



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**USDA Extends Flexibilities, Allowing Kids to Continue to Access Meals Safely through the Summer Months**

COLUMBUS – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the [extension](#) of three nationwide waivers that will allow child nutrition programs to continue to flexibly operate to provide much needed meals to children through the summer months.

Secretary Perdue said, "USDA has been extremely aggressive in expanding flexibilities to ensure Americans who have been impacted by the coronavirus continue to receive the food they need for themselves and their families. As our nation reopens and people return to work, we want to continue to be flexible since there is not a one size fits all approach to feeding kids. Extending these waivers throughout the summer ensures local operators can make plans that best suit their communities and keep children fed."

Specifically, USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) extended three waivers—

- (1) **Non-Congregate Feeding:** FNS will continue to permit meals to be served to children outside of normally-required group settings;
- (2) **Parent Pickup:** FNS will continue to permit parents or guardians to pick up meals for their children;
- (3) **Meal Times:** FNS will waive requirements that meals be served at certain times to permit grab-n-go options. This flexibility will also allow feeding programs to distribute multiple days-worth of meals at a single time.

In addition to these nationwide waiver, Ohio has applied for an extension through September 30, 2020 of its [area eligibility waiver](#). This waiver extension will allow several of Ohio's School Food Authorities (SFAs) and sponsors not meeting area eligibility requirements under the Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option regulations to continue to provide food to children during the emergency. Overall, these waivers support common sense solutions to help meet the significant nutritional challenges and needs of families.

Katherine Ungar, JD, Policy Associate at Children's Defense Fund Ohio, explains "We are very happy to learn that USDA has extended these critical waivers, to grant flexibility to Ohio's feeding sites to ensure Ohio's children continue to have access to meals in a way that promotes social distancing and safety for



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not only the child, but also the providers. We are hopeful the USDA will grant Ohio's request for an extension of its area eligibility waiver to allow greater access to food during this unprecedented time."

Without these waivers, many Ohio feeding programs would struggle to operate leaving thousands of Ohio children hungry.

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The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.