

Providing Meals

GUIDANCE FROM THE STUDENT SUCCESS & WELLNESS BUREAU



School Year (SY) 2020–2021 District/School Requirements

- Provide meals to all students including remote students. Use the remote guidelines and provide meals to those students who are doing remote learning on any given day.
- Operate and return to National School Lunch Program (NSLP) at the start of SY 2020–2021. This means if you are a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 (P2) school, all students will eat for free. Standard schools that collect applications will need to begin the application process for SY 2020–2021 and categorize students as free, reduced, and paid. Those schools that are P2 and need to re-establish their base year for SY 2020–2021 will be required to collect new applications.
- Eligibility for free, reduced, and paid procedures should follow the USDA Eligibility Guidelines Manual.

Meal Service District/School Requirements

- Establish food distribution sites both at district buildings and at particular bus stops/routes, to the greatest extent practicable.
- Practice established social distancing protocols to the greatest extent practicable.
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to participating staff.
- Utilize proper United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal counting and claiming procedures.
- Use food handling processes and procedures and maintain proper food temperatures.
- [Employee Safety Guidance for meal service programs](#)

Meal Service Considerations

- Consider use of disposable plates, utensils, etc. to minimize spread of COVID-19.

If serving meals in the cafeteria:

- Mark spaced lines to enter the cafeteria and serving lines; designate entrances and exit flow paths.
- Schedule longer meal periods for staggered meal delivery.
- Maximize social distancing to space seating and utilize outdoor seating as practicable and appropriate.
- Conduct cleaning of cafeteria(s) and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day and between staggered meal services.

If serving meals in classrooms:

- Consider pre-packaged boxes or bags for each student instead of traditional serving lines.
- Avoid sharing foods and utensils.

Remote Learning Considerations

- Reduce and minimize contact by delivering a week's worth of meals during a designated time (Ex: delivering a week's worth of meals every Monday).
- Distribute supplemental instructional materials and printed district/school communications along with meals.



Reentry Support Guidance

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: [Michael Chavez](#) ped.state.nm.us

New Mexico USDA Approved Five Waivers for SY 2020–2021

All waivers can be utilized until June 30, 2021

Waiver forms will be sent to the School Food Authority (SFA) to opt-in to waivers and provide detailed information.

WAIVER 1: Meal Pattern Flexibility

- Schools should do their best to follow the USDA meal pattern requirements unless it is not feasible (Ex: certain meal components not available or substitutions made to meal patterns).
- Schools must let New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) know how they will utilize this waiver along with details of any substitutions made.
- You can claim breakfast or lunch meals for reimbursement that do not meet the meal pattern, as long as a waiver is submitted for each instance.

WAIVER 2: Meal Times Waiver

- Waiver provides flexibility for both NSLP and School Breakfast Programs. Breakfast does not need to be served at or near the beginning of the school day. Both breakfast and lunch may be served at the same time and do not need to be served between 10am and 2pm.
- Schools must let NMPED know how they will provide meals along with dates and times of meal service and any bus routes if applicable.
- Recommend multiple serving times to increase social distancing of students and minimizing spread of COVID-19.

WAIVER 3: Non-Congregate Feeding

- Children do not need to be served or consume the meal on the school campus.
- All meals must be claimed under NSLP program not Seamless Summer Option (SSO) starting in



August or beginning of SY 2020–2021, which means schools will go back to free, reduced, and paid percentages.

WAIVER 4: Guardian Pick up

- A parent or guardian, without the child being present, may pick up a meal(s).
- Schools must opt in and notify the NMPED of plans and modifications they intend to implement. SFAs will need to submit a plan to NMPED to ensure accountability and Program integrity.
- Schools must provide a plan for program integrity and provide assurances they will run the program appropriately according to USDA NSLP regulations.

WAIVER 5: Offer vs. Serve

- “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that schools serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal cafeteria. Schools attempting to adhere to this guidance may be unable to also effectively adhere to offer versus serve requirements.”
- This is required in high schools but is now waived because of the need for pre-packaged meals.
- This allows schools to provide food in a fast, safer manner for students.
- This also allows schools to provide meals in the classroom or transferred on buses.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON HOW TO UTILIZE MULTIPLE WAIVERS AT ONCE:

- Home delivery (meal times + non-congregate)
- Multiple meals at once (meal times + non-congregate)
- Parent or guardian can pick up multiple meals per child at once for consumption at home (meal times + non-congregate + parent/guardian pickup)
- Providing food items in bulk as long as individual meals are easily identifiable as a reimbursable meal (meal times + non-congregate)

For more information, please contact your assigned Health Educator.