

Mapping the Way to School Year 2020-21

School Food Service Guidance, Flexibilities/Waivers, and the SNP Back to School Virtual Conference

As schools continue to review the most up to date information available and plan for the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, please ensure that the plans specific to school food service include the following conditions, should you wish to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture School Nutrition Programs:

- At the beginning of the School Year 2020-21, schools will be eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Participation in the Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Program will discontinue at the start of the school year.
- Schools will transition to the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program meal patterns. As of now, only in instances where food availability becomes a concern can schools submit a flexibility request to the Illinois State Board of Education to modify the meal pattern. This is possible on a limited basis and only on a weekly basis. Every attempt must be made to meet the required USDA meal pattern for the specific meal service.
- With the non-congregate feeding waiver, reimbursable meals served to enrolled students, even if offsite, may be claimed for reimbursement. Meal counting and claiming requirements need to be followed.
- As we transition to NSLP and SBP, schools need to be prepared to count meals at the point of service. Meals will be claimed in the eligibility category of the students (Free, Reduced, or Paid), at the school where the student is enrolled, regardless of where the meal is served. For those schools that are approved to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a total meal count by meal service is required, by enrolling school.
- The USDA has granted authority for parent/guardian pick-up of meals, however, schools will be required to track the enrolled student that the meals are picked up on behalf of. This is to ensure proper claiming at the enrolled school.

ISBE Nutrition Department team members continue to work with USDA to provide as much flexibility to ensure that healthy, nutritious, and safe meals are provided to all enrolled students in Illinois schools. We will continue to keep schools updated on the most recent guidance and flexibilities available for participation in the USDA School Nutrition Programs.

Below are previous ISBE Nutrition Department announcements regarding SY 20-21, including links to the USDA nationwide waivers for SY 20-21 and ISBE's upcoming SNP Back to School Virtual Conference. Additional resources are available at www.isbe.net/nutrition under the "Mapping the Way to School Year 2020-21" section:

USDA Flexibilities/Waivers for SY 20-21

The USDA extended four nationwide waivers for School Year 2020-21, giving key flexibilities to school districts to provide meals to students with appropriate safety measures. When the new school year begins, school districts will return to participating in NSLP, SBP, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program with the following initial flexibilities. ISBE will continue to work with USDA for any additional flexibilities needed to provide meals to students.

- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-Congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs](#): Under this waiver, sponsors can provide non-congregate meals during COVID-19 related operations. This will allow school districts to provide meals for students utilizing remote learning. Under normal circumstances, NSLP, SBP, and CACFP meals must be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants on site.
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Service Time Flexibility in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program](#): Under this waiver, program operators may establish meal service times that support streamlined access to nutritious meals. This works in conjunction with the non-congregate feeding waiver to allow multiple meals to be picked up at one time. It also provide flexibility for serving meals due to scheduling issues (such as busing schedules due to number of riders, etc.) related to social distancing while learning on-site.
- [Nationwide Waivers to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children](#): Under this waiver, program operators may distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their children without the children being present in non-congregate delivery methods.
- [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs](#): Sponsors should continue to make every effort to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements and the nutrition standards to the greatest extent possible. However, the USDA and the Illinois State Board of Education recognize that sponsors may experience challenges in meeting those requirements. Sponsors that are unable to meet the meal pattern requirements must [submit a form](#) to ISBE to report their circumstances and request a waiver. Waiver requests must be submitted on a weekly basis as needed. ISBE will approve use of this waiver on a case-by case basis.

The USDA also issued a [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve \(OVS\) Flexibility for Senior High Schools in the National School Lunch Program for School Year 2020-21](#). Generally, NSLP participating schools that serve grades 9-12 are required to implement OVS allowing older students to have a choice in the number of meal components selected for a reimbursable meal. This USDA waiver provides flexibility for all schools to package complete reimbursable meals for ease of distribution in non-congregate settings as well as altered on-site methods such as meals in the classroom or other locations. This allows schools flexibility on how best to offer meal services to students.

ISBE Nutrition Department staff is available to assist with questions and concerns from our districts/sponsors. Please reach out to us at cnp@isbe.net. Thank you for all you're doing to feed students in need during these challenging times.

Register for the SNP Back to School Virtual Conference

There is still time to sign up for the Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department's live webinars for the School Nutrition Programs Back to School Virtual Conference. Five webinars are scheduled:

- [ISBE Update, 9 a.m. July 20](#)
- [USDA Foods, 9 a.m. July 21](#)
- [Financial Management, 1 p.m. July 21](#)
- [Monitoring, 9 a.m. July 22](#)
- [Nutritional Pursuit: Test Your Knowledge, 1 p.m. July 22](#)

Please note that the Menu Planning webinar originally scheduled for 1 p.m. July 20 has been canceled. We are working closely with the USDA to gain additional guidance and will reschedule.

Click on the individual links to register or visit www.isbe.net/snpb2s to choose the live webinars you would like to attend. The live webinars will be recorded and available for viewing along with a Question & Answer document.

The SNP Back to School Virtual Conference will also feature recorded trainings and fact sheets on a variety of topics, as well as an exhibitor's section of resources for schools. Watch for new content daily at www.isbe.net/snpb2s as we begin "Mapping the Way" to School Year 2020-21.

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