



Important Updates Regarding COVID-19 & Federal Nutrition Programs

For the 2.2 million people living in NY households that struggle against hunger, COVID-19 presents unique challenges. As more schools, child care centers, and older adult meal sites close, additional families will lose access to the federal nutrition and food programs that sustain their nutrition, health, and well-being.

Hunger Solutions New York is working to provide updates that can help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the food security of low-income people.

Below are important updates on federal nutrition programs in NYS. We will continually update our [COVID-19 webpage](#) with information on this response.

SNAP

On March 16th, NYS OTDA issued a [notice on COVID-19](#) to local social service districts. Highlights include:

- **All SNAP application and recertification interviews may be done by phone.** An in-person interview is only required if the applicant or recertifying recipient requests an in-person interview.
- **SNAP benefits can be used for online grocery purchases.** Current participating retailers include Amazon, Walmart and ShopRite. Amazon is available statewide; Walmart and ShopRite participate in specific zip codes.
- We now know that the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), signed into law on March 18, includes a **temporary nationwide suspension of the ABAWD 3-month time limit rule that will go into effect on April 1.** For that reason, local districts in

NYS will grant good cause to any ABAWD unable to meet the time-limit work requirement during the month of March.

School Meals

Schools and community partners can leverage federal resources and work together to ensure access to nutritious meals during school closures. The summer nutrition programs (the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) through the National School Lunch Program) are available to provide meals during school closures. Many schools are already using these programs to provide meals to students.

Resources have been made available to schools working to feed children who rely on school breakfast and lunch during school closures:

- [New guidance](#) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture was released regarding the **delivery of meals during school closures related to COVID-19**. This [Q&A](#) will provide schools and community partners clarification during this unique situation.
- "[Ensuring Access to the Child Nutrition Programs in the Event of School Closures](#)" is a fact sheet from Food Research & Action Center outlining **model meal programs during school closures**.
- [No Kid Hungry Emergency Relief Grants Available - \\$1 million in emergency grants are available to support local efforts](#) like home delivered meals, grab and go meals programs, school and community pantries, backpack programs, and other steps to help reach children and families who lose access to meals due to school closures related to COVID-19. If your school or organization needs funding to support these efforts, please [submit](#) your interest in receiving emergency grant funds.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

NYS Department of Health guidance, "[Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance for CACFP Sponsoring Organizations](#)," **explains current flexibilities, waivers submitted to USDA for approval, and other resources available to CACFP providers**. Highlights include:

- **NYS has submitted several waiver requests to USDA**. The waivers pertain to non-congregate feeding, missing meal components in the event of a shortage of a

required component, late reimbursement claims, and temporary suspension of monitoring requirements.

- When a school is closed, the school may establish an emergency program through the Child Nutrition Programs to provide food to children who normally attend their school; **childcare centers or homes can also receive meals from these schools or other sites at no cost.**
- For CACFP questions, contact CACFP at 1-800-942-3858 or cacfp@health.ny.gov.

We will continue to send email updates, post updates to our website, and use Facebook and Twitter to share information. Thank you for your continued efforts to help New Yorkers with needed access to food during this time.



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