

Appendix A

COVID-19 Child Nutrition Nationwide Waivers

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When the pandemic began in March 2020, the FFCRA provided FNS with the authority to establish waivers for the purpose of providing meals under the Child Nutrition Programs with appropriate safety measures. With this authority, FNS issued nationwide waivers of certain Child Nutrition Program rules that provided States and local program operators with flexibilities to help them serve meals to children who were no longer routinely being educated in school buildings due to the pandemic. Table A.1 lists the COVID-19 Child Nutrition nationwide waivers that FNS authorized for use by State agencies and local program operators from March through September 2020.

Table A.1. COVID-19 Child Nutrition nationwide waivers authorized for use from March through September 2020

Waiver name	Full waiver policy memo name	Initial authorization date	Focus	Description of waiver
Meal Service Time Flexibility	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #1: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Service Time Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs	March 20, 2020	Access	Allowed meals to be served to kids outside traditional times to maximize flexibility for meal pick-up.
Non-congregate	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #2: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs	March 20, 2020	Access	Allowed meals to be served and consumed in non-group settings.
Afterschool Activity Requirements in NSLP/CACFP	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #3: Nationwide Waiver of the Activity Requirement in Afterschool Care Child Nutrition Programs	March 20, 2020	Access	Allowed afterschool meals and snacks to be served outside the standard afterschool setting.
Meal Pattern Flexibility	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #4: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs	March 25, 2020	Access	Provided the flexibility to serve meals that do not meet specified meal pattern requirements when needed.
Parent Pick-up	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #5: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children	March 25, 2020	Access	Allowed parents and guardians to pick-up meals and bring them home to their children.
CEP Deadlines in NSLP/SBP	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #6: Nationwide Waiver of Community Eligibility Provision Deadlines in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs	March 25, 2020	Administrative	Provided more time to meet required election and reporting deadlines for CEP.
CACFP Monitoring for Sponsors	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #7: Nationwide Waiver of Monitoring Requirements for Sponsors in the Child and Adult Care Food Program	March 27, 2020	Administrative	Provided flexibilities for certain monitoring and review requirements for sponsors participating in CACFP.

Appendix A. COVID-19 Child Nutrition Nationwide Waivers

Waiver name	Full waiver policy memo name	Initial authorization date	Focus	Description of waiver
CACFP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State agencies	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #8: Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State Agencies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program	March 27, 2020	State Administrative	Provided flexibilities for certain monitoring and review requirements for CACFP.
School Meals Onsite Monitoring - Revised	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #9: Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements in the School Meals Programs - Revised	March 27, 2020	Administrative and State Administrative	Provided flexibilities for certain monitoring and review requirements for school meals programs.
SFSP Onsite Monitoring for Sponsors	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #10: Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for Sponsoring Organizations in the Summer Food Service Program	March 27, 2020	Administrative	Provided flexibilities for certain monitoring and review requirements for sponsors participating in SFSP.
SFSP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State agencies	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #11: Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State Agencies in the Summer Food Service Program	March 27, 2020	State Administrative	Provides flexibilities for certain monitoring requirements for State agencies administering, and sponsors operating, SFSP
60-Day Reporting Requirements	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #12: Nationwide Waiver of 60 Day Reporting Requirements for January and February 2020	April 1, 2020	Administrative	Provided new deadline for 60-day reporting requirements.
SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #14: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites in SFSP and the NSLP Seamless Summer Option	April 21, 2020	Administrative	Allowed sponsors to determine closed enrolled SSO and SFSP site eligibility through area eligibility.
SFSP First Week Site Visits	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #15: Nationwide Waiver to Waive First Week Site Visits in the Summer Food Service Program	April 21, 2020	Administrative	Provided flexibility for requirement to visit SFSP sites during first week of operation.
SFSP Offer vs. Serve Flexibilities	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #16: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities in the Summer Food Service Program	April 30, 2020	Access	Provided the flexibility to serve meals without using offer versus serve.

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Waiver name	Full waiver policy memo name	Initial authorization date	Focus	Description of waiver
SFSP/SSO Meal Service Time	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #17: Nationwide Waiver of Meal Service Time Restrictions in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option	April 21, 2020	Access	Allowed meals to be served to kids outside traditional times to maximize flexibility for meal pick-up.
School Wellness Policy Assessments	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #18: Nationwide Waiver of Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessments in the NSLP and SBP	April 23, 2020	Administrative	Provided a new first triennial assessment deadline.
NSLP/SFSP Food Service Management Contract Duration	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #19: Nationwide Waiver of Food Service Management Contract Duration in the National School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service Program	April 24, 2020	Admin	Allowed extension of FSMC contracts.
CACFP Annual Review Requirements for State agencies	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #20: Nationwide Waiver of Annual Review Requirements for State Agencies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program	April 24, 2020	State Administrative	Provided flexibility for conducting annual reviews of CACFP sites.
SFSP/SSO Unanticipated School Closure Operations	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #21: Nationwide Waiver to Extend Unanticipated School Closure Operations	April 27, 2020	Administrative	Allowed local program operators to continue operating SSO and SFSP under unanticipated school closure requirements in May and June 2020 without meeting the administrative requirements for operating these programs in the summer
SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #32: Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility Waivers	June 10, 2020	Access	Allows sponsors, regardless of their location, to operate open SSO and SFSP sites.

Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-disaster-assistance/fns-responds-covid-19/child-nutrition-covid-19-waivers>

Note: Focus reflects the primary target or goal of the waiver, either improving children's access to meals or providing flexibility in Child Nutrition program administration.

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Appendix B

Data Collection Methods and Data Quality

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Data collection for this report involved obtaining survey and administrative data from the 67 State agencies in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands that administer NSLP, SBP, SSO, SFSP, and CACFP.⁹ In some States, a single agency completed the survey and provided administrative data; in other States, the data were provided by multiple agencies. The data collection period began in March 2021. This appendix provides additional information about the report's data collection process and limitations of the data.

A. Survey data collection

The State agency survey was administered via the web and fielded from March 18 through May 31, 2021.

1. Survey content

The survey collected information on the FFCRA statutory reporting requirements for the 21 COVID-19 Child Nutrition nationwide waivers that FNS authorized for use from March through September 2020 during the federally declared COVID-19 public health emergency. The survey also requested that, if prior to issuance of the nationwide waivers, the State agency received an individual Child Nutrition waiver that was later addressed by a nationwide waiver on the same subject, the State agencies should consider those waivers when responding to questions about the related nationwide waiver.

FFCRA requires each State agency that oversees the Child Nutrition Programs and uses a nationwide waiver to report on: (1) the use of each waiver by the State agency and local program operators, and (2) a description of whether and how each waiver resulted in improved services to children. In addition, three waivers have additional reporting requirements. In FNS guidance on these waivers, State agencies were told to report:

- For the Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility waivers, how new meal sites were selected to serve children who were previously eligible or newly eligible for program benefits due to the economic impacts of COVID-19;
- For the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children, plans taken to ensure that meals were distributed only to parents or guardians of eligible children and that duplicate meals were not distributed to any child; and
- For the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs, information on when and where this waiver was in effect and for what food components.

Full participation in the SMO Study satisfied State agencies' reporting requirements for the 21 COVID-19 Child Nutrition nationwide waivers. State agencies were required to respond to all survey questions, and questions included a “don't know” response option. The survey also included questions about Child Nutrition Program meal service operations during March through September 2020, as well as financial and operational challenges that State agencies and local program operators experienced during that period.

2. Survey data quality

All State agencies completed the survey. Respondents were generally able to provide substantive answers to the survey questions, and they were typically able to find a response that fit their situation among the

⁹ Because SMO is focused on Child Nutrition Programs, it did not collect information on CACFP operations in adult day care centers.

options provided, rather than having to enter a response in the “other-specify” response option. The prevalence of “don’t know” responses varied greatly by SA, waiver survey section, and survey question. For example, the prevalence of don’t know responses was greater for certain monitoring waiver survey sections, as well as for questions regarding specific monitoring methods used or methods used to comply with the additional requirements of the Parent/Guardian Pick Up waiver.

Survey data collected from State agencies on the Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver has certain limitations, primarily due to incomplete data. In the survey, State agencies that collected required data on meal components waived in each Child Nutrition Program by local program operators using the waiver were asked to submit a file with that data. Those who were able to submit a file skipped a set of survey questions on the meal components waived. As State agencies submitted their files, the study team reviewed the files for completeness and conducted follow-up as needed. Follow-up efforts spanned April through October 2021. However, after follow-up, the extent to which required data were provided by State agencies varied, affecting data completeness and quality. About 10 percent of State agencies with local program operators that used the waiver had incomplete data on which meal components were waived.

In addition, through our analysis of the percentage of local program operators that used each waiver in each Child Nutrition Program, we identified data quality issues with some State agencies' survey responses. Specifically, when comparing the number of local program operators that State agencies reported in the survey as having used each waiver in each Program with the number of local program operators that operated the Programs from March through September 2020 in State administrative data, the study team identified inconsistencies in the data collected from some State agencies across the two sources. For example, in the survey, some State agencies reported that a greater number of local program operators used a waiver in a Child Nutrition Program than the total number of local program operators that operated that Program from March through September 2020, according to State administrative data. local program operators these data quality issues were not widespread, they limit the usefulness of calculating the percentages of local program operators that used waivers during this period.

B. Administrative data collection

The administrative data collection began in mid-March 2021. Most State agencies had provided data by July 2021, and all State agencies had provided data by September 2021.

