



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
and Learning**  
BRIGHT FROM THE START

June 28, 2023

Greetings Happy Helpings Sponsors,

DECAL applied and was recently approved by USDA to grant Happy Helping Sponsors the ability to serve non-congregate meals at outdoor meal sites on days when the area is experiencing excessive heat. A copy of the waiver approval can be found [here](#).

This waiver is intended to ensure continuity of the meal service at outdoor sites on days when excessive heat makes service of congregate meals impractical or dangerous. This waiver may only be used when high temperatures could not reasonably be planned for and may not be used to respond to high temperatures that are typical of the area in which a site is located.

The non-congregate waiver for excessive heat is not the same as the new option to provide non-congregate meals in rural areas. They **differ** in the following ways:

- *The non-congregate waiver for excessive heat is not limited to only sites in rural areas.*
- *The non-congregate waiver for excessive heat only allows for serving non-congregate meals to participating children and does not allow for parent/guardian meal pick-up or the delivery of meals to participants' homes.*

### **General Requirements for this Waiver**

- Meal service sites must be approved by Nutrition Services prior to serving meals in a non-congregate setting during excessive heat.
- This waiver is limited to only outdoor sites where there is no temperature-controlled alternate site available.
- Non-congregate meal services may only be offered on days when the National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a heat advisory, an excessive heat warning, or an excessive heat watch for the area in which the approved site is located.

### **Recordkeeping Requirements for this Waiver**

- Sites must maintain documentation of the date and the number of meals served and consumed off site under this flexibility.
- Sponsors must separately record the number of non-congregate meals served under this flexibility in the claim for reimbursement.
- Sponsors must maintain and provide upon request National Weather Service (NWS) documentation advising of either a heat advisory, excessive heat warning, or excessive heat watch. Sponsors must print or obtain this information from the NWS website which can be found [here](#). The date of the NSW documentation must correspond to the dates non-congregate meals were served due to excessive heat.
- Sponsors must also upload an original copy of the NWS documentation in the attachment list located in GA ATLAS within 10 days of the non-congregate meal service. See below for details on applying for this flexibility.

- For more information on *Recordkeeping Requirements* please review [DECAL Policy 18](#).

### Requesting this Waiver

Sponsors must seek approval to serve non-congregate meals during excessive heat via the SFSP site application in GA ATLAS, under question #22 within the Site Eligibility section. In addition, sponsors must complete and submit to their Nutrition Services Application Specialists [Attachment B - FY 2023 Request for Participation in the Demonstration Project for Non-Congregate Feeding for Outdoor Sites Experiencing Extreme Heat](#).

For questions, please contact [Robyn Parham](#).

Regards,

Nutrition Services

*Together, we can help feed Georgia's Children & Adults.*

***This institution is an equal opportunity provider.***

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