



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

June 10, 2025

Greetings Happy Helpings Sponsors,

On May 30, 2025, USDA granted a Nutrition Services request to waive certain requirements in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for summer 2025 operations. Specifically, Nutrition Services was approved to waive the requirement to serve congregate meals during times of excessive heat and air quality advisories.

Non-Congregate Meals during Excessive Heat Waiver

This waiver allows SFSP sponsors, in good standing, to operate approved outdoor meal sites without temperature-controlled alternative sites as non-congregate sites on days when the area is experiencing excessive heat. These waivers may only be used 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 an approved outdoor meal site is located, as indicated at <https://www.weather.gov/>. These waivers are effective May 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025.

Non-Congregate Meals during Air Quality Advisories

This waiver allows SFSP sponsors, in good standing, to operate approved outdoor meal sites without alternative indoor sites as non-congregate sites on days when the area is experiencing certain air quality advisories. Sites may be approved for non-congregate meal service on days when the site's zip code has an Air Quality Index (AQI) "purple" flag or higher, as indicated at <https://www.airnow.gov/>. These waivers are effective May 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025.

Additional Flexibilities Available

The following flexibilities are also available during times of excessive heat and air quality advisories. These flexibilities are effective May 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025:

- Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-Up
- Meal Service Time Flexibilities

Guidance Available on Waivers and Approval Process

Nutrition Services has developed instructions and further guidance on applying for these waivers and flexibilities entitled **Happy Helpings Excessive Heat and Air Quality Advisories Application and Instruction Guide**.

The guidance can be found [here](#).

All sponsors who desire to apply for these waivers are strongly encouraged to review this guidance as it offers information on required documentation to be maintained and submitted. In addition, the guidance contains instructions on

how to report meals served during the utilization of these waivers.

Sponsors interested in utilizing these waivers and flexibilities must request approval via the Waiver Module in GA ATLAS. Sponsors must have approval to utilize these waivers and flexibilities prior to serving meals in non-congregate settings during excessive heat and/or air quality advisories.

For general questions on requesting a USDA approved waiver, please contact Tammie.Baldwin@dec.al.ga.gov. For specific policy questions pertaining to waivers, please contact Sonja.Adams@dec.al.ga.gov.

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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