1. Administrative data content

Each month, State agencies report to FNS their Child Nutrition Program participation data aggregated at the State level. State agencies report NSLP, SBP, and SSO data on the FNS-10, Report of School Program Operations; SFSP data on the FNS-418, Report of the Summer Food Service Program for Children; and CACFP data on the FNS-44, Report of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The data collected on these forms were the basis of the SMO administrative data request to State agencies, although SMO collected these data aggregated at the site or local program operator level, depending on the data available at the State agency.

The administrative data collected during SMO Year 1 included school-level FY 2020 FNS-10 data, covering the 12 months from October 2019 through September 2020; site-level FNS-418 data for the months of March through September 2020; and outlet-level FNS-44 data for the months of March through

September 2020. When data were not available from State agencies at these levels, the study team collected SFA-level FNS-10 data, sponsor-level FNS-418 data, and institution-level FNS-44 data.

In addition to the data elements regularly collected on these forms, SMO requested identifying information and key characteristics of each school, site, or outlet, or SFA, sponsor, or institution; and data consistent with what was reported to FNS in the Remarks section of these forms from March through September 2020. Specifically, FNS memo SP-16-2020, CACFP 10-2020, SFSP 09-2020 required that certain information on schools, sites, and outlets operating during the pandemic be provided in the Remarks section of the FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 for the monthly data collections beginning with March 2020.

2. Administrative data quality

Overall, State agencies were generally able to provide the requested administrative data, though the level of disaggregation and level of completeness varied. Regarding disaggregation, most State agencies provided some or all of the requested data at the lower level of disaggregation for each form—school, site, or outlet.

From April through October 2021, the study team reviewed the completeness of the administrative data and conducted follow-up with State agencies to request missing data and to clarify data elements or inconsistencies. Some State agencies were unable to provide certain data elements, which affected the completeness of the data. Data elements commonly missing across the three forms included those related to commodity meals or foods and Remarks section data that FNS requested States submit on operations during the pandemic. Some of the most commonly missing data elements included: (1) on the FNS-10, indicators of whether the site operated SSO or NSLP/SBP during a given month and whether each SSO site operated as open or closed; and (2) on the FNS-418, sponsor type and an indicator of whether the site was made area eligible under the COVID-19 Child Nutrition nationwide waiver.

Data on average daily meals and average daily attendance also were frequently missing across the forms or determined to be inaccurate, based on FNS instructions for calculating these data elements. Although FNS does not collect data on the actual number of children participating in the Programs from State agencies each month, the agency requires State agencies to report on average daily meals or attendance in each Program. FNS uses these data as a proxy for children participating. As a result, these data elements are key to addressing the SMO research questions related to student and child participation. To address the missing or inaccurate data received from State agencies, the study team produced calculated versions of these variables for the purposes of improving the quality and reliability of the analysis.¹⁰

¹⁰ Student and child participation were calculated by dividing the meal count by operating days. If the State agency did not provide operating days but did provide average daily meals or attendance, student and child participation was set equal to the SA-provided average daily meals or attendance.

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Appendix C

Chapter II Supplemental Tables

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Table C.1. Change school participation in NSLP and SBP from October 2019 to April 2020

	Oct. 2019 (#)	Apr. 2020 (#)	Percent change
All schools participating in both NSLP and SBP	75,933	2,077	-97
Public schools	71,465	428	-99
Private schools	2,016	22	-99
Residential childcare institutions	1,789	1,575	-12
All schools participating in NSLP only	6,181	123	-98
Public schools	4,470	73	-98
Private schools	1,586	15	-99
Residential childcare institutions	49	33	-33
All schools participating in SBP only	168	19	-89
Public schools	139	6	-96
Private schools	7	1	-86
Residential childcare institutions	8	12	50

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-10 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: Forty-four States provided school-level data and school type. Schools that participated in SSO in April 2020 are not included in this table.

Table C.2. Schools or sites providing meals through NSLP, SBP, SSO, or SFSP in October 2019 from March through September 2020 and monthly percentage change

	Oct. 2019 (#)	Mar. 2020 [# (% change)]	Apr. 2020 [# (% change)]	May 2020 [# (% change)]	Jun. 2020 [# (% change)]	Jul. 2020 [# (% change)]	Aug. 2020 [# (% change)]	Sep. 2020 [# (% change)]	Apr. to May 2020 (undupli- cated total number of schools or sites)	Jun. to Jul. 2020 (undupli- cated total number of schools or sites)	Aug. to Sep. 2020 (undupli- cated total number of schools or sites)
Schools operating NSLP N = 44	82,114	79,513 (-3%)	2,477 (-97%)	2,369 (-4%)	2,170 (-8%)	2,307 (6%)	27,973 (1,113%)	23,158 (-17%)	2,564	2,652	33,022
Schools operating SBP N = 44	76,101	69,529 (-9%)	2,359 (-97%)	2,276 (-4%)	2,118 (-7%)	2,232 (5%)	26,102 (1,069%)	21,244 (-19%)	2,442	2,551	30,306
Schools operating SSO N = 33	.	22,785	16,910 (-26%)	16,015 (-5%)	11,159 (-30%)	5,666 (-49%)	8,083 (43%)	21,548 (167%)	17,415	11,602	22,486
Sites operating SFSP N = 45	.	19,928	22,803 (14%)	24,292 (7%)	28,648 (18%)	31,161 (9%)	29,460 (-5%)	39,728 (35%)	25,968	36,292	51,902
Total^a N = 49	82,282	125,146 (34%)	42,360 (-66%)	42,833 (1%)	42,173 (-2%)	39,294 (-7%)	66,466 (69%)	86,354 (30%)	46,141	50,776	109,262

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-10 and FNS-418 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: The number of schools (NSLP, SBP, and SSO) and sites (SFSP) operating during each month is calculated for each program. Generally, if the same school or site operated in multiple programs, it is counted twice in the total. However, if a school shifted operations between NSLP and SSO in a given month, it is included only in the count of SSO sites for that month. Shaded cells are not applicable.

^a Because some schools participated in both NSLP and SBP, the totals do not equal the sum of the rows above.

Table C.3. Percent SSO or SFSP sites by area eligibility status, March through September 2020

	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020	May 2020	Jun. 2020	Jul. 2020	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020
SSO							
New area eligible							
Number of states	N = 22	N = 22	N = 22	N = 22	N = 17	N = 19	N = 21
Percentage of sites	16	17	17	18	6	10	18
Open/area eligible							
Number of states	N = 30	N = 31	N = 30	N = 29	N = 24	N = 25	N = 27
Percentage of sites	92	90	90	93	93	86	73
Closed							
Number of states	N = 30	N = 31	N = 30	N = 29	N = 24	N = 25	N = 27
Percentage of sites	8	10	10	7	7	14	27
SFSP							
New area eligible							
Number of states	N = 35	N = 35	N = 35	N = 35	N = 36	N = 36	N = 35
Percentage of sites	13	15	15	12	13	17	26
Open/area eligible							
Number of states	N = 42	N = 42	N = 42	N = 42	N = 45	N = 45	N = 44
Percentage of sites	91	91	91	92	91	86	73
Closed							
Number of states	N = 42	N = 42	N = 42	N = 42	N = 45	N = 45	N = 44
Percentage of sites	9	9	9	8	9	14	27

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-10 and FNS-418 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: States included in the analysis are those that provided data on sites made area eligible in SSO or SFSP because of the area eligibility nationwide waiver. Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of sites made area eligible in SSO or SFSP because of the area eligibility nationwide waiver, the number of sites classified as open or area eligible under Federal regulations, or the number of closed sites by the total number of SSO and SFSP sites in States that provided these data.

Table C.4. Outlets providing meals through CACFP from March through September 2020 and monthly percentage change

	Mar. 2020 (#)	Apr. 2020 [# (% change)]	May 2020 [# (% change)]	Jun. 2020 [# (% change)]	Jul. 2020 [# (% change)]	Aug. 2020 [# (% change)]	Sep. 2020 [# (% change)]	Apr. to May 2020 (unduplicated total number of outlets)	Jun. to Jul. 2020 (unduplicated total number of outlets)	Aug. to Sep. 2020 (unduplicated total number of outlets)
Outlets operating CACFP	105,640	57,129 (-46%)	61,773 (8%)	66,754 (8%)	66,470 (0%)	74,932 (13%)	85,238 (14%)	64,266	72,648	88,230

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-44 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: Forty-three States provided outlet-level FNS-44 data.

Table C.5. Children participating in NSLP, SBP, SSO, and SFSP from March through September 2020 and percent change

	Mar. 2020 [#]	Apr. 2020 [# (% change)]	May 2020 [# (% change)]	Jun. 2020 [# (% change)]	Jul. 2020 [# (% change)]	Aug. 2020 [# (% change)]	Sep. 2020 [# (% change)]
NSLP N = 54	23,153,369	112,044 (-100%)	108,506 (-3%)	78,417 (-28%)	196,192 (150%)	3,394,458 (1,630%)	3,043,962 (-10%)
SBP N = 54	12,628,537	132,243 (-99%)	151,763 (15%)	132,872 (-12%)	209,393 (58%)	1,932,626 (823%)	1,704,828 (-12%)
SSO N = 40	5,919,772	4,182,375 (-29%)	3,870,621 (-7%)	2,200,973 (-43%)	1,280,534 (-42%)	1,527,099 (19%)	4,071,976 (167%)
SFSP N = 53	3,887,466	6,244,543 (61%)	6,807,578 (9%)	5,185,402 (-24%)	4,975,118 (-4%)	4,372,921 (-12%)	7,414,986 (70%)
Total^a N = 54	34,400,149	10,571,525 (-69%)	10,841,919 (3%)	7,528,458 (-31%)	6,492,047 (-14%)	9,367,870 (44%)	14,677,175 (57%)

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: Child participation equals the meal count for the meal type with the most claims divided by operating days. If the State did not provide operating days but did provide average daily meals, child participation equals the State-provided average daily meals. Pennsylvania did not provide operating days or average daily meals for SFSP and is therefore excluded from SFSP participation data. If an SFA shifted operations between NSLP and SSO in a given month, children served by that SFA are only included in the SSO participation data for that month.

