

Nutrition Program Updates

3.18.20

COVID-19 Response Efforts

As the COVID-19 response efforts continue to unfold, the department will provide additional updates related to nutrition programs, including updated available flexibilities. The information below reflects key program requirements with new options to ensure students may continue to receive these essential services.

1. **Spring Break Meal Service Now Permitted:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released guidance documents now permitting school food authorities (SFAs) to provide meal services to students through scheduled spring breaks that were cancelled or postponed due to the unforeseen public health emergency. Programs that begin operations under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) may offer meal services through their spring break periods. (USDA Guidance document available [here](#))
2. **Multiple Meals (Same Type) Served at Once:** Under the current circumstances and operating SSO programs for unexpected closures, the department may permit SFAs to serve multiple of the same meal type to students at one time. This would allow for up to a week's worth of breakfast, for example, to be provided at a single delivery service. Nutrition programs should consider the shelf-stable status of planned meals when considering this option. (USDA Guidance document available [here](#))
3. **Lunch Meal Time Exemptions:** The department also has the authority to exempt SFAs from lunch meal time requirements, generally required to fall between 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, upon request from the SFA. *Through this unexpected closure, the SSO site application submitted in TMAC with the planned lunch meal times will serve as a request and approval for this exemption all in one.* SFAs will not need to take separate action to request this exemption, apart from entering the planned meal times into the SSO applications. **This exemption will permit SFAs to serve breakfast and lunch simultaneously.** (Citation: 7 CFR 210.10(i))

The combination of flexibilities afforded by item 2 and 3 above means that districts may provide both breakfast and lunch meals for up to an entire week at one delivery time.

All nutrition directors are receiving targeted support and guidance on implementing these options from the School Nutrition team, including regionally based nutrition consultants. If school nutrition directors have specific questions, please contact respective regional consultants.

Additional Resource:

The department is partnering with Hoonuit to make available a site finder for families on where the closest meal services will be available to them. While USDA also facilitates a site finder that is updated weekly, this additional resource will be updated daily, and populated based on site addresses loaded into TMAC for each SSO application (the department will not upload home addresses if home delivery is the being implemented). As soon as this site is available with Tennessee-specific data, the department will share out the resource to districts and the public.

If you have questions, please contact the School Nutrition hotline at 800-354-3663, or Sandy Dawes, State Director of School Nutrition at Sandy.Dawes@tn.gov.