

Bulk Packaged Food for Multiple Meals

COVID-19 Waiver Submission and Approval Required before Use the Bulk Packaged Food Method Is Allowed

Bulk packaged food distribution of food items/components (bulk packaged food) is a COVID-19 flexibility allowed under the USDA nationwide waivers for non-congregate feeding, meal service times, and no child present (parent pick up), if applicable.

What Is Bulk Packaged Food Distribution?

Bulk packaged food distribution is a strategy for packaging multiple meals so that like foods are stored together, yet the food items are easily assembled into a meal and require no more than warming to be eaten. Bulk packaged food items are not pre-plated, unitized meals.

- ✓ Bulk packaged food for multiple meals is not the same as multiple meals served at one time.
- ✓ Bulk packaged foods are not provided in the form of unitized meals—a complete reimbursable meal in one package. Instead, like food items/components are provided in a package or bag and will be served in two or more meals or snacks.
- ✓ Bulk packaged foods are also ready to be apportioned and eaten immediately.

Implementation of Bulk Packaged Food Distribution

. In addition, to implement a bulk packaged food distribution method, the CE must also ensure that the CE is able to meet the following requirements:

Planning—Successful implementation relies on the CE’s ability to proactively prepare and develop a written plan for distribution that will guide the efforts of staff as they implement this strategy. CEs must follow the guidance TDA provides and the Texas Food Establishment Rules in the developing planning documents.

- ✓ TDA’s guidance is located at www.SquareMeals.org/FandNResources/CoronavirusUpdateforContractingEntities.aspx
- ✓ Texas Food Establish Rules are at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/foodestablishments/laws-rules.aspx>

Written Information to Include with Bulk Packaged Foods—CEs must provide specific written information in each package. The household will use this information to correctly assemble each reimbursable meal.

- ✓ The packaged items are distributed with a menu for each meal with serving portion sizes.
- ✓ Labeled packages include a list of the contents for each package, described in a manner that allows the household to know what food item goes with each meal.
- ✓ Each document includes the nondiscrimination statement.
- ✓ For package, there is a description of how to store foods until it is for the meal to be served, including, but not limited to, the number of days the food can be stored safely.
- ✓ For applicable food items, there is a list of allergens including, but not limited to, common allergens and any allergens known for the household members.
- ✓ Any food item provided that is not a component contributing to a reimbursable meal must be clearly labeled as not part of a menued meal.

Preparation for the Meals Included in the Package—CEs must ensure to apply the following guidance in preparing food items for each meal.

- ✓ All food items must be fully cooked or pre-cooked, i.e., safe to eat with no preparation. However, some food items will taste better if warmed. The CE may provide directions for warming. Warming cannot include adding boiling water to a food item to prepare the food item for eating.
- ✓ All food items that require chopping are cut prior to packaging.
- ✓ Participants receiving meals cannot be asked to convert raw and inedible ingredients by baking, frying, boiling, roasting, chopping, or mixing.
- ✓ Raw uncooked proteins, such as eggs, raw chicken, and frozen fish fillets, are not creditable food components of a reimbursable meal.