^a Totals include SSO, SFSP, and either NSLP or SBP, based on which program had a larger number of children participating that month.

Table C.6. Children participating in CACFP from March through September 2020 and monthly percentage change

	Mar. 2020 [#]	Apr. 2020 [# (% change)]	May 2020 [# (% change)]	Jun. 2020 [# (% change)]	Jul. 2020 [# (% change)]	Aug. 2020 [# (% change)]	Sep. 2020 [# (% change)]
CACFP	3,642,891	1,368,071 (-62%)	1,914,082 (40%)	1,983,727 (4%)	1,261,374 (-36%)	1,805,610 (43%)	2,541,101 (41%)
Child care centers	3,270,454	1,134,648 (-65%)	1,651,705 (46%)	1,682,416 (2%)	934,353 (-44%)	1,463,700 (57%)	2,200,837 (50%)
Family day care homes	372,341	233,423 (-37%)	262,324 (12%)	301,231 (15%)	326,875 (9%)	341,722 (5%)	340,177 (0%)

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-44 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: All 50 States the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands provided child participation data that is included in the first and second rows of this table. Child participation in child care centers and family day care homes does not equal total CACFP child participation for some months because outlet type was not available for all child participation data. Child participation equals the meal count for the meal type with the most claims divided by operating days. If the State did not provide operating days but did provide average daily meals, child participation equals the State-provided average daily meals.

Table C.7. Meals and snacks/supplements served by school, site, or outlet type through NSLP, SBP, SSO, SFSP, and CACFP during COVID-19 (March through September 2020) and monthly percentage change

	Mar. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Apr. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	May 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Jun. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Jul. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Aug. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Sep. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]
NSLP	N = 44	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 42	N = 42	N = 41
Public schools	203,266,046 (38%)	853,200 (0%)	731,311 (0%)	651,638 (0%)	1,281,785 (0%)	29,741,169 (11%)	47,541,957 (10%)
Private schools	4,710,347 (1%)	51,668 (0%)	79,775 (0%)	53,625 (0%)	62,329 (0%)	717,528 (0%)	2,287,194 (0%)
RCCIs	1,932,776 (0%)	1,562,346 (0%)	1,537,105 (0%)	1,439,566 (0%)	1,375,125 (0%)	1,413,253 (1%)	1,464,119 (0%)
SBP	N = 44	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 42	N = 42	N = 41
Public schools	97,650,519 (18%)	758,344 (0%)	628,698 (0%)	581,963 (0%)	1,192,902 (0%)	17,640,288 (6%)	27,012,784 (6%)
Private schools	1,310,077 (0%)	40,680 (0%)	52,995 (0%)	37,248 (0%)	37,493 (0%)	162,951 (0%)	1,086,902 (0%)
RCCIs	1,313,686 (0%)	1,126,640 (0%)	1,131,493 (0%)	1,060,061 (0%)	1,034,637 (0%)	1,056,429 (0%)	1,056,496 (0%)
SSO	N = 33	N = 33	N = 32	N = 31	N = 26	N = 28	N = 29
Public schools	66,889,132 (12%)	144,928,280 (36%)	135,668,685 (32%)	85,341,360 (25%)	50,823,130 (17%)	29,269,033 (11%)	93,347,623 (20%)
Private schools	5,222,883 (1%)	7,011,056 (2%)	14,347,915 (3%)	15,481,025 (5%)	3,122,387 (1%)	3,308,388 (1%)	3,784,522 (1%)
RCCIs	105,697 (0%)	111,602 (0%)	96,843 (0%)	49,371 (0%)	9,783 (0%)	4,757 (0%)	53,513 (0%)
Other sites	249,680 (0%)	849,280 (0%)	646,803 (0%)	520,227 (0%)	343,653 (0%)	73,248 (0%)	279,727 (0%)
SFSP	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 45	N = 45	N = 44
Self-prep/rural sites	46,744,891 (9%)	154,631,185 (38%)	153,645,145 (36%)	113,074,175 (34%)	108,933,977 (36%)	72,443,682 (26%)	146,301,728 (31%)
Other sites	11,781,505 (2%)	39,578,051 (10%)	45,412,478 (11%)	42,606,149 (13%)	66,266,470 (22%)	53,494,332 (19%)	49,144,867 (10%)
CACFP	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43	N = 43
Tier I	16,227,081 (3%)	11,819,442 (3%)	12,504,109 (3%)	15,117,948 (4%)	15,379,987 (5%)	15,343,447 (6%)	15,270,497 (3%)
Tier II	2,040,747 (0%)	1,305,390 (0%)	1,453,524 (0%)	1,837,457 (1%)	1,876,953 (1%)	1,988,518 (1%)	2,079,690 (0%)
Family Day Care Homes	18,274,110 (3%)	13,129,507 (3%)	13,962,623 (3%)	16,961,659 (5%)	17,263,724 (6%)	17,338,267 (6%)	17,357,733 (4%)
For-profit center	29,281,523 (5%)	13,510,621 (3%)	18,532,425 (4%)	25,894,015 (8%)	27,120,966 (9%)	26,569,602 (10%)	29,323,945 (6%)
OSHCC	1,789,520 (0%)	400,889 (0%)	591,159 (0%)	833,888 (0%)	681,185 (0%)	738,188 (0%)	1,239,298 (0%)
Head Start	7,884,447 (1%)	860,527 (0%)	1,131,467 (0%)	1,078,179 (0%)	1,249,015 (0%)	1,680,231 (1%)	5,396,407 (1%)
At-risk afterschool	10,285,094 (2%)	8,438,854 (2%)	12,469,204 (3%)	10,058,047 (3%)	487,403 (0%)	2,036,900 (1%)	12,098,808 (3%)
Emergency shelter	259,082 (0%)	209,477 (0%)	171,187 (0%)	204,172 (0%)	198,649 (0%)	208,158 (0%)	189,153 (0%)

Appendix C. Chapter II Supplemental Tables

	Mar. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Apr. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	May 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Jun. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Jul. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Aug. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]	Sep. 2020 [# (% change across child nutrition programs)]
All other CCCs	19,179,163 (4%)	5,836,799 (1%)	8,267,739 (2%)	14,073,393 (4%)	15,313,782 (5%)	16,320,908 (6%)	18,633,844 (4%)
CCC	70,104,624 (13%)	30,119,321 (7%)	41,857,890 (10%)	52,617,322 (16%)	45,582,352 (15%)	48,573,922 (17%)	68,701,317 (15%)

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-10, FNS-418, or FNS-44 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: Sample sizes differ by program and month and are provided in program subheading rows. Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of meals served in each school, site, or outlet type for each month by the total number of meals served during the month across all five programs. Percentages sum to greater than 100 because of sites that provide both NSLP and SBP

Table C.8. Schools, sites, or outlets that served one or more meal type through NSLP/SBP, SSO, SFSP, and CACFP during COVID-19 (March through September 2020)

	Mar. 2020 (%)	Apr. 2020 (%)	May 2020 (%)	Jun. 2020 (%)	Jul. 2020 (%)	Aug. 2020 (%)	Sep. 2020 (%)
NSLP/SBP N = 44							
1 meal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 meal + 1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 meals	82	60	57	58	65	91	89
2 meals + 1 snack	18	40	43	42	35	9	11
3 meals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 meals + 1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SSO N = 33							
1 meal	27	7	7	7	4	5	7
1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 meal + 1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 meals	71	92	93	93	95	94	92
2 meals + 1 snack	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
3 meals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 meals + 1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SFSP N = 45							
1 meal	6	6	6	10	11	9	5
1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 meal + 1 snack	2	3	4	8	9	8	2
2 meals	89	90	89	81	78	82	93
2 meals + 1 snack	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 meals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 meals + 1 snack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CACFP N = 43							
1 meal	12	3	3	2	0	4	6
1 snack	4	1	1	1	0	2	4
1 meal + 1 snack	5	4	4	4	3	3	6
2 meals	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
2 meals + 1 snack	60	77	78	79	82	76	69
3 meals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 meals + 1 snack	15	13	13	13	13	13	13

	Mar. 2020 (%)	Apr. 2020 (%)	May 2020 (%)	Jun. 2020 (%)	Jul. 2020 (%)	Aug. 2020 (%)	Sep. 2020 (%)
Total N = 50							
1 meal	13	5	5	5	4	6	6
1 snack	3	1	1	1	0	1	3
1 meal + 1 snack	3	3	3	4	4	3	3
2 meals	40	38	36	32	30	40	45
2 meals + 1 snack	34	46	47	49	52	42	36
3 meals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 meals + 1 snack	7	8	7	8	8	7	7

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 data from fiscal year 2020.

Notes: Program percentages are calculated by dividing the number of schools (NSLP, SBP, and SSO), sites (SFSP), or outlets (CACFP) serving more than one meal type by the total number operating each program during each month. Total percentages are calculated by dividing the number of schools, sites, or outlets serving more than one meal type across all five programs by the total number operating across the five programs during each month. Generally, if a school, site, or outlet operated in two programs in a month, it is counted twice in the totals. However, if a school shifted operations between NSLP and SSO in a given month, it is included only in the count of SSO sites for that month.

Appendix D

Chapter III Supplemental Tables

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Table D.1. Percentage of State agencies reporting that certain proportions of local program operators experienced operational challenges providing meal service from March through September 2020, by local program operator type

Proportion of local program operators that experienced operational challenges	SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, SSO (% State agencies)	SFAs providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Non-SFA sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Institutions providing CACFP (% State agencies)
None	5	6	9	7
Less than half	27	20	22	18
About half	13	17	20	16
More than half	23	30	22	33
All	29	20	19	18
Don't know ^a	4	7	7	7

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies reporting each proportion by the total number of State agencies responding.

