



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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Governor

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Holly A. Robinson, Ed.D.
Commissioner

Memorandum

To: Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Sponsors

From: Jackie Romain

Date: September 22, 2009

Re: Responding to School Closings for H1N1 Outbreaks

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to SFSP sponsors on how schools and community organizations may provide reimbursable meals to low-income children during school closures related to the H1N1 influenza virus. Such closures would follow a declaration of a public health emergency under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act and would prevent the service of congregate meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act authorizes the provision of meal service to children who are not in school during non-summer months due to an unanticipated school closure. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing added flexibility using program waiver authority in an effort to address concerns regarding the loss of school meals for low-income children, many of whom may not have access to other sources of food when schools are closed. Thus, the requirement for schools serving meals in a congregate setting will be waived for these H1N1-related school closures in order to provide meals to low-income children. Meals served during these school closures may be provided and claimed through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). With the exception of the congregate meal service, the SFSP Sponsor will operate as it does during the summer months, and all meals provided to children 18 and under will be reimbursed at the SFSP rates for rural/self-prep or urban/vended meals.

SFSP Sponsors that want to provide reimbursable meals for children in schools closed due to the H1N1 virus must have an agreement with Bright from the Start which covers operation of the SFSP. SFSP Sponsors with existing agreements in place may modify these agreements to include waiver requests for operation during H1N1 school closures. The waiver request should include the following:

- Name of the school(s) covered by the waiver request
- Time-frame to begin meal service from the point a public health emergency and school closure is declared
- Meal-types served (breakfast, lunch and/or snack)
- A description of the method of meal distribution used, in addition to describing how meals will be provided for off-site consumption and addressing food safety related concerns

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- A description of how the program will be operated to target children in closed schools
- A description of how meals will be counted to ensure the integrity of the claims submitted
- A description of how the meal distribution will target low-income children, including children that may not have free or reduced price eligibility information readily available if the school does not have 50 percent or more free or reduced price children enrolled
- Methods for communicating with families

Interested School Food Authorities (SFA) and organizations not currently operating in the SFSP should execute new agreements with waiver requests as soon as possible, for planning purposes in anticipation of possible school closures. The waiver requests should include all relevant information described above. Bright from the Start, in coordination with the Georgia Department of Education, may require that additional information be included in waiver requests from School Food Authorities. All waiver requests must be submitted to Bright from the Start for review and approval and reported to the appropriate FNS Regional Office in the event of a school closure.

To request a waiver, please contact Falita Flowers, Nutrition Program Manager at (404) 656-6452.

For questions concerning this memorandum, please contact Sonja Adams, Policy Administrator at (404) 651-8193.