

Good evening SFSAs,

We have received a number of questions and even a few waiver requests for utilizing the USDA Parent Pick Up waiver for meals. To assist, this email will address common questions and provides guidance on developing a plan that meets the USDA requirements. Further, a Sample Plan is available on the OCN website that aligns with the guidance below. As a reminder, use of **the Parent Pick Up waiver is optional**. The system described below is only required when children are not present. **The Parent Pick Up Form is only required for families choosing not to bring children to the site.**

In preparation for implementation of the USDA Parent Pick Up waiver, OCN researched numerous other state and local plans, seeking to incorporate the best practices from around the nation. We found a patchwork of systems and procedures, none of which offered the efficiency and ease of implementation we thought necessary to make use of the waiver practical. As such, we have developed guidance and a Sample Plan that districts/organizations may adopt. Due to our research, multiple discussions with USDA and other states, and some creative thinking, we believe the OCN Sample Plan provides for ease of use and speed of meal delivery while meeting USDA requirements. The Sample Plan is available on the OCN website.

It is up to each District/organization to develop their own plan. You may implement the Sample Plan (procedures described below), use the sample plan as a base and modify it as needed, or propose a district specific plan. Please remember, **OCN approval of the District/organization plan for distributing meals is required before Parent Pick Up of meals is utilized.**

Per our previous announcement, after consultation with USDA, some type of roster system with the names of parents(s)/guardian(s) and the associated eligible children is required. However, OCN has developed a greatly simplified roster system and supporting documents to assist. **If implementing the streamlined system, this does not require lists of children to be checked during the meal service.** Please see below for more information on the streamlined roster system.

For approval of a waiver application, there are two main requirements that must be met:

- 1) Meals are only distributed to parents or guardians of eligible children (Validation/Accountability)
- 2) Duplicate meals are not distributed to any child (Rosters/Meal Distribution)

Validation

A sample Parent Pick-Up Form is available on the OCN website that schools may modify and provide to parents to apply for Parent Pick Up of meals. At the bottom of this form is a section for "District/Organization Use Only". **The "Sponsor Signature" indicates that the authorized employee has validated the information provided by the parent.**

Validation methods:

- **If children of the parent/guardian are present:**
 - The school may conduct a visual check/validation of the children in the car and make an approval from that observation

Tip: Visual verification is the simplest and quickest method for validating eligible children. We encourage you to employ this method whenever possible.

- **If children are not present, but enrolled in the district, the number of eligible children must validated.**
 - Validation may be made from the Eligibility software package

Tip: Families with enrolled students may have other children who are not enrolled the district, such as pre-k children. Other methods of validation, examples listed below may be used for these children.

- **If children are not present, and not enrolled in the district,** documentation of eligible children must be provided for validation, examples:
 - Current K-12 student ID
 - Recent K-12 report card
 - Copy of birth certificate
 - SNAP benefit letter
 - Headstart Enrollment Form
 - MSDH Child Care Certificate
 - WIC approval letter

When the form is validated, a roster number will be assigned to that Parent Form. This field is at the bottom of the form in the “District/Organization Use Only” section. We recommend numbering the forms sequentially, beginning at 1, as there is only one category, free.

Tip: The District/Organization does not need to maintain copies of the documents used for validation. A visual inspection and the completed Sponsor Signature serve as verification that either children were observed or documentation was reviewed.

Upon validation, the family will receive a completed Dashboard Sign. [A sample Dashboard Sign is available on the OCN website.](#) The Dashboard Sign will have the Roster Number and number of students approved. Use of the Dashboard sign should be quicker than going to the car, counting children, and then serving meals.

Tip: If not using the OCN provided Dashboard Sign, for privacy reasons, we encourage the use of a number system rather than a form with children’s’ names listed as it will be readily viewable on the dash.

Rosters

The district will maintain the approved forms and create a roster that contains the Roster number, name(s) of parent/guardian(s), and names of students. Forms will be sent to the Central Office daily to be added to the roster. **The roster will be maintained at the Central office and does not need to be used at the individual sites.** The Roster will prevent adults from applying for Parent Pick up at multiple sites and receiving multiple Dashboard Signs. This will assist in meeting the requirement to prevent distribution of duplicate meals.

Distributing Meals

When a car with a Dashboard Sign arrives:

- On the daily meal count form, the CN employee marks the number of meals that are indicated by the Number of Children on the Dashboard Sign.
- CN employee provides the meals and the transaction is complete.

Tip: Many vehicles have trunks or hatchbacks that may be opened remotely by the driver. CN staff may place meals in the trunk to avoid direct contact, reduce exposure, and maintain social distancing.

With the traditional SFSP, numbers or other identifiers are not required, but staff are expected to prevent multiple meals being served to any participant. For Unanticipated School Closures, staff should report to their supervisor if they believe duplicate meals are being served. Possible reasons to suspect this may include seeing the same Roster Number more than once in a day, seeing the same adult picking up meals multiple times, etc. We suggest staff report any suspected instances to a supervisor to resolve and do not deny meals to a family.

We hope that this guidance will assist those seeking to implement the Parent Pick-Up waiver. If you have questions, please direct them to Charles Crawford: ccrawford@mdek12.org

Stay safe!
Scott

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