^a The percentage of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of local program operators that experienced operational challenges providing meal service.

Table D.2. Factors contributing to operational challenges providing meal service from March through September 2020, by local program operator type

Factors	SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, SSO (% State agencies)	SFA sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Non-SFA sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Institutions providing CACFP (% State agencies)
Completing waiver request forms	52	43	39	40
Identifying site locations	30	30	35	24
Obtaining approval for new sites	29	28	35	20
Establishing new meal delivery methods	66	70	70	65
Obtaining needed meal delivery equipment	54	57	52	36
Redistributing staff to manage meal sites and delivery methods	71	72	67	55
Ensuring staff safety and obtaining personal protective equipment	80	76	76	73
Continuity of operations during staff absences	84	80	70	76
Providing meals during food shortages or supply chain issues	66	67	63	71
Obtaining meal packaging	59	63	54	53
Other	5	4	2	2
Other: Switching meal operations to accommodate serving in-school and virtual students	5	4	2	2
Don't know what factors contributed to operational challenges	2	2	0	2

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies reporting each factor by the total number of State agencies that oversee the programs.

^a “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded.

Table D.3. Operational challenges for local program operators in rural and urban/suburban areas from March through September 2020

Differences	Percentage of State agencies
No Difference in Rural vs. Urban/Suburban Operational Challenges	46
Differences in Rural vs. Urban/Suburban Operational Challenges	51
Rural: meal site access/distances	32
Rural: supply chain issues	29
Rural: meal delivery	21
Rural: staff availability	21
Rural: participation decreases affected operations	3
Urban/suburban: meal delivery	3
Urban/suburban: participation decreases affected operations	3
Don't know ^a	5

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Differences listed were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Percentage of State agencies were calculated by dividing the total number of State agencies that reported each difference by the total number that reported there were differences. "Rural" challenges were identified by State agencies as those that local program operators in rural areas experienced; "urban/suburban" challenges were identified by State agencies as those that local program operators in urban and suburban areas experienced.

^a The percentage of State agencies that indicated there were differences in the operational challenges local program operators faced in rural areas compared to urban/suburban areas, but they did not know what the differences were.

Table D.4. Percentage of State agencies in which certain proportions of local program operators experienced financial challenges providing meal service from March through September 2020, by local program operator type

Proportion of local program operators that experienced financial challenges	SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, SSO (% State agencies)	SFA sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Non-SFA sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Institutions providing CACFP (% State agencies)
None	4	7	9	5
Less than half	14	17	31	11
About half	13	9	11	18
More than half	41	43	24	42
All	21	13	13	16
Don't know ^a	7	11	11	7

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies reporting each proportion by the total number of State agencies responding.

^a The percentage of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of local program operators that experienced financial challenges providing meal service.

Table D.5. Factors that contributing to financial challenges providing meal service from March through September 2020, by local program operator type

Factors	SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, SSO (% State agencies)	SFA sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Non-SFA sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Institutions providing CACFP (% State agencies)
Meal packaging costs	75	72	67	62
Purchase of personal protective equipment for staff	79	72	72	78
Meal transportation and delivery costs	64	74	67	55
Purchase of equipment for alternate meal service approaches	57	59	43	35
Staff overtime or hazard pay	61	56	41	44
Increased food costs	71	67	65	71
Fixed staff-related costs	55	52	35	42
Other fixed costs	48	35	31	38
Decreased federal reimbursement because of decreased participation	79	61	52	82
Other	7	9	6	5
Other: Decreased a la carte and competitive food sales ^a	5	6	0	0
Don't know what factors contributed to financial challenges	2	0	0	0

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies reporting each factor by the total number of State agencies that oversee the programs.

^a “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded.

Table D.6. Financial challenges for local program operators in rural and urban/suburban areas from March through September 2020

Differences	Percentage of State agencies
No Difference in Rural vs. Urban/Suburban Financial Challenges	28
Differences in Rural vs. Urban/Suburban Financial Challenges	69
Rural: higher transportation costs	53
Rural: higher food costs	22
Rural: participation decreases affected finances	18
Rural: higher supply costs	9
Rural: higher staffing costs	2
Urban/suburban: participation decreases affected finances	7
Urban/suburban: higher supply costs	2
Urban/suburban: higher staffing costs	2
Don't know ^a	7

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Differences listed were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Percentage of State agencies calculated by dividing the total number of State agencies that reported each difference by the total number that reported there were differences. "Rural" challenges were identified by State agencies as those that local program operators in rural areas experienced; "urban/suburban" challenges were identified by State agencies as those that local program operators in urban and suburban areas experienced.

^a The percentage of State agencies that indicated there were differences in the financial challenges local program operators faced in rural areas compared to urban/suburban areas, but they did not know what the differences were.

Table D.7. Percentage of State agencies that experienced financial or operational challenges administering Child Nutrition Programs, or challenges implementing or using the COVID-19 Child Nutrition nationwide waivers, from March through September 2020

Type of challenges	Percentage of State agencies
Financial	22
Operational	76
Implementing or using waivers	67

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies reporting each challenge by the total number of State agencies.

Table D.8. Factors that contributed to operational challenges administering Child Nutrition Programs from March through September 2020, by program

Factor	NSLP (% State agencies)	SBP (% State agencies)	SSO (% State agencies)	SFSP (% State agencies)	CACFP (% State agencies)
Resources needed to review and approve waiver requests from providers	43	43	38	50	40
Resources needed to approve meal sites	27	27	25	37	22
Resources needed to assist providers with identification of meal sites	27	25	23	30	18
Resources needed to provide technical assistance to local program operators	41	39	34	44	44
Limitations on ability to hire new staff	27	27	27	24	25
Unexpected staff training needs	34	34	32	48	42
Redesigning monitoring approaches (for example, from onsite to virtual)	52	50	43	67	60
Implementing IT system changes	46	45	39	46	42
Office closures	41	41	36	46	51
Unclear guidance from FNS	57	57	50	61	58
Untimely guidance from FNS	68	66	57	70	65
Insufficient technical assistance from FNS	34	34	32	35	36
Other	11	11	11	11	7
No operational challenges with program administration	9	11	20	2	2

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each factor by the total number of State agencies that oversee the program.

Table D.9. Percentage of State agencies that were unable to overcome certain challenges with implementing or using COVID-19 Child Nutrition nationwide waivers from March through September 2020

Challenge	Percentage of State agencies
Slow guidance	12
Time/effort needed to collect data	10
Unclear guidance	9
Staff burden	9
Ensuring program integrity	4
Slow waiver release	3
Administrative funding inflexibility	1
Future uncertainty	1
CACFP waiver differences	1
At-risk afterschool waiver challenges	1
Guidance distributed to locals by advocates	1
None: No challenges reported implementing or using COVID-19 Child Nutrition waivers	33
None: State agencies were able to overcome all challenges	30

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Per Table D.2, sixty-seven percent of State agencies had challenges implementing or using COVID-19 Child Nutrition waivers. State agencies that experienced challenges were asked which they were unable to overcome. Challenges listed were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each challenge that could not be overcome by the total number of State agencies that oversee the programs. Some State agencies reported that they were able to overcome all challenges and others reported they experienced no challenges. These responses are captured in the last two rows of this table.

Table D.10. Factors that contributed to financial challenges administering Child Nutrition Programs from March through September 2020, by program

Factor	NSLP (% State agencies)	SBP (% State agencies)	SSO (% State agencies)	SFSP (% State agencies)	CACFP (% State agencies)
Added new staff	7	7	5	4	5
Increased staff hours	16	16	16	17	18
Staff overtime	9	9	9	9	9
IT system changes	13	13	11	9	7
Other	9	9	9	7	7
No financial challenges with program administration	0	0	2	2	2

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies reporting each factor by the total number of State agencies that oversee the program.

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Appendix E

Chapter IV Supplemental Tables

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Table E.1. Total number of State agencies that used each waiver from March through September 2020, by Child Nutrition Program

Waiver	NSLP (administered by 56 State agencies)	SBP (administered by 56 State agencies)	SSO (administered by 56 State agencies)	SFSP (administered by 54 State agencies)	CACFP (administered by 55 State agencies)
Meal Service Time Flexibility	44	43	40	53	52
Non-congregate	41	40	39	53	53
Afterschool Activity Requirements in NSLP/CACFP	31	NA	NA	NA	43
Meal Pattern Flexibility	38	38	36	42	42
Parent Pick-up	39	40	38	52	50
CEP Deadlines in NSLP/SBP	52	48	NA	NA	NA
CACFP Monitoring for Sponsors	NA	NA	NA	NA	54
School Meals Onsite Monitoring - Revised	45	43	NA	NA	NA
SFSP Onsite Monitoring for Sponsors	NA	NA	NA	52	NA
60-Day Reporting Requirements	30	27	NA	7	37
SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites	NA	NA	34	47	NA
SFSP First Week Site Visits	NA	NA	NA	53	NA
SFSP Offer vs. Serve Flexibilities	NA	NA	NA	51	NA
SFSP/SSO Meal Service Time	NA	NA	39	52	NA
School Wellness Policy Assessments	42	38	NA	NA	NA
NSLP/SFSP Food Service Management Contract Duration	31	NA	NA	24	NA
SFSP/SSO Unanticipated School Closure Operations	NA	NA	39	49	NA
SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility	NA	NA	38	44	NA

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Sixty-seven State agencies administered at least one of the relevant Child Nutrition Programs in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands during this time period. The waivers included here were used by local program operators. State Agency level waivers are shown in Appendix F. Shaded cells are not applicable.

