



## SNAC Bites October 2020 Edition

*Welcome to the October 2020 issue of SNA Communication (SNAC) Bites! SNAC Bites highlights new SNA programs and news, and provides content for your state association publications, chapter meetings and social media channels. In some cases, the content will need to be customized for your state association's needs, should you decide to use the below stories.*

Here are this month's headlines:

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### **1. USDA Extends SFSP/SSO Waivers**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [extended](#) all Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) waivers through as late as December 31, 2020, dependent on available funding. The move allows schools to offer meals to all children at no charge this fall to minimize the challenges of meal service during a pandemic. SNA is continuing to advocate for these waivers to be extended through School Year 2020-21. The announcement came less than one week after SNA's Board of Directors hosted a call with USDA officials to share urgent feedback from schools that have seen dramatic declines in student lunch participation in the opening weeks of school, leaving meal programs in dire financial circumstances. Read more in [SNA's press release](#).



## **2. U.S. Senate Passes Funding and Extends USDA Authority to Grant Waivers**

The U.S. Senate passed [H.R. 8337](#), Continuing Appropriations Act of 2021, a short-term funding bill that provides \$1.4 trillion in continuing FY2021 appropriations for Federal agencies through December 11, 2020. This bill also extends the U.S. Department of Agriculture's authority to issue and extend nationwide child nutrition waivers until September 20, 2021. USDA's authority was first granted back in March under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#). President Trump has now signed the bill into law.

## **3. U.S. House Passes Updated HEROES Act**

The U.S. House of Representatives passed an updated HEROES Act. Among other provisions, the bill provides "as much funding as necessary" for school meal programs, provides increased flexibility for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) in low-income communities, ensures that commodity allocations and other child nutrition program calculations are held harmless during months severely impacted by COVID-19, and requires the Secretary of Agriculture to make waiver applications, approvals and denials public in a timely manner. Read a summary of the bill [here](#).

## **4. Clarification on NSLP/SBP Meal Pattern Rules for SY 2020-21**

SNA continues to receive inquiries regarding meal pattern requirements for school meal programs operating the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (NSLP/SBP). In April 2020, [a federal district court ruling](#) struck down USDA's [2018 final rule](#), *Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements*. The ruling eliminated NSLP/SBP meal pattern flexibilities, reverting back to the 2012 meal patterns for grades K-12, which required flavored milk to be fat free; all grains to be whole-grain rich; and school lunches and breakfasts to meet sodium target 2.

However, USDA's [COVID-19: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs](#) waived for all states the requirement to serve meals that meet the meal patterns during school year 2020-21. USDA is allowing school meal programs to use this meal pattern flexibility if they cannot meet the 2012 meal pattern requirements. In the August 21, 2020 FNS document, [Questions and Answers for the Child Nutrition Programs during School Year 2020-2021 – #5](#), FNS addresses the issue on pages 5 and 6. School nutrition professionals operating NSLP/SBP should contact their State Agencies for more information on the waiver process.

## **5. Ranking Member Stabenow and Chairman Scott Send Letter to USDA**

Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03) [sent a letter](#) to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. This letter requests that USDA reverse its decision not to extend all school meal waivers and urges USDA to take action and use its full authority to provide healthy meals to students for the duration of the school year. The letter states, "USDA's refusal to extend all school meal waivers is inconsistent and baffling during this national crisis, especially considering that as many as 17 million children did not get enough to eat this summer and there are no signs of the situation improving once the summer is over." Read the [full press release](#).

## **6. Rep. Foxx Sent Bipartisan Letter to USDA to Extend all School Meal Waivers**

House Education and Labor Committee ranking member Virginia Foxx (NC-5), along with two dozen other Republicans on the House Agriculture Committee, sent a letter to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. This letter asks USDA to reconsider its decision not to allow broad access to free meals to all families this school year. [Read the full letter](#).



## 7. New School Meal Bills Introduced

All school nutrition-related bills and legislation can be found on [SNA's Action Network](#). One (1) new Federal bill impacting school nutrition programs were introduced in September 2020:

- Reps. Rodney Davis (IL-13), Jim Costa (CA-20), Don Bacon (NE-2), and Abigail Spanberger (VA-3) introduced [H.R.8325](#), Operation Feed our Kids Act to direct the USDA to extend child nutrition waivers granted under CARES ACT authority for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

## 8 Senators Send Letter to USDA Urging Extension of Waivers through SY 2020-21

U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH), along with 28 additional Senators, sent a letter to the USDA requesting the full extension of school meal waivers through the end of the 2020-21 school year. The letter states that these extensions would allow schools the flexibility to fully serve students whether they are attending school in person or virtually. [Read the full letter](#).

