



Nevada Council on Food Security

COVID-19 Response Efforts Update

July 29, 2020

Nevada Department of Agriculture Report

Response Summary

- Upon unanticipated school closures, in collaboration with school districts/schools, nutrition program operators/sponsors, the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) opened alternative meal distribution sites, many of which started the first day of closure. The following programs are providing meals:
 - Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): 135 sites
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): 133 sites
 - National School Lunch Program (NSLP)-Seamless Summer Option (SSO): 93 sites
- The sponsors are utilizing both their facilities and bus routes to ensure serving as many people in the community as possible. NDA received approval for waivers from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support schools and communities in providing meals to children in areas experiencing school or district closure in response to COVID-19. Sponsors have utilized all available waivers to serve grab-and-go multiple meals (2 per child), multiple days of meals (up to 5), meals on weekends and meals to children 18 years of age and younger in areas not designated as high needs.
- NDA has published meal distribution site locations online and on social media channels. Feeding sites are also uploaded weekly to the USDA National Hunger Hotline for publication.
- Facilitation of Baylor University's Emergency Meals-to-You (eMTY) program implemented to serve Esmeralda County School District due to full closure from COVID-19. Meals are being delivered to student homes at parental request until August 15th.
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) continues to provide household foods to families and individuals in need. The program has received an additional \$3.5M in food entitlement and \$220,000 in administrative funds through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). An estimated 7.7 million pounds of food have been distributed through TEFAP since March 1 through June 30.
 - TEFAP also received \$632,000 in administrative funding and \$3.6M in food entitlement through the CARES Act. The additional food began arriving in June/July of 2020 and the administrative funding was made available to our two partner food banks in June. Our two partner food banks have reported increased need since the pandemic began. Since the pandemic began in March, the two food banks have distributed an average of 1.9M pounds of food per month to an average of 88,000 households per month, a 186% increase over the three months preceding the pandemic.



- Most food distributions are being conducted using a drive-thru model to maximize social distancing and reduced physical contact. NDA has waived signature requirements during food distributions.
- NDA's Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) has continued to provide household food distributions in the 11 Tribal communities we serve, with no change in distribution dates and times. In March, 571 individuals received food through FDPIR and in April, 535 individuals have received food through the program, a significant increase over the 420 individuals who participated in the program prior to the pandemic. In May, June, and July, participation began returning to normal as other food and financial resources became available.
- NDA has released two grant opportunities utilizing CARES Act funding to support food banks and community organizations:
 - **Nevada CARES Food Security Initiative** is a grant opportunity available to the two Nevada food banks: Three Square Food Bank in Las Vegas and the Food Bank of Northern Nevada in Reno/Sparks. Both food banks have seen significant increases in need due to the pandemic. This grant opportunity is intended to support food banks in expanding their existing food relief efforts to meet increased need not supported by existing federal funding sources. This project will award \$2.8 million to the two food banks beginning in August 2020.
 - The **Nevada CARES Community Food Response** project is a grant opportunity available to Nevada community organizations and public entities working to reduce food insecurity in Nevada during the pandemic. The project will award \$2.8M to 13 community organizations to support efforts to meet increased food needs during the pandemic. The projects will begin in August 2020.
- NDA is presenting and/or participating in the following for school reopening plans to ensure children are fed:
 - NDA hosting statewide biweekly School Nutrition Operators open forums since June to share resources, discuss challenges and needs, provide support, and answer questions.
 - NDA participation in USDA-Food and Nutrition Services , Western Region Office Back-to-School Task Force.
- NDA hosted training for sponsors for SY 20-21 on new updates regarding free and reduced-price school meal eligibility and Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

Resolutions/Successes

- Nevada has implemented the following USDA COVID-19 waivers through direct communication and guidance with National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors/operators.



- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Child Nutrition Programs (extended through June 30, 2021)
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Service Time Flexibility in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program (extended through June 30, 2021)
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children (extended through June 30, 2021)
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs (extended through June 30, 2021)
- Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Flexibility for Senior High Schools in the National School Lunch Program for School Year 2020-2021
- Distributing meals to parent/guardian w/out presence of children
- Educational or enrichment activity requirements applicable to NSLP Afterschool Snacks and CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals and Snacks waived (Update: NDA is planning on submitting a statewide waiver asking for an extension)
- Deadlines relating to Community Eligibility Provision reporting and election
- Onsite monitoring requirements for state agencies AND sponsors waived
- Non-area eligibility waived for underserved areas (extended through August 31, 2020)
- NDA submitted a statewide waiver to extend operations of SFSP/SSO during 100% distance learning models through June 30, 2021.
- Current statistics:
 - Total meals served from March 16 through June 30:
 - SFSP: 3,109,376 meals served
 - CACFP: 818,431 meals served
 - NSLP-SSO: 2,660,991 meals served
- Culinary Training Academy and Anderson Dairy are working with the State Child Care Licensing and Adult Day Care Centers clients to provide meals, food transportation and/or milk to facilities with limited access to food that are not currently an NDA sponsor/operator.
- In response to the closure of the Nye County School District's meal service program on April 3, NDA coordinated with Three Square Food Bank to hold a one-time TEFAP distribution for affected households in Pahrump. The distribution served over 600 families with approximately one week's worth of food.



Barriers/Needs/Gaps in services

- Meal delivery for seniors and the homebound continues to be a challenge for food banks. **Update:** the Nevada CARES grant awards target this challenge and will provide support here.
- A parent/guardian or child must still pick up the meals as there is not enough resources for mobile distribution throughout many districts, especially urban areas.
- For sponsors/operators using bus stop distributions, it is difficult to maintain social distancing during these stops.
- Access and transportation, especially in some remote locations, remains a barrier and inclement weather conditions can affect feeding sites. Update: transportation limitations may still exist for both schools and families.
- There is limited or no ability to produce and/or distribute SSO/SFSP meals by program operators in the event a sponsor's/operator's kitchen or distribution operations are suspended due to COVID-19.