USDA Federal Update

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Highlights

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
• Emergency Legislation and COVID-19 Response
• Program and Resource Updates

USDA Office of the Chief Scientist
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Celebrates 50 Years

• Founded in August 1969
• Appointed new leadership in August 2019
  • Deputy Undersecretary for FNCS
  • Administrator for FNS
• Maintains service to communities through:
  • supplemental nutrition throughout the lifespan
  • evolving economic, political, and social conditions
  • technical assistance and extensive partnerships
  • dietary guidance
REFLECTION POLL

When you consider the types of qualities needed for future public health nutrition leaders, which do you think will be more important?

A. Empathy
B. Adaptability
C. Integrity
D. Courage
E. Passion
Families First Coronavirus Response Act

DIVISION A, TITLE I - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Temporary Flexibilities Granted to FNS by Congress:
- temporarily suspend in-person requirements for certification and re-certification
- defer certain medical tests used to determine nutritional risk
- state agencies can issue up to four months of benefits on EBT cards at one time
- allow substitutions for some food items in WIC packages and states can amend food lists, as needed

Commodity Assistance Program

Temporary Flexibilities Granted to FNS by Congress:
- ability to move USDA Foods (or commodities) to accommodate local need
- allow state and Indian Tribal Nations to request waivers for Disaster Household Distribution (DHD)
- provide boxes of USDA Foods to households in need using existing inventories
FNS COVID-19 Response
Phase 1: Congregate Meal Waivers for Summer Meal Delivery

• Under existing authorities, FNS enabled Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sponsors to serve meals and support students during the pandemic.
• Once approved through a state agency, SFAs serve meals free of charge to children, 18 years and under.
• If there is a need in specific areas, community representatives can work with SFA to sponsor local programs.
Families First Coronavirus Response Act

DIVISION B

• TITLE I—MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL ACCESS TO LUNCH FOR STUDENTS (MEALS)
  • SEC. 2101 – 2102. Address Meal Standard, Congregate Feeding, and Time of Service Flexibilities

• TITLE II—COVID—19 CHILD NUTRITION RESPONSE
  • SEC. 2201 – 2204. Address Physical Presence Flexibilities and Administrative Requirements

Temporary Flexibilities Granted to FNS by Congress:

• Open Site: waive the requirement that open sites must be located in areas where at least 50 percent of NSLP participants are eligible for free or reduced price meals

• Meal Patterns: waives requirements to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements

• Non-Congregate Feeding: meals can be served to children outside of the normally-required group setting to support social distancing

• Parent Pickup: parents and/or guardians can pick up meals and bring them home to their children

• Meal Times: offers more flexibility for when meals can be served to allow for grab-n-go options; also allows meals for multiple days to be provided at once
Meals for Kids Site Finder

FNS offers the **Meals for Kids Site Finder** to quickly and easily find summer meal sites.

Search results provide up to 50 nearby locations based on address, city, state or zip code.

Results include site addresses, hours of operation, contact information, and directions.

Information is updated as states provide new locations.

Compatible on tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices.
DIVISION B, TITLE III - SNAP WAIVERS

- SEC. 2301 – 2302. Provides flexibilities for ABAWD time limits, benefits amounts; addresses state administrative data and USDA reporting requirements.

Temporary Flexibilities Granted to FNS by Congress:

- **Emergency Allotments (EA):** allows states to issue emergency supplements to SNAP households that normally receive less than the maximum benefit
- **Pandemic EBT (P-EBT):** provides benefits (similar to SNAP or “food stamps”) to children who normally receive free or reduced-price school meals
- **Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) Time Limit Suspension:** suspends the time limit associated with ABAWD work requirements during the national emergency
Meals to You

Collaboration includes:

- Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty
- McLane Global
- PepsiCo

Goal to deliver about 1,000,000 meals to students in a limited number of rural schools.

Questions or comments? FeedingKids@usda.gov
WIC Participant and Program Characteristics 2018

- WIC enrolled 7.8 million women, infants, and children in April 2018, a decline from 8.8 million reported in 2016.

- In 2018, the proportion of breastfeeding women exceeded that of non-breastfeeding postpartum women.
USDA WIC Telehealth Innovations Project

In September 2019, USDA established a cooperative agreement with Tufts University to test and evaluate the use of telehealth innovations.

**Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC)** administers a competitive awards process directed to WIC State Agencies, U.S. territories and Indian Tribal Organizations.