NA = not applicable.

Table E.2. Total number and percentage of all local program operators that used each waiver from March through September 2020, by Child Nutrition Program

Waiver	NSLP			SBP			SSO			SFSP			CACFP: Child care centers			CACFP: Family day care homes		
	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a
Meal Service Time Flexibility	4,571	35	5	3,990	35	5	5,687	68	4	6,478	73	4	3,414	14	6	611	>100 ^b	14
Non-congregate	6,144	44	4	5,530	46	4	6,945	78	2	7,168	78	2	4,174	16	5	153	26	12
Afterschool Activity Requirements in NSLP/CACFP	1,287	10	8	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	791	4	14	29	6	13
Meal Pattern Flexibility	4,323	30	2	3,934	31	2	4,115	45	1	1,447	16	2	2,737	10	3	133	21	9
Parent Pick-up	5,171	38	4	4,603	39	4	5,801	68	3	5,779	68	3	2,933	12	7	292	51	13
CEP Deadlines in NSLP/SBP	4,740	40	7	4,332	41	6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
CACFP Monitoring for Sponsors	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3,496	26	13	1,001	>100 ^b	12
School Meals Onsite Monitoring - Revised	3,246	30	10	3,130	33	9	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SFSP Onsite Monitoring for Sponsors	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4,289	60	11	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
60-Day Reporting Requirements	557	5	6	488	5	5	NA	NA	NA	213	2	2	842	4	8	47	9	9
SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,926	36	4	2,694	32	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SFSP First Week Site Visits	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4,616	57	7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SFSP Offer vs. Serve Flexibilities	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3,274	41	6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SFSP/SSO Meal Service Time	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5,642	65	4	5,727	66	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Appendix E. Chapter IV Supplemental Tables

Waiver	NSLP			SBP			SSO			SFSP			CACFP: Child care centers			CACFP: Family day care homes		
	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a	#	%	Don't Know ^a
School Wellness Policy Assessments	6,026	48	3	5,436	49	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
NSLP/SFSP Food Service Management Contract Duration	260	2	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	214	3	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SFSP/SSO Unanticipated School Closure Operations	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6,522	85	6	5,988	78	9	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3,226	37	4	3,693	43	3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021 and disaggregated FNS-10, FNS-418, and FNS-44 data from fiscal year 2020.

Note: Program percentages were calculated by dividing the number of local program operators that State agencies reported in the survey used each waiver from March through September 2020 by the total number of local program operators that served program meals or snacks/supplements at any point during that time period, according to State administrative data.

^a The number of State agencies that reported they did not know how many local program operators used the waiver, after reporting that the waiver was used in the program. These State agencies are excluded from the percentage calculations.

^b Inconsistencies in the data collected from State agencies across the two sources affected the percentages to some extent. For example, in the survey, some State agencies reported a greater number of local program operators used a waiver in a certain Child Nutrition Program than the total number of local program operators that operated that program from March through September 2020, according to State administrative data. As a result, the percentage of local program operators that used certain waivers exceeded 100 percent for some programs, which are identified in the table as “>100.”

NA = not applicable.

Table E.3. Percentage of State agencies in which SFAs established NSLP, SBP, or SSO meal sites with certain characteristics from March through September 2020, by proportion of SFAs

Characteristic	No SFAs (% State agencies)	<1/2 SFAs (% State agencies)	About 1/2 SFAs (% State agencies)	>1/2 SFAs (% State agencies)	All SFAs (% State agencies)	Don't Know ^a (% State agencies)
Central locations respective to children's homes	14	11	14	34	7	20
Locations with higher levels of participation in Child Nutrition Programs	16	13	16	29	4	23
Facilities with central kitchens	13	25	14	18	0	30
Facilities with larger spaces for meal preparation	14	16	21	18	4	27
Continued offering meals at all sites	7	29	18	20	13	14
Other ^b	23	5	2	2	4	36

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each proportion by the total number of State agencies responding.

^a The percentage of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of SFAs that established meal sites with certain characteristics.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. State agencies also reported the proportion of local program operators that provided the “other” characteristic specified. Other responses included bus routes, mobile sites, and home delivery.

Table E.4. Percentage of State agencies in which sponsors established SFSP meal sites with certain characteristics from March through September 2020, by proportion of sponsors

Characteristic	No Sponsors (% State agencies)	<1/2 Sponsors (% State agencies)	About 1/2 Sponsors (% State agencies)	>1/2 Sponsors (% State agencies)	All Sponsors (% State agencies)	Don't Know ^a (% State agencies)
Central locations respective to children's homes	6	15	20	31	9	19
Locations with higher levels of participation in Child Nutrition Programs	2	17	26	28	6	22
Facilities with central kitchens	2	33	22	22	4	17
Facilities with larger spaces for meal preparation	4	28	26	17	4	22
Continued offering meals at all sites	6	24	24	28	6	13
Other ^b	22	6	4	2	0	33

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each proportion by the total number of State agencies responding.

^a The percentage of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of sponsors that established meal sites with certain characteristics.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. State agencies also reported the proportion of local program operators that provided the “other” characteristic specified. Other responses included bus routes, mobile sites, and home delivery.

Table E.5. Percentage of State agencies in which institutions established CACFP meal sites with certain characteristics from March through September 2020, by proportion of institutions

Characteristic	No Institutions (% State agencies)	<1/2 Institutions (% State agencies)	About 1/2 Institutions (% State agencies)	>1/2 Institutions (% State agencies)	All Institutions (% State agencies)	Don't Know ^a (% State agencies)
Central locations respective to children's homes	15	29	7	15	4	31
Locations with higher levels of participation in Child Nutrition Programs	5	31	20	11	0	33
Facilities with central kitchens	13	36	13	5	0	33
Facilities with larger spaces for meal preparation	16	35	7	5	0	36
Facilities caring for children of essential workers	7	27	22	16	2	25
Continued offering meals at all sites	5	29	16	25	2	22
Other ^b	18	2	0	0	0	45

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each proportion by the total number of State agencies responding.

^a The percentage of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of institutions that established meal sites with certain characteristics.

^b "Other" responses were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. State agencies also reported the proportion of local program operators that provided the "other" characteristic specified. Other responses included bus routes, mobile sites, and home delivery.

Table E.6. Percentage of SSO and SFSP sites that were open or closed from March through September 2020

Site type	SSO (% sites)	SFSP (% sites)
Open	30	53
Closed	7	13

Source: School Meals Operations Study, disaggregated FNS-10 and FNS-418 data, fiscal year 2020.

Notes: Open sites serve meals to all children from the community on a first-come, first-served basis, while closed sites serve meals to children enrolled in a program at the site. The analysis includes SSO data provided by 31 States, and SFSP data provided by 45 States. Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of each type of SSO and SFSP site by the total number of SSO and SFSP sites in States that provided this data.

Table E.7. Proportion of local program operators that used certain methods to target new meal sites with the Area Eligibility SFSP/SSO waiver most commonly reported by State agencies from March through September 2020, by local program operator type and program

Method	Proportion of SFAs providing SSO most commonly reported by State agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of sponsors providing SFSP most commonly reported by State agencies	Don't Know ^a
No methods used- all sites approved as area eligible	None	11	None	9
Analyzed unemployment data	None	12	Less than half	15
Analyzed prior year school meals eligibility data	Less than half	10	Less than half	12
Identified site(s) that were area eligible in prior years	More than half	8	Less than half	8
Targeted near-eligible sites, such as sites where 40% of children were eligible for free or reduced-price meals	Less than half	11	More than half	9
Other ^b	None	9	None	10
Did not use any methods to target new meal sites	None	13	None	13

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: State agencies reported the proportion of local program operators on a 5-point scale: that included none, less than half, about half, more than half, and all. The SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility waiver was used by 38 State agencies for SSO and 44 State agencies for SFSP.

^a The number of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of SFAs that used certain methods to target new meal sites.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. State agencies also reported the proportion of local program operators that provided the “other” method specified. Other responses included considered geography and identified accessible locations.

Table E.8. Percentage of State agencies across all waivers reporting that more than half or all local program operators implemented certain meal delivery methods, meal options, or meal counting methods

	All local program operators (% State agencies)	SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, or SSO (% State agencies)	Sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Institutions providing CACFP (% State agencies)
Meal delivery methods				
Walk-up sites at schools, centers, or other buildings	40	42	47	25
Curbside pick-up/ drive through service	54	63	60	31
Mobile sites at which a bus or van delivers meals at pre-set times	8	9	11	2
Delivery with stops at individual homes	5	5	6	4
Other home delivery methods	2	3	2	2
Meal options				
Full week (5 days) of meals at one time	19	23	24	5
2–3 days of meals at one time	26	30	31	12
Weekend meals	13	16	15	7
Bulk food packages ^a	11	13	12	6
Frozen meals	3	4	3	2
Shelf-stable meals	10	13	11	6
Supper and a snack through CACFP at-risk	14	NA	NA	14
Meal counting options				
Standard point of service system	26	16	33	27
Mobile technology (for example, laptop, tablet, or cell phone apps)	6	7	7	1
Paper rosters	42	40	44	43
Clickers	5	6	5	3
Other ^b	4	7	2	2

Source: SMO Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Average percentages were calculated by dividing the summed numbers of State agencies that reported “more than half” or “all” for each method (for each local program operator type) by the summed numbers of State agencies that reported the local program operator type used each access-focused waiver. NA= not applicable.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded.

NA = not applicable.

