

# COVID-19 Response

## Best Practices For Meal Service

### Meal Frequency & Times

**Offer Multiple Days-** Students pick up meals for multiple days (3-5) on defined distribution days 1-2 times per week to reduce COVID-19 exposure risk.

**Offer at Strategic Times-** Consider offering meal pick-up over the course of two to four hours. Offer during times when those still working can access- over the noon hour or during evening hours like Miami-Dade schools who serves meals from 4:00-7:00 PM in their community.

### Ideal COVID-19 Meal Service Model

- Grab-n-Go meals
- Distributed Curbside
- Student doesn't need to be present if unable/sick
- Multiple Meals provided at one time
- Limited locations and varied hours for Meal Pick-up

### Serving Models

**Grab and Go meals are the best practice, offered in the following ways:**

#### Curbside

Drive through or walk-up.

#### Bus Delivery

Meals distributed at the usual school bus stop in each neighborhood.

#### School Cafeteria

Controlled entry into cafeteria or service window/door to hand out from.

Work in partnership with non-profits, food banks, restaurants and others to provide extra bulk foods for families during meal distribution.

### Social Distancing Strategies

- Limit Distribution Locations
- Limit Distribution Days
- Minimize number of staff who interact with customers.
- Avoid handing off items directly- place meals on table, allowing customer to pick it up.
- Prepare foods in larger kitchens to allow separate work spaces for each team member.

### Who is USFA?

The Urban School Food Alliance consists of 12 of the nation's largest school districts, that represent 3,600,000 students, serving 635,000,000 meals annually. School districts include:

Baltimore City Public Schools  
Boston Public Schools  
Broward County Schools (FL)  
Chicago Public Schools

Dallas Independent School District  
DeKalb County School District (GA)  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools (FL)

New York City Public Schools  
Orange County Public Schools (FL)  
Palm Beach County (FL)  
The School District of Philadelphia



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## Serving At-Risk

### Students/Families

#### Resource Bus for Homeless Students

Multiple districts in urban areas are working with their Homeless Services and Transportation Services departments to fill buses with food/meals and in some cases toiletries to provide to homeless students in their district.

#### Home Delivery for Medically-Fragile

Boston Public and New York City schools are both doing outreach to students who are medically-fragile. NYC Schools has partnered with DoorDash to provide this much-needed delivery service.

#### Deliveries to Shelters

Some urban districts are providing meals to those housed in shelters.

#### Community Partnerships

Many school districts are partnering with other local food agencies such as food banks, food pantries and Red Cross chapters to offer meal box and toiletry distribution for families in conjunction with their school feeding sites.

## Biggest Challenges

While many obstacles have been overcome, here are some areas that remain a challenge:

### Keeping Staff Safe

Child Nutrition Staff were left out of PPE planning by federal, state and local agencies. Limited supplies are available. Staff are getting ill resulting in the closure of needed feeding sites.

### Funding Labor Costs

While meal revenue has decreased dramatically, labor costs have skyrocketed with most districts continuing to pay their staff at home for their normal hours and paying 1.5-2.5 times more for those working.

### Funding Adult Meals

There is no funding for adult meals served under NSLP or summer feeding programs. Many are being required to feed all members of the family.

### Product Availability

As states close their borders and require workers to stay home, the supply chain is being impacted. Non-perishable foods can be challenging to source while produce is going to waste because of delivery and storage concerns. Skim/1% milk is in short supply.

### Increased Food/Supply Costs

Extra costs are racking up for packaging as schools move to multi-meal distribution. Individually packaged items are more expensive.

### Sustainability of Efforts

Districts are faced with logistical/operational challenges as they attempt to pivot and become package and distribution centers for their communities. Their infrastructure and resources were not designed for this, causing most to fear how sustainable their efforts will be beyond the first month of closures.

To find out more about how Urban Schools are stepping up to serve their communities during COVID-19 check out:

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