

Child Nutrition Program Meal Service During Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Best Practices for Parent Pick-Up of Meals and Snacks

Although many schools and child and adult care sites have resumed serving meals on-site during School Year (SY) 2021-2022, meal service flexibilities are still available via nationwide waivers during the public health emergency. State agencies may opt into these waivers to allow program operators to provide meals for pick-up by parents and guardians (i.e., parent pick-up). In States that opt in, parent pick-up is allowed for schools and sites operating the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (NSLP and SBP), the NSLP Seamless Summer Option (SSO), and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This flexibility is also allowed for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), but only during operations in response to unanticipated school closures. Additionally, States may submit individual waivers to FNS requesting permission to allow parent pick-up under the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). Although these flexibilities are available through June 30, 2022, they should only be used for the duration and extent that they are needed.



fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/cn-2021-22-waivers-and-flexibilities

Questions To Consider

- Would another method of meal distribution meet needs while ensuring program integrity (e.g., bus delivery along regular bus routes)?
- What is the plan for ensuring meals go to eligible participants (i.e., children and dependent adults)?
- What is the strategy for preventing the distribution of duplicate meals (e.g., a person claiming the same meals from multiple sites)?
- What is the plan to ensure that meals accommodate students/participants with food allergies or special dietary needs?



Tips for Success

Below are ideas that may work for your site. Be sure to follow your State and local requirements.

For all sites:

- Partner with local universities and community groups for volunteers to help distribute meals to parents and guardians.
- Indicate who is eligible to pick-up and receive meals on advertisements and promotions of the meal distribution site.
- Post signage at meal distribution sites indicating who is eligible to pick-up and receive meals and snacks.
- Ask parents or guardians how many participants (children and dependent adults) in the household need meals.

For closed, enrolled sites:

Improving traffic flow

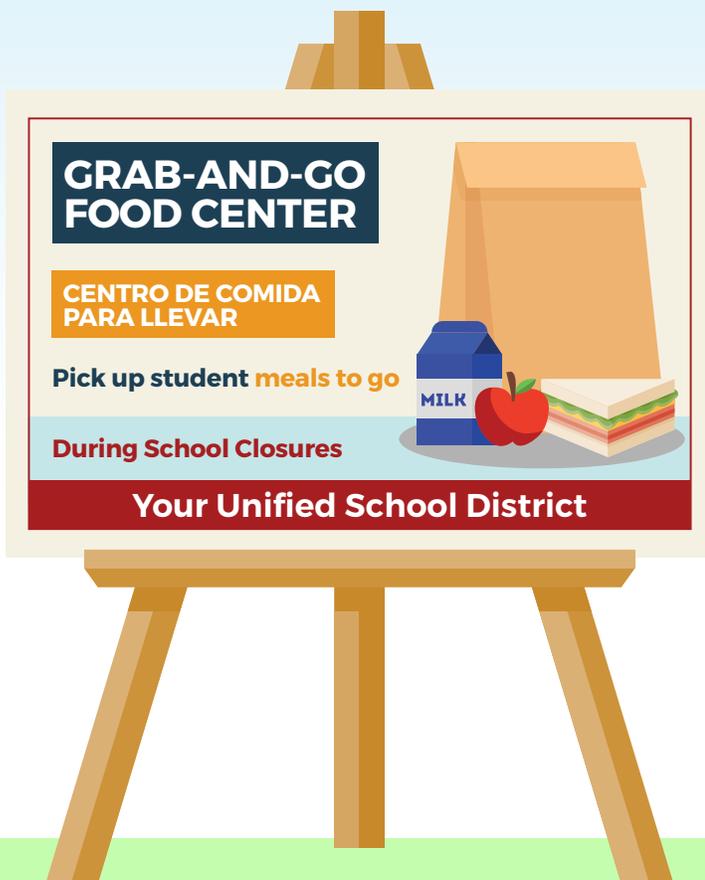
- Offer online or curbside traffic flow maps for the pick-up of meals at designated sites.
- Provide parents and guardians with rear view mirror hangers or placards showing the number of meals to be picked up.

Verifying eligibility

- Send a unique Quick Response (QR) code to the parents and guardians of eligible participants. The code could then be scanned at each meal pick-up.
- Use pre-printed attendance rosters that you can check off when parents and guardians pick up meals and snacks for the participant.
- Ask parents to present a copy of their student's report card, student identification card, or school correspondence when picking up meals.
- Ask parents and guardians to provide their child's school meal personal identification number (PIN) when picking up meals. Have a backup method of verifying student eligibility in the event parents and guardians do not know their child's school meal PIN.

Managing alternative pick-up options

- If your school is hybrid, consider distributing breakfast to students at the end of the school day to eat the meal the following morning.
- Use an online pre-ordering system to allow parents/guardians to order food once a week and specify what meals/snacks they need, and for how many days.
- For families needing alternate meal pick-up times or asking for contactless pick-up, use school meal vending machines that use the child's ID number to prompt dispensing of the meals.



Communicating With Families

Use social media, emails, texts, newsletters, and websites to share messages with the different ways that “We Will Serve You”:

- Utilize an interactive online map to assist families in identifying where meals could be picked up.
- Consider sending home nutrition education materials for the family along with the meals.
- Create events around pick-up times, such as themed meals, decorations, and costumes to create a positive and engaging environment.
- Ensure that communications are in multiple languages and alternative formats, if possible.



Share USDA Team Nutrition’s Stronger With School Meals materials to highlight how school meals can help students be strong physically and mentally: fns.usda.gov/tn/stronger-school-meals-educational-materials. Materials include infographics, activity booklets, stickers, buttons, and more!

Safety Reminders

Use meal distribution strategies that maintain physical distancing and avoid the formation of groups or tight lines, such as “drive-through” style meal pick-up or staggered pick-up times. Consider placing meals on carts and tables for contactless meal pick-up.



Provide parents and guardians with food safety information related to the safe transportation, storage, and re-heating of foods provided.

Follow Federal, State, and local food safety requirements and guidelines. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html) for more information including how to:

- Encourage staff to clean their hands often.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Remind staff not to work if they are sick.
- Remind parents and guardians not to come to meal distribution sites if they are sick.