Table E.9. Percentage of State agencies reporting that local program operators indicated certain methods were most effective at providing the greatest number of meals to the greatest number of children from March through September 2020

Method	Percentage of State agencies
Allowing parents/guardians to pick-up meals without children present	91
Curbside pick-up/drive-through services	91
Distribution of 2–3 days of meals at one time	82
Distribution of a full week (5 days) of meals at one time	78
Walk-up sites at schools, centers, or other buildings	64
Mobile sites at which a bus or van delivers meals at pre-set times	63
Distribution of weekend meals	55
Delivery with stops at individual homes	51
Replacing individual meals with bulk food packages ^a	45
Distribution of shelf-stable meals	36
Distribution of frozen meals	25
Other home delivery method	10
Other ^b	10
Other: Offering all meals for free	3
Other: Non-congregate meals	3

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: State agencies were asked “what methods did local program operators indicate were the most effective at providing the greatest number of meals to the greatest number of children during the federally declared COVID-19 public health emergency, from March through September 2020?” Multiple responses were allowed. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each method by the total number of State agencies responding.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded.

Table E.10. Percentage of State agencies reporting that local program operators indicated certain meal service methods were the most costly for providing meal service from March through September 2020, by local program operator type

Method	SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, or SSO (% State agencies)	SFA Sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Non-SFA Sponsors providing SFSP (% State agencies)	Institutions providing CACFP (% State agencies)
Providing meals at walk-up sites at schools, centers, or other buildings	23	17	19	13
Providing meals through curbside pick-up/drive-through service	34	28	28	24
Operating mobile sites at which a bus or van delivers meals at pre-set times	50	63	52	42
Delivering meals with stops at individual homes	55	65	52	49
Other methods for providing home delivery of meals	18	19	19	11
Distributing a full week (5 days) of meals at one time	9	17	15	13
Distributing 2–3 days of meals at one time	11	13	13	11
Distributing meals daily	38	46	41	36
Distributing weekend meals	9	17	17	11
Replacing individual meals with bulk food packages ^a	13	9	11	9
Providing frozen meals	7	9	9	5
Providing shelf-stable meals	32	28	28	20
Other	5	2	4	2
Don't know which types of meal service methods were most costly	23	20	26	35

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: State agencies were asked “what types of meal service methods did local program operators indicate were most costly for local program operators providing meal service during the federally declared COVID-19 public health emergency, from March through September 2020?” State agencies were allowed to select up to five methods for each local program operator type. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies reporting each method by the total number of State agencies that oversee the programs.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

Table E.11. Proportion of local program operators with the Parent/Guardian Pick-up waiver most commonly reported by State agencies that used certain methods to ensure meals were distributed only to parents or guardians of eligible children from March through September 2020, by local program operator type

Method	Proportion of SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, or SSO most commonly reported by State agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of sponsors providing SFSP most commonly reported by State Agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of institutions providing CACFP most commonly reported by State Agencies	Don't Know ^a
Scanned children's meal cards or asked for children's personal identification numbers used for meal service	Less than half	10	Less than half	12	None	16
Requested children's names, ages or dates of birth, or grade levels when meals were picked up	Less than half	9	Less than half	11	More than half	11
Requested children's school names or a copy of school correspondence when meals were picked up	Less than half	9	Less than half	14	None	17
Requested the number of children for which the parent/guardian was picking up meals	All	8	More than half	9	More than half	13
Provided parents/guardians with rear view mirror hangers, placards, or QR codes	Less than half	14	Less than half	17	None	20
Posted signage to indicate who is eligible to pick up and receive meals	None	13	More than half	15	Less than half	19
Other ^b	None	16	None	17	None	19
Other: Parent signed form, provided attestation	Less than half	NA	More than half	NA	More than half	NA
Other: Pre-order	Less than half	NA	Less than half	NA	NA	NA
Did not use any methods to ensure meals were distributed only to parents/guardians of eligible children	None	11	None	11	None	15

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: State agencies reported the proportion of local program operators on a 5-point scale that included none, less than half, about half, more than half, and all. The Parent Pick-up waiver was used by 39 State agencies for NSLP, 38 State agencies for SBP, 38 State agencies for SSO, 52 State agencies for SFSP, and 50 State agencies for CACFP. NA= not applicable.

^a The number of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of local program operators that used certain methods to ensure meals were distributed only to parents or guardians of eligible children.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. State agencies also reported the proportion of local program operators that provided the “other” method specified.

Table E.12. Proportion of local program operators with the Parent/Guardian Pick-up waiver that used certain methods to ensure duplicate meals were not distributed to any child from March through September 2020, by local program operator type

Method	Proportion of SFAs providing NSLP, SBP, or SSO most commonly reported by State Agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of sponsors providing SFSP most commonly reported by State Agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of institutions providing CACFP most commonly reported by State Agencies	Don't Know ^a
Told parents/guardians picking up meals that children are not eligible to receive duplicate meals	All	11	All	12	All	17
Asked parents/guardians to self-attest that they were not picking up duplicate meals	Less than half	15	Less than half	13	Less than half	20
Requested children's names or other identifying information when meals were picked up	More than half	8	More than half	7	All	7
Used the same staff at multiple delivery sites (that provided meals at different times) located in a geographic area	Less than half	14	Less than half	14	Less than half	19
Other ^b	None	15	None	20	None	21
Other: Signage, outreach materials	All	NA	More than half	NA	All	NA
Other: Cross-checked rosters; used point-of-service system	Less than half	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Did not use any methods to ensure duplicate meals were not distributed	None	11	None	12	None	13

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: State agencies reported the proportion of SFAs on a 5-point scale that included none, less than half, about half, more than half, and all. The Parent Pick-up waiver was used by 39 State agencies for NSLP, 38 State agencies for SBP, 38 State agencies for SSO, 52 State agencies for SFSP, and 50 State agencies for CACFP. NA= not applicable.

^a The number of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of local program operators that used certain methods to ensure duplicate meals were not distributed.

^b "Other" responses were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. State agencies also reported the proportion of local program operators that provided the "other" method specified.

Table E.13. Percentage of State agencies in which SFAs used the Meal Pattern Flexibility waiver to waive requirements for each meal component from March through September 2020, by Child Nutrition Program

Meal component	NSLP (% State agencies)	SBP (% State agencies)	SSO (% State agencies)	SFSP (% State agencies)	CACFP (% State agencies)
Milk	46	43	36	49	42
Meat/Meat alternates	13	9	16	21	21
Grains	31	27	30	36	33
Fruits	16	16	24	24	24
Vegetables	30	22	33	31	27
Don't know ^a	1	1	1	1	3
No response ^b	9	12	10	10	15
Vegetable subgroups					
Dark green	13	NA	12	NA	NA
Red/orange	7	NA	10	NA	NA
Starchy	10	NA	13	NA	NA
Legumes	12	NA	16	NA	NA
Other	4	NA	4	NA	NA
Don't know ^a	0	NA	0	NA	NA
No response ^b	15	NA	12	NA	NA

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: The Meal Pattern Flexibility waiver was used by 38 State agencies for NSLP, 38 State agencies for SBP, 36 State agencies for SSO, 42 State agencies for SFSP, and 42 State agencies for CACFP.

^a The percentage of State agencies that reported they did not know which components local program operators waived, after reporting that the waiver was used in the program.

^b State agencies either provided a file documenting local program operators that used the meal pattern waiver in each program or responded to survey questions about use of the waiver. “No response” reflects the percentage of State agencies that reported in the survey that the waiver was used for a program but did not provide information in their file on the components or vegetable subgroups for which the waiver was used.

NA = not applicable.

Table E.14. Proportion of local program operators most commonly reported by State agencies that used the Meal Pattern Flexibility waiver for multiple food components from March through September 2020, by Child Nutrition Program

Program	Proportion of local program operators	Don't Know ^a	No Response ^b
NSLP	Less than half	0	0
SBP	Less than half	0	2
SSO	Less than half	0	0
SFSP	Less than half	0	1
CACFP	Less than half	0	2

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: State agencies reported the proportion of local program operators on a 5-point scale that included none, less than half, about half, more than half, and all.

The Meal Pattern Flexibility waiver was used by 38 State agencies for NSLP, 38 State agencies for SBP; 36 State agencies for SSO; 42 State agencies for SFSP; and 42 State agencies for CACFP.

^a The number of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of local program operators that waived multiple food components.

^b State agencies either provided a file documenting local program operators that used the meal pattern waiver in each program or responded to survey questions about use of the waiver. “No response” reflects the number of State agencies that reported in the survey that the waiver was used for a program but did not provide information in their file on the components for which the waiver was used.

Table E.15. Average percentage of State agencies across all access-focused waivers reporting that waivers improved services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by Child Nutrition Program

Improved services to children	NSLP (% State agencies)	SBP (% State agencies)	SSO (% State agencies)	SFSP (% State agencies)	CACFP (% State agencies)
Greater geographic distribution of sites	34	38	61	59	45
Increased number of sites	30	30	53	57	40
Increased alternative meal delivery methods	64	67	76	72	68
Allowed pick up of multiple meals at one time	67	70	78	73	74
Allowed distribution of bulk food packages ^a	51	53	68	62	60
Allowed service of available foods when supply issues occurred	43	48	55	46	50
Improved safety for children by not requiring congregate feeding or meal pick-up	75	73	79	72	79
Reduced barriers to receiving meals	79	79	88	85	88
Increased participation	55	59	75	76	66
Other ^b					
Other: Reduced food safety concerns	1	1	1	0	0
Other: Promoted equity for working families, families with disabilities	1	1	0	1	0
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	7	7	2	2	1
This waiver did not improve services to children	2	1	0	1	1

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Access-focused nationwide waivers include Meal Service Time Flexibility, Non-congregate, Afterschool Activity Requirements in NSLP/CACFP, Meal Pattern Flexibility, Parent Pick-up, SFSP Offer vs. Serve Flexibilities, SFSP/SSO Meal Service Time, and SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility. Average percentages were calculated by dividing the summed numbers of State agencies reporting NSLP improvements from each waiver by the summed numbers of State agencies that used each access-focused NSLP waiver.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded.