**THIS-WIC**

- Provides technical support
- Evaluates the impact of the awards
- Disseminates promising and successful initiatives

**Supports USDA goals to:**

- develop an evidence-base
- support cost-effective telehealth interventions
- improve client outcomes
- increase client retention
USDA WIC Telehealth Innovations Project

Telehealth innovations offer many potential benefits to State Agencies (SA) including:

• improving the quality of programming and access
• ensuring relevance for changing WIC participant populations
• providing flexible and adaptable tools to meet learning preferences
• addressing potential shortages of and/or barriers to accessing qualified professionals
• increasing opportunity for engagement

Phase One is complete – Brief proposal to express intent or interest
Phase Two is in progress – Full proposal to respond to RFP
WIC Works Resource System
20th Anniversary

Celebrating with monthly features to support WIC Champions!

Insights are offered on topics important to the WIC community including:

• WIC State Agency Materials
• Training and Self-Assessment Tools
• Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Resources
• Grant Opportunities
• Menus and Sample Meals

Sign up for updates at wicworks.fns.usda.gov/contact

THE WIC WORKS RESOURCE SYSTEM

20 Years!

As we look back and celebrate the last two decades, we’d like to acknowledge our most important resource: you!
Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2018

In FY2018, SNAP provided benefits to approximately **39.7 million people living in 19.7 million households** each month across the US:

- 33% were nondisabled, non-elderly adults, including parents and caregivers
- 7% able-bodied adults age 18-49 in households w/o children
- 44% were under age 18
- 14% were 60+
- 9% were nonelderly adults with a disability

In FY18, average monthly SNAP benefit = $255
Online EBT established in select states in 2019
- Increased to about 70% of States in the US
- EBT can be used to select and pay for groceries online with options for home delivery and store pick up
- Supports populations at higher risk:
  - Older adults
  - Individuals with underlying conditions
  - Households with limited community-based options
- FNS maintains a list of approved states and retailers
- Further information about using EBT benefits can be found on retailer websites

https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot
SNAP-ED

New content includes:

• working with Indian Tribal Organizations
• budget submission for multi-year plans
• use of brand names
• allowable and unallowable costs on digital devices
• staff time and effort documentation
• conference and travel costs
Study on Nutrition and Wellness Quality in Childcare Settings (SNAQS)

Study will address:
• Meals and snacks served in childcare settings
• Providers’ nutrition and wellness policies and practices
• Children’s food consumption in and out of childcare
• Meal costs and plate waste
New Team Nutrition Resources

Providing Multiple Meals at a Time for Children During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

These tip sheets provide information about using bulk foods and distributing multiple meals at a time.

- For the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- For the Summer Food Service Program
- For the Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program

The 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee is holding its Draft Advisory Report Meeting on Wednesday, June 17, 2020.

- The meeting will include updates on the Committee’s draft conclusion statements and discussion on its draft advisory report.
- Advisory report summarizes the evidence review and provides overarching advice to the Secretaries of USDA and HHS based on the consideration of all of its conclusions statements.
- The Committee will finalize its report based on the discussion at the meeting and submit its final report to at the end of June 2020.
- For future updates, please visit DietaryGuidelines.gov
REFLECTION POLL

How has your work changed as a result of COVID-19?

A. My work is very much the same.
B. My responsibilities have increased but it’s been manageable.
C. My job is overwhelming and it’s hard to stay on top of everything.
D. It’s been difficult to perform my work during the pandemic.
E. Work has not been a concern because I need to care for myself or my family.
Office of the Chief Scientist
USDA Science Blueprint

• Focus on collaborative science in USDA’s extramural and intramural research programs
• Provides a framework for science initiatives
• Highlights the Research, Education, and Economics Missions Areas which include:
  • Agricultural Research Service
  • Economic Research Service
  • National Institute of Food and Agriculture
• USDA has additional research authorities:
  • Food Safety and Inspection Service
  • Natural Resources Conservation Service
  • Food and Nutrition Service
  • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
  • Marketing and Regulatory Programs mission area
USDA Science Blueprint Themes

Theme 1 - Sustainable Ag Intensification
Theme 2 - Ag Climate Adaptation
**Theme 3 - Food and Nutrition Translation**
Theme 4 - Value Added Innovations
Theme 5 - Ag Science Policy Leadership
Theme 3 - Food and Nutrition Translation

- Food Safety and Health
- Nutrition and Health Promotion
- Objectives and Strategies
- Objectives and Strategies
RESOURCES

- https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids
- https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot
- DietaryGuidelines.gov
- https://thiswic.nutrition.tufts.edu
Thank You