
COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act

Description of Program and Relief

The COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act (the “CNRA”) enables the Secretary of Agriculture to waive conditions that states, schools, and individuals must meet to be eligible for financial support for federal nutrition programs.

The CNRA allows states the flexibility to provide free or subsidized school meals while schools, childcare, and adult care centers are shut down due to COVID-19, consistent with social distancing guidelines, and to ease eligibility requirements on recipients of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (“WIC”) benefits. For example:

- Schools may distribute the meals to-go, removing the restriction that the meals be eaten on-site, enabling recipients to comply with social distancing guidelines. Most all states and territories have already obtained waivers from the USDA’s requirement that school meals be served in a group setting.
- The CNRA removes certain nutritional and meal component requirements for school meals under the National School Lunch Act if a food supply emergency arises.

Government or Lead Agency

Department of Agriculture (“USDA”)

Dates Available

Through September 30, 2020.

Eligibility Requirements/Restrictions

The USDA has allowed states to begin their summer meals programs, which provide free or subsidized breakfast and lunch to students in lower-income communities while schools are closed due to COVID-19, as well as meals to child and adult care centers.

The CNRA also grants the Secretary of Agriculture the authority, during the COVID-19 emergency, to issue nationwide school meal waivers as necessary through September 2020.

Finally, the CNRA exempts WIC participants from meeting certain requirements, such as being physically present at a WIC clinic to provide bloodwork or to demonstrate nutritional needs, before receiving assistance.

List of Additional Information

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19>

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/03/10/secretary-perdue-announces-proactive-flexibilities-feed-children>

<https://comer.house.gov/media/press-releases/comer-bonamici-introduce-bill-protect-access-school-meals-during-school>