Table E.16. Percentage of State agencies reporting that access-focused waivers improved NSLP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	Meal Service Time Flexibility (% State agencies)	Non-congregate (% State agencies)	Afterschool Activity Requirements in NSLP/CACFP (% State agencies)	Meal Pattern Flexibility (% State agencies)	Parent Pick-up (% State agencies)
Greater geographic distribution of sites	43	44	26	21	38
Increased number of sites	30	34	32	21	33
Increased alternative meal delivery methods	73	83	52	39	72
Allowed pick up of multiple meals at one time	75	85	61	37	77
Allowed distribution of bulk food packages ^a	57	63	45	39	49
Allowed service of available foods when supply issues occurred	45	41	19	76	33
Improved safety for children by not requiring congregate feeding or meal pick-up	82	90	81	32	90
Reduced barriers to receiving meals	77	85	77	63	92
Increased participation	61	61	45	29	79
Other ^b					
Other: Reduced food safety concerns	NA	NA	NA	5	NA
Other: Promoted equity for working families, families with disabilities	NA	NA	NA	NA	3
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	9	5	6	8	8
This waiver did not improve services to children	0	0	6	3	0
Number of State agencies that used waiver	44	41	31	38	39

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each access-focused waiver for the program. NA= not applicable.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

Table E.17. Percentage of State agencies reporting that access-focused waivers improved SBP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	Meal Service Time Flexibility (% State agencies)	Non-congregate (% State agencies)	Meal Pattern Flexibility (% State agencies)	Parent Pick-up (% State agencies)
Greater geographic distribution of sites	44	48	21	38
Increased number of sites	30	38	21	33
Increased alternative meal delivery methods	74	85	39	70
Allowed pick up of multiple meals at one time	79	85	37	78
Allowed distribution of bulk food packages ^a	58	63	39	50
Allowed service of available foods when supply issues occurred	44	40	76	33
Improved safety for children by not requiring congregate feeding or meal pick-up	81	90	32	90
Reduced barriers to receiving meals	77	85	63	93
Increased participation	63	63	32	80
Other ^b				
Other: Reduced food safety concerns	NA	NA	5	NA
Other: Promoted equity for working families, families with disabilities	NA	NA	NA	3
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	9	5	8	8
This waiver did not improve services to children	0	0	3	0
Number of State agencies that used waiver	43	40	38	40

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each access-focused waiver for the program. NA= not applicable.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

Table E.18. Percentage of State agencies reporting that access-focused waivers improved SSO services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	Meal Service Time Flexibility (% State agencies)	Non-congregate (% State agencies)	Meal Pattern Flexibility (% State agencies)	Parent Pick-up (% State agencies)	SFSP/SSO Meal Service Time (% State agencies)	SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility (% State agencies)
Greater geographic distribution of sites	78	74	28	53	41	92
Increased number of sites	65	59	25	37	44	87
Increased alternative meal delivery methods	90	90	42	82	90	63
Allowed pick up of multiple meals at one time	100	97	42	87	97	47
Allowed distribution of bulk food packages ^a	83	77	53	74	82	39
Allowed service of available foods when supply issues occurred	65	59	83	47	38	34
Improved safety for children by not requiring congregate feeding or meal pick-up	98	95	39	95	85	61
Reduced barriers to receiving meals	98	90	61	97	95	89
Increased participation	93	79	33	84	79	82
Other ^b						
Other: Reduced food safety concerns	NA	NA	6	NA	NA	NA
Other: Promoted equity for working families, families with disabilities	NA	NA	NA	3	NA	NA
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	0	0	8	0	0	3
This waiver did not improve services to children	0	0	3	0	0	0
Number of State agencies that used waiver	40	39	36	38	39	38

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each access-focused waiver for the program. NA= not applicable.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

Table E.19. Percentage of State agencies reporting that access-focused waivers improved SFSP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	Meal Service Time Flexibility (% State agencies)	Non-congregate (% State agencies)	Meal Pattern Flexibility (% State agencies)	Parent Pick-up (% State agencies)	SFSP Offer vs. Serve Flexibilities (% State agencies)	SFSP/SSO Meal Service Time (% State agencies)	SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility (% State agencies)
Greater geographic distribution of sites	81	77	31	56	22	52	95
Increased number of sites	68	77	33	46	24	60	91
Increased alternative meal delivery methods							
Allowed pick up of multiple meals at one time	98	98	45	88	41	96	45
Allowed distribution of bulk food packages ^a	87	81	48	65	37	77	39
Allowed service of available foods when supply issues occurred	57	47	81	31	37	33	36
Improved safety for children by not requiring congregate feeding or meal pick-up	94	96	38	98	37	85	57
Reduced barriers to receiving meals	94	92	69	98	53	96	91
Increased participation	91	94	36	88	53	85	86
Other ^b							
Other: Reduced stigma of receiving free meals	NA	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other: Reduced food safety concerns	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other: Allowed safe meal delivery during a time with civil unrest, in addition to COVID	NA	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	NA
Other: Promoted equity for working families, families with disabilities	NA	NA	NA	4	NA	NA	NA
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	0	0	2	0	12	0	0
This waiver did not improve services to children	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Number of State agencies that used waiver	53	53	42	52	51	52	44

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each access-focused waiver for the program. NA= not applicable.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

Table E.20. Percentage of State agencies reporting that access-focused waivers improved CACFP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	Meal Service Time Flexibility (% State agencies)	Non-congregate (% State agencies)	Afterschool Activity Requirements in NSLP/CACFP (% State agencies)	Meal Pattern Flexibility (% State agencies)	Parent Pick-up (% State agencies)
Greater geographic distribution of sites	52	58	44	17	56
Increased number of sites	50	53	42	14	40
Increased alternative meal delivery methods	87	92	63	24	76
Allowed pick up of multiple meals at one time	94	89	74	29	86
Allowed distribution of bulk food packages ^a	75	68	60	31	66
Allowed service of available foods when supply issues occurred	54	47	35	79	34
Improved safety for children by not requiring congregate feeding or meal pick-up	90	96	88	29	92
Reduced barriers to receiving meals	94	92	91	67	98
Increased participation	69	83	70	26	82
Other ^b					
Other: Reduced stigma of receiving free meals	NA	2	NA	NA	NA
Other: Reduced food safety concerns	NA	NA	NA	2	NA
Other: Allowed safe meal delivery during a time with civil unrest, in addition to COVID	NA	NA	NA	NA	2
Other: Promoted equity for working families, families with disabilities	NA	NA	NA	NA	2
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	2	0	2	2	0
This waiver did not improve services to children	0	0	0	5	0
Number of State agencies that used waiver	52	53	43	42	50

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each access-focused waiver for the program. NA= not applicable.

^a Bulk food packages: Food packages that contain items that could be used for multiple meals or portion sizes. For example, a quart of milk provides four one-cup servings.

^b “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

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Appendix F

Use and Impact of Waivers Related to Program Administration

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In addition to the waivers that primarily focused on improving children's access to meals, FNS issued nationwide waivers that provided flexibilities related to program administration between March and September 2020. This Appendix provides an overview of the use of these waivers by local program operators and State agencies, as well as the ways in which the administration-related waivers improved services to children. The overview is followed by supplemental tables.

A. Use of waivers related to program administration

Among waivers related to program administration, local program operators operating SSO or SFSP most frequently used the SFSP/SSO Unanticipated School Closure Operations waiver, as discussed in Chapter IV. In addition, SFSP sponsors also frequently used the SFSP Onsite Monitoring for Sponsors waiver and the SFSP First Week Site Visits waiver, which both provide flexibilities related to certain program monitoring requirements related to onsite reviews.

Also as discussed in Chapter IV, SFAs operating NSLP and SBP during this time period most frequently used the School Wellness Policy Assessments waiver and the CEP Deadlines waiver. SFAs operating these programs also commonly used the School Meals Onsite Monitoring Waiver, which provided flexibilities related to certain monitoring requirements related to onsite reviews. In addition, CACFP institutions most frequently used the CACFP Monitoring for Sponsors waiver, which waived similar requirements.

FNS also issued nationwide waivers that provided monitoring flexibilities specifically for State agencies between March and September 2020, and nearly all State agencies used these waivers (Table F.1).

1. Monitoring waivers

Under program regulations, State agencies and local program operators are required to monitor Child Nutrition Program operations, and onsite monitoring is required at specified intervals to help ensure program integrity. In order to maintain safety and minimize the spread of COVID-19, FNS issued waivers in each Program during the March through September 2020 period that provided flexibilities with these requirements for State agencies and local program operators. FNS guidance noted that suspending onsite monitoring is vital to support social distancing while providing meals, and that school and child care center and family day care home closures may limit opportunities for onsite monitoring.

Under these waivers, many State agencies and local program operators shifted their approaches to monitoring from onsite visits to alternative methods, like desk audits or virtual observations. State agencies reported that they most frequently conducted desk audits, either by reviewing records and paperwork or by interviewing site operators. State agencies also most commonly reported that more than half of their local program operators conducted desk audits. The next most common monitoring approach used by State agencies and local program operators was virtual observations, in which monitors reviewed live stream video of site operations or photos of meal preparation and service. State agencies also commonly reported that many local program operators did not conduct any monitoring during March through September 2020 while using these waivers.

