility Determinations for School Year 2022-2023 Carryover [42 U.S.C. 1758(b)(C) and 7 CFR 245.6(c)(2)] (*July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023*)

\*\* Current nationwide waivers of onsite monitoring for NSLP, SBP, and CACFP remain in effect until 30 days after the end of the Public Health Emergency (PHE). The end of the PHE will be declared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.