## 9. USDA Publishes SFSP Reimbursement Waiver and Q&A on SFSP/SSO

On September 11, 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released two documents:

- Nationwide Waiver to “[Allow Reimbursement for Meals Served Prior to Notification of Approval and Provide Flexibility for Pre-approval Visits in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#).” This waiver allows SFSP operators to forgo the requirement that reimbursements shall not be paid for meals served at a site before the sponsor has received written notification that the site has been approved for participation. This waiver expires on December 31, 2020.
- [Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through December 2020](#). This memorandum includes questions and answers intended to provide clarification to State Agencies and program operators on issues related to recently published waivers for SFSP and SSO during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 10. Senator McConnell Responds to Letter from SNA Member

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) sent a letter to an SNA member in Kentucky in response to an action alert on the impact of COVID-19 on child nutrition programs. This letter illustrates Congress's past actions on school nutrition issues, including Senator McConnell signing onto a letter encouraging USDA to provide operators' the flexibility to continue to serve meals. Also, McConnell assures that as a Senate Agriculture Committee member, he will monitor all further efforts to improve child nutrition programs. [Read the full letter](#).

## 11. SNA Applauds House Vote to Extend Critical Waivers

SNA is praising the House of Representatives' recent vote to extend critical school meal program waivers through the end of the 2020-21 school year while urging for rapid Senate approval and immediate action from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement the waiver extensions. Late on September 22nd, the House passed a Continuing Resolution to include language allowing USDA to extend all Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) waivers through the end of the school year. [Read the full press release](#).

## 12. SNA Member Addresses Congressional Committee on Education and Labor

On September 23, 2020, SNA member Angela Richey, MPH, RD, SNS, addressed members of the House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services of the Committee on Education and Labor during a briefing entitled, “America's Child Hunger Crisis: Examining the Urgent Need for Federal Action.” Richey serves as the Nutrition Services Director for Roseville Area and St. Anthony/New Brighton Schools in Minnesota. During the



briefing, she provided an overview of the many challenges school nutrition professionals face as they continue to serve students during the pandemic. She stressed how critical child nutrition program waivers have been to meal program operations this year and thanked the House for the [recent vote to extend the waivers](#) through the end of SY 2020-21. [Read the full story.](#)

### 13. FNS Publishes CACFP Area Eligibility Waiver

The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) published the [Nationwide Waiver](#) for "Area Eligibility in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool Care Component." This waiver allows schools and afterschool care centers to serve at-risk afterschool meals and snacks to students regardless of location. This waiver expires on December 31, 2020.

### 14. SNA Joins Allied Groups on Letter to USDA

SNA, along with almost 1,400 national, state, and local organizations signed onto a letter to the USDA. This letter requests that USDA issue additional child nutrition waivers to support access and program operations through the 2020-2021 school year. [Read the full letter.](#)

### 15. Federal Register Notices

SNA monitors the Federal Register for notices impacting school nutrition programs including recent Proposed, Interim, and Final Rules, and changes to existing Rules. Check for updates, including SNA comments, and share your comments on [SNA's Action Network](#).

- **Federal Register: Agency Information Collection Activities: FNS Information Collection.** FNS issued the [Federal Register notice](#), "Agency Information Collection Activities: FNS Information Collection Needs due to COVID-19."
- **Federal Register: Information Collection on Use of PEBT During COVID-19.** FNS published the [Federal Register notice](#) "Agency Information Collection Activities: National Study of State Adoption and Use of Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (PEBT) During Covid-19."

### 16. Countdown to National School Lunch Week!

[National School Lunch Week](#), October 12-16, is right around the corner! Whatever may be #nowplaying in your school lunch program, there are many levels in which you can participate, and many reasons why you should. Here are just a few:

- **Increase student participation**—use our [activity and coloring sheets](#) for elementary and middle school age kids, and turn to the toolkit for ideas for all ages
- **Spread the message** to parents that you're continuing to serve safe, healthy, delicious lunch at school—use the NSLW infographic in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)
- **Earn media coverage** from local papers, TV stations and internet bloggers
- **Connect with teachers, parents and administrators** at your school or in your district to reiterate the importance of [safe and nutritious](#) school meals

Find last minute engagement ideas in the [#NSLW20 toolkit](#), gear up in the [SNA NSLW Shop](#) (download the [brochure](#) for NSLW items and pricing info) and start spreading the word on social media! Be sure to tag SNA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) so we may share your social media posts and use the hashtag #NSLW20. Email your best photos and a short summary of your celebration to [snmagazine@schoolnutrition.org](mailto:snmagazine@schoolnutrition.org) and your submission could end up in a future issue of *School Nutrition* magazine!



