

Good morning SFSAs,

We hope that you are all safe and did not receive damage from the violent storms and tornados around the state this weekend. Please report any site closures or damaged sites to your Program Specialist. Please contact Donna Stubbs if you have USDA Foods losses from damage or power outages: DStubbs@mdek12.org Our team is standing by to provide assistance as needed.

Child Nutrition meals are considered an essential business and the Office of Child Nutrition is here to support you and to aid you in navigating any barriers that may arise. To assist, this email provides an overview of newly available waivers from USDA. All forms and instructions have been posted on our website: <https://www.mdek12.org/OCN>. Please follow the directions carefully, as each of these **may affect your reimbursement**.

Area Eligibility Waiver

Currently some sites under 50% F/R are operating through an exception provided in previous USDA guidance. This waiver formalizes eligibility for these sites and provides for a simplification of requirements. The new procedure requires a request from the SFA, including a justification, and then approval by OCN. **The eligibility waiver is required for all sites under 50%, including any that have closed.**

Note: There are different requirements for sites between 40-49% eligibility and sites under 40% eligibility.

Meal Pattern Flexibility (exceptional circumstances)

This form should only be completed if your district/organization is experiencing difficulty procuring and serving one or more components per meal pattern requirements. **OCN approval is required before any substitutions may occur.** If approved, your organization must maintain records related to the basis for the request and the substitutions made. At this time, OCN is not aware of any supply chain disruptions that would warrant a waiver.

Note: Licensed Child Care Centers are subject to Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) regulations as well as USDA regulations. Please refer to the instructions for more information.

Parent Pick-up of Meals

USDA recognizes that in this public health emergency, continuing to require children to come to the meal site to pick up meals may not be practical and in keeping with the goal of providing meals while also taking appropriate safety measures. As such, parents may be allowed to pick up meals without children present **upon OCN approval of the District/organization plan for distributing meals.**

Each district/organization must provide a description of their system and how it will ensure that:

- 1) Meals are only distributed to parents or guardians of eligible children
- 2) Duplicate meals are not distributed to any child.

In consultation with USDA, this will require some type of roster system with the names of parents(s)/guardian(s) and the associated eligible children. To assist, OCN has provided a sample Parent Pick Up Waiver Form.

Each of the forms and applications mentioned above are posted on the Child Nutrition website:
<https://www.mdek12.org/OCN>

Please contact OCN for additional information or support. Again, please forward questions to Charles Crawford ccrawford@mdek12.org so that we may respond as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Thanks for all you do and stay safe!

Scott

Scott Clements, **State Director**
Office of Child Nutrition and Healthy Schools