



CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM STATE WAIVER REQUEST TEMPLATE

Child Nutrition Programs are expected to be administered according to all statutory and regulatory requirements; waivers to the requirements are exceptions. However, Section 12(l) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1760(l), provides authority for USDA to waive requirements for State agencies or eligible service providers under certain circumstances. When requesting the waiver of statutory or regulatory requirements for the Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs), including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), the Special Milk Program (SMP), and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), State agencies and eligible service providers should use this template. State agencies and eligible service providers should consult with their FNS Regional Offices when developing waiver requests to ensure a well-reasoned, thorough request is submitted. State agencies and eligible service providers are encouraged to submit complete waiver requests at least 60 calendar days prior to the anticipated implementation date. Requests submitted less than 60 calendar days prior to the anticipated implementation should be accompanied by an explanation of extenuating circumstances.

For more information on requests for waiving Program requirements, refer to SP 15-2018, CACFP 12-2018, SFSP 05-2018, *Child Nutrition Program Waiver Request Guidance and Protocol- Revised*, May 24, 2018.

1. State agency submitting waiver request and responsible State agency staff contact information:

Iowa Department of Education (Department), Bureau of Nutrition & Health Services

Kala Shipley, Bureau Chief, kala.shipley@iowa.gov, 515-681-2307

Patti Harding, Administrative Consultant, patti.harding@iowa.gov, 515-868-1956

Cheryl Tolley, Administrative Consultant, cheryl.tolley@iowa.gov, 515-681-2304

Region: Midwest

2. Eligible service providers participating in waiver and affirmation that they are in good standing:

The Department is requesting this waiver as the USDA Child Nutrition Program State agency and on behalf of all school food authorities (SFAs) and institutions participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during the 2025-26 program year, that are deemed by the Iowa State agency to be in good standing.

3. Description of the challenge the State agency is seeking to solve, the goal of the waiver to improve services under the Program, and the expected outcomes if the waiver is granted. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(iii) and 12(l)(2)(A)(iv) of the NSLA]:

The Department is requesting a state-wide waiver to allow local program operators to offer non-congregate meals to participants fasting during Ramadan. The National School Lunch Act (NSLA), Child Nutrition Act and Program regulations require SFAs and institutions to operate congregate meal services at specific times. Program operators that serve meals to participants observing Ramadan often experience a drop in participation and would benefit from offering alternative meal service options. This waiver would allow program operators to offer meals that participants in attendance can take off-site and consume after fasting, providing participants who observe Ramadan access to healthy and wholesome meals.

4. Specific Program requirements to be waived (include statutory and regulatory citations). [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(i) of the NSLA]:

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

The waivers in this section are intended to provide needed flexibility to support SFAs in continuing to offer nutritious meals to participants fasting to observe Ramadan.

Non-Congregate Meal Service (NSLP and SBP)

Under the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1753(b)(1)(A), and the Child Nutrition Act, 42 U.S.C. 1773(b)(1)(A), NSLP and SBP meals must be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants on site.

Meal Service Times (NSLP and SBP)

Under Program regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(l) and 7 CFR 220.8(l), meals served in the NSLP and SBP must follow meal service time requirements.

Offer Versus Serve (NSLP)

Under the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1758(a)(3), and Program regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(e), program operators of senior high schools (as defined by the State education agency) must participate in offer versus serve at lunch.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The waivers in this section apply to emergency shelters, adult day care centers, outside-school-hours care centers and the at-risk afterschool component of CACFP only. These waivers are intended to provide needed flexibility to support institutions in continuing to offer nutritious meals to participants fasting to observe Ramadan.

Non-Congregate Meal Service (CACFP)

Under the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1766(f)(1)(A), and Program regulations at 7 CFR 226.19(b)(6)(iii), CACFP meals must be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants on site.

Meal Service Times (CACFP)

Under Program regulations at 7 CFR 226.20(k), meals served in the CACFP must follow meal service time requirements.

5. Detailed description of alternative procedures and anticipated impact on Program operations, including technology, State systems, and monitoring:

There are no anticipated impacts on technology, state systems or monitoring that will necessitate alternative procedures. The State agency will approve each SFA's or institution's waiver application

on an individual basis.

6. Description of any steps the State has taken to address regulatory barriers at the State level. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:

No regulatory barriers are expected at the state level.

7. Anticipated challenges State or eligible service providers may face with the waiver implementation:

No anticipated challenges are anticipated with waiver implementation.

8. Description of how the waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government. If there are anticipated increases, confirm that the costs will be paid from non-Federal funds. [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(iii) of the NSLA]:

No anticipated increase of Federal government costs. Participants in attendance would normally receive meals but are unable to consume meals at standard meal times because they are fasting as part of their religious observance. Therefore, providing a meal that participants can consume later, at a time that honors their religious principles, does not increase costs.

9. Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:

This waiver will begin Feb. 17, 2026 and be effective through March 20, 2026.

10. Proposed monitoring and review procedures:

The Department will approve the individual requests from each SFA or institution to implement the waiver. In addition, the Department will work directly with the SFA or institution to ensure they have sound strategies in place for counting and claiming meals.

11. Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNS):

The Department will report to FNS all requested data for the waiver in the timelines required by USDA.

12. Link to or a copy of the public notice informing the public about the proposed waiver [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:

Public notice posted at:

<https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/operation-support/nutrition-programs/school-meals>

<https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/operation-support/nutrition-programs/child-adult-care-food-program>

13. Signature and title of requesting official:

Kala Shipley

Title: Bureau Chief

Requesting official's email address for transmission of response:

kala.shipley@iowa.gov

patti.harding@iowa.gov

cheryl.tolley@iowa.gov

TO BE COMPLETED BY FNS REGIONAL OFFICE:

FNS Regional Offices are requested to ensure the questions have been adequately addressed by the State agency and formulate an opinion and justification for a response to the waiver request based on their knowledge, experience and work with the State.

Date request was received at Regional Office:

- Check this box to confirm that the State agency has provided public notice in accordance with Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA**
- **Regional Office Analysis and Recommendations:**

SP 15-2018, CACFP 12-2018, SFSP 05-2018 Child Nutrition Program Waiver Request Guidance and Protocol- Revised

Final Audit Report

2026-01-05

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