### **17. SNA Launches New Series on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Committed to advancing #diversity, #equity and #inclusion (DEI), today SNA introduces a new professional development series designed to provide Association members with multiple education opportunities to understand and support this critical workplace priority. DEI is a fundamental element in SNA's multi-year [Strategic Plan](#), and the new series will reflect the Association's intention to be a leading light on this issue in the K-12 foodservice segment.

National authority and fearless DEI advocate Dr. Nika White is partnering with SNA to develop content and lead many of the key training sessions planned in the Series. If you missed last week's inaugural DEI webinar for leaders, [Growing as an Intentional Inclusionist®](#), check it out On-Demand. Dr. White earned high praise from attendees ("This is the best diversity presentation that I have heard."), so don't miss it!

Throughout 2020-21, SNA will offer targeted education sessions and workshops, including [How to Become a More Inclusive Team Member](#) with Dr. White, for the heart of every K-12 foodservice team—school nutrition employees and frontline staff. Additionally, a special DEI focus by *School Nutrition* magazine is planned for its February 2021 issue. Announcements of new offerings will be made in the [special DEI section of the Learning Center](#) page of SNA's website.

As SNA commemorates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we look forward to sharing this important mission with you—our valued members.

### **18. Join Us at the Directors' Best Practices Conference!**

***A Message from Your Conference Co-Advisors Christine Clarahan, MS, RDN, SNS; and Timikel Sharpe, MS***  
**Conference Dates:**

We are very excited to serve as the co-advisors for SNA's new virtual event this fall, the Directors' Best Practices Conference (October 26-28, 2020).

Join us to navigate this complex school year together, share ideas about what's working and network with peers about where we may need some help. It might be the most challenging year in school nutrition, but you are not alone!

You don't want to miss out on the latest school nutrition participation and trends data, best practice and idea sharing, financial sustainability discussion and ideas, and sanitation and HACCP planning specific to COVID-19 with Dr. Cyndie Story and Dr. Beverly Girard. You'll also hear from a renowned pediatrician representing the American Academy of Pediatrics who will discuss the importance of school meals for student wellness. Check out the more detailed [agenda](#) and conference [FAQs](#).

Plus, learn new ideas to engage with your communities and share more data on participation/financial challenges with your administration.

We'll wrap up each day of the conference with Zoom room networking. While nothing replaces face-to-face communication, this is a fun way to catch up and connect!

We look forward to seeing you at the [Directors' Best Practices Conference](#).





### **19. Register Now for SNA's Innovative Solutions Showcase (ISS)!**

As a school nutrition professional, are you wondering how you will determine what new products, service, or pieces of equipment you will need for the school year as you continue to feed kids during this pandemic? If so, you will not want to miss this opportunity to participate in up to six industry presentations per week through SNA's New Innovative Solutions Showcase (ISS). [Registration](#) is **FREE for SNA members!** But if you find that you can't attend one of the sessions, don't worry, all sessions are recorded and will live on the SNA website—the ISS webpage. Twenty-five (25) companies have already presented their session, [listen here](#).

### **20. School Nutrition Foundation Professional Development Scholarships**

*Want to earn your degree?* SNF is accepting applications for [Professional Development Scholarships](#) to help cover the costs of tuition and books for a degree in a school nutrition related field. The common application opened on October 1, 2020 and the deadline is January 31, 2021 at 11:59 PM EST. Check out the SNF website for more information!

### **21. School Nutrition Foundation Equipment Grants**

New this year, eligible applicants have the opportunity to win **one of four equipment grants!** These grants are the Winston Equipment Grant, the Vulcan Equipment Grant, the Hobart Equipment Grant, and the Collection Grant. SNF is now accepting applications for the [SNF Equipment Grants](#). If your kitchen needs new equipment, consider applying today! For questions, please contact [scholarships@schoolnutrition.org](mailto:scholarships@schoolnutrition.org).

### **22. Read the October 2020 Issue of *School Nutrition Magazine***

Surviving Fall 2020 has required school nutrition teams to embrace the pivot. *School Nutrition* is here to celebrate successes and inspire solutions.

Since mid-March, school nutrition teams have handled challenge after challenge with professionalism, creativity and initiative. The [October 2020 issue of \*School Nutrition\*](#) celebrates these successes and addresses challenges that are still affecting the industry.

### **23. Staffing Challenges Subject of *SN Digital Extra***

The school year may be officially underway, but many districts are tackling reopening challenges in phases. All-virtual learners may be the model in place today, but within a few weeks, that could transition to a hybrid model. In the latest article in its ongoing COVID-19 digital supplement series, *School Nutrition* magazine connected with eight district directors who shared pain points about staffing challenges, while reaffirming their pride and gratitude for the dedication of frontline team members. [Learn more](#).