B. Ways administration-focused waivers improved services to children

Most State agencies reported that waivers related to program administration helped improve services to children primarily by increasing State agency and local program operator ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas, such as providing meals to children. State agencies also reported that these waivers increased their ability to provide technical assistance to local program operators. About half said the waivers increased the ability of local program operators to begin operations more quickly and increased administrative resources for addressing food supply issues and other challenges in preparing meals.

C. Supplemental tables

Table F.1. Total number of State agencies nationwide that used each State agency monitoring waiver from March through September 2020

Waiver	# of State Agencies
CACFP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State agencies	53
School Meals Onsite Monitoring - Revised	56
SFSP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State agencies	53
CACFP Annual Review Requirements for State agencies	53

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Each waiver applies to specific Child Nutrition Programs, noted in the name of the waiver. During FY 2020, 56 State agencies administered NSLP, SBP, and SSO; 54 State agencies administered SFSP; and 55 State agencies administered.

Table F.2. Percentage of State agencies that conducted certain types of monitoring following implementation of State agency monitoring waivers from March through September 2020, by waiver

Types of monitoring	CACFP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State Agencies (% State agencies)	School Meals Onsite Monitoring – Revised (% State agencies)	SFSP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State agencies (% State agencies)	CACFP Annual Review Requirements for State agencies (% State agencies)
Desk audit - paperwork review	91	73	89	81
Desk audit - interviews with site operators	92	73	88	85
Virtual observations conducted through live stream video	66	48	54	57
Virtual observations through review of site photos	62	36	46	58
On-site while assisting with or observing meal service	17	16	23	17
Other	4	9	7	4
No monitoring conducted	8	11	0	13
Number of State agencies that used waiver	53	56	53	53

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Each waiver applies to specific Child Nutrition Programs, noted in the name of the waiver. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that conducted each type of monitoring in the relevant Child Nutrition Program(s) by the total number of State agencies that used each State agency monitoring waiver.

Table F.3. Proportion of local program operators most commonly reported by State agencies that conducted certain types of monitoring following implementation of local program operator on-site monitoring waivers from March through September 2020, by waiver

Types of monitoring	CACFP Monitoring for Sponsors		School Meals Onsite Monitoring - Revised		SFSP Onsite Monitoring Sponsors		SFSP First Week Site Visits	
	Proportion of institutions providing CACFP most commonly reported by State agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of SFAs providing NSLP and SBP most commonly reported by State agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of sponsors providing SFSP most commonly reported by State agencies	Don't Know ^a	Proportion of sponsors providing SFSP most commonly reported by State agencies	Don't Know ^a
Desk audit- paperwork review	More than half	11	More than half	15	More than half	11	More than half	13
Desk audit- interviews with site operators	More than half	11	More than half	15	More than half	12	Less than half	13
Virtual observations conducted through live stream video	Less than half	14	None	17	Less than half	15	Less than half	18
Virtual observations through review of site photos	Less than half	17	None	16	Less than half	17	Less than half	19
On-site while assisting with or observing meal service	Less than half	18	None	14	Less than half	11	Less than half	12
Other	None	25	None	16	None	22	None	23
No monitoring conducted	More than half	11	More than half	15	More than half	11	More than half	13

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: State agencies reported the proportion of local program operators on a 5-point scale: that included none, less than half, about half, more than half, and all.

The CACFP Monitoring for Sponsors waiver was used by local program operators in 54 State agencies. The School Meals Onsite Monitoring – Revised waiver was used by local program operators in 45 State agencies for NSLP and 43 State agencies for SBP. The SFSP Onsite Monitoring for Sponsors waiver was used by local program operators in 52 State agencies. The SFSP First Week Site Visits waiver was used by local program operators in 54 State agencies.

^a The number of State agencies that reported they did not know the proportion of local program operators that implemented certain types of monitoring.

Table F.4. Percentage of State agencies reporting that local program operator administration-focused waivers improved NSLP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	CEP Deadlines in NSLP/SBP (% State agencies)	School Meals Onsite Monitoring - Revised (% State agencies)	60-Day Reporting Requirements (% State agencies)	School Wellness Policy Assessments (% State agencies)	NSLP/SFSP Food Service Management Contract Duration (% State agencies)
Increased administrative resources for identifying meal sites	48	38	20	50	35
Increased administrative resources for addressing food supply issues and other challenges in preparing meals	54	51	27	52	58
Increased administrative resources for providing meals	62	67	43	67	74
Increased ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas to improve services to children	81	78	43	83	74
Increased ability of local program operators to begin operations more quickly	42	49	30	43	65
Other ^a					
Other: Enabled more schools to qualify, increasing children served	6	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other: Allowed reimbursement, improving SFA ability to serve children	NA	NA	10	NA	NA
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	15	13	27	10	6
This waiver did not improve services to children	4	7	10	7	3
Number of State agencies that used waiver	52	45	30	42	31

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each local program operator administration-focused waiver. NA= not applicable.

^a “Other” responses were derived from State agencies’ open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

Table F.5. Percentage of State agencies reporting that local program operator administration-focused waivers improved SBP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	CEP Deadlines in NSLP/SBP (% State agencies)	School Meals Onsite Monitoring – Revised (% State agencies)	60-Day Reporting Requirements (% State agencies)	School Wellness Policy Assessments (% State agencies)
Increased administrative resources for identifying meal sites	52	40	19	55
Increased administrative resources for addressing food supply issues and other challenges in preparing meals	58	51	26	58
Increased administrative resources for providing meals	67	67	41	71
Increased ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas to improve services to children	88	79	44	89
Increased ability of local program operators to begin operations more quickly	46	51	30	47
Other ^a				
Other: Enabled more schools to qualify, increasing children served	6	NA	NA	NA
Other: Allowed reimbursement, improving SFA ability to serve children	NA	NA	11	NA
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	10	14	30	5
This waiver did not improve services to children	2	5	7	5
Number of State agencies that used waiver	48	43	27	38

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each local program operator administration-focused waiver. NA= not applicable.

^a “Other” responses were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

Table F.6. Percentage of State agencies reporting that local program operator administration-focused waivers improved SSO services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites (% State agencies)	SFSP/SSO Unanticipated School Closure Operations (% State agencies)
Increased administrative resources for identifying meal sites	62	59
Increased administrative resources for addressing food supply issues and other challenges in preparing meals	59	64
Increased administrative resources for providing meals	71	79
Increased ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas to improve services to children	88	82
Increased ability of local program operators to begin operations more quickly	76	82
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	3	13
This waiver did not improve services to children	0	0
Number of State agencies that used waiver	34	39

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each local program operator administration-focused waiver.

Table F.7. Percentage of State agencies reporting that local program operator administration-focused waivers improved SFSP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	SFSP Onsite Monitoring for Sponsors (% State agencies)	60-Day Reporting Requirements (% State agencies)	SFSP/SSO Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites (% State agencies)	SFSP First Week Site Visits (% State agencies)	NSLP/SFSP Food Service Management Contract Duration (% State agencies)	SFSP/SSO Unanticipated School Closure Operations (% State agencies)
Increased administrative resources for identifying meal sites	50	43	66	57	33	65
Increased administrative resources for addressing food supply issues and other challenges in preparing meals	65	57	57	70	63	59
Increased administrative resources for providing meals	69	43	74	79	67	82
Increased ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas to improve services to children	73	57	83	79	75	82
Increased ability of local program operators to begin operations more quickly	60	43	83	70	79	80
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	13	0	4	6	8	8
This waiver did not improve services to children	2	14	2	2	0	0
Number of State agencies that used waiver	52	7	47	53	24	49

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each local program operator administration-focused waiver.

Table F.8. Percentage of State agencies reporting that local program operator administration-focused waivers improved CACFP services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	CACFP Monitoring for Sponsors (% State agencies)	60-Day Reporting Requirements (% State agencies)
Increased administrative resources for identifying meal sites	33	19
Increased administrative resources for addressing food supply issues and other challenges in preparing meals	50	30
Increased administrative resources for providing meals	59	43
Increased ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas to improve services to children	76	57
Increased ability of local program operators to begin operations more quickly	52	30
Other ^a		
Other: Improve children's safety	4	NA
Other: Allowed reimbursement, improving SFA ability to serve children	NA	8
Don't know how this waiver improved services to children	15	22
This waiver did not improve services to children	0	14
Number of State agencies that used waiver	54	37

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 by the total number of State agencies that used each local program operator administration-focused waiver. NA= not applicable.

^a "Other" responses were derived from State agencies' open-ended responses. Responses that did not directly address the question were not coded. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each response by the total number of State agencies that used the waiver in the program.

Table F.9. Percentage of State agencies reporting that State agency administration-focused waivers improved services to children in certain ways from March through September 2020, by waiver

Improved services to children	CACFP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State agencies (% State agencies)	School Meals Onsite Monitoring – Revised (% State agencies)	SFSP Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State agencies (% State agencies)	CACFP Annual Review Requirements for State agencies (% State agencies)
Increased State agency administrative resources for approving meal sites	57	64	62	47
Increased State and local administrative resources for identifying meal sites	36	46	42	43
Increased State agency ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas to improve services to children	60	82	68	66
Increased State agency ability to provide technical assistance to local program operators	87	86	83	81
Increased local program operators' administrative resources for providing meals to children	62	71	62	66
Increased local program operators' ability to focus administrative resources on other priority areas to improve services to children	60	77	62	60
Other	2	5	2	2
Number of State agencies that used waiver	53	56	53	53

Source: School Meals Operations Study, State Agency Child Nutrition Director COVID-19 Waiver Collection School Year 2020–2021.

Note: Each waiver applies to specific Child Nutrition Programs, noted in the name of the waiver. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of State agencies that reported each improvement from March through September 2020 for the relevant Child Nutrition Program(s) by the total number of State agencies that used each administration-focused waiver.