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*The Urban School Food Alliance
was created by school foodservice
professionals in 2012 to address
the unique needs of the nation's
largest school districts.*

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

March 5, 2020

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the operators of twelve of the largest school meal programs in the nation, serving 3.6 million students at more than 5,400 schools, we share the growing concerns about the appropriate ways to deal with the coronavirus in school settings. While none of us want to see school systems close as a precaution, we need to be prepared for that possibility. When schools are closed, children who depend upon the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will lose access to healthy and regular meals.

Our membership offers you the following links to what is happening in each of our areas, and this hyperlinked information is expected to be updated on an on-going basis:

- [Baltimore, MD](#)ⁱ
- [Boston, MA](#)ⁱⁱ
- [Broward County, FL](#)ⁱⁱⁱ
- [Chicago, IL](#)^{iv}
- [Dallas, TX](#)^v
- [DeKalb County, GA](#)^{vi}
- [Los Angeles, CA](#)^{vii}
- [Miami, FL](#)^{viii}
- [New York, NY](#)^{ix}
- [Orange County, FL](#)^x
- [Palm Beach County, FL](#)^{xi}
- [Philadelphia, PA](#)^{xii}

We need to immediately prepare for alternative methods of providing food service to these students should an alternative be needed. We want to do so in a safe fashion that minimizes the need for congregate sites and maximizes the use of USDA Foods in an efficient manner. With respect to areas that may be impacted by the coronavirus and similar to the severe flooding case demonstrated by Memo SFSP 07-2008, we urge you to:

- Allow State agencies (SAs) to waive area eligibility requirements for any individual sponsor or site, including those previously approved sites that must relocate.
- SAs may approve sponsor or site applications submitted after the regulatory deadline and up to 30 days after the start of operations for sponsors wishing to establish new operations in affected areas.
- Appropriate flexibility in meeting the meal pattern requirements may be considered on a case by case basis. Requests for meal pattern waivers should be submitted to the appropriate Regional Office.
- Claims for reimbursement may be submitted up to 90 days after the end of a month's operation without a request for waiver of the 60-day deadline due to good cause.

We respectfully urge you to use the regulatory tools at your disposal, and we are prepared to assist in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Kathryn T. Wilson, PhD, SNS

Dr. Kathryn T. Wilson, SNS
Executive Director
Urban School Food Alliance
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ⁱ <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/health-updates>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.browardschools.com/coronavirus>

^{iv} <https://www.cps.edu/oshw/Pages/HealthyCPS.aspx>

^v <https://thehub.dallasisd.org/2020/02/28/district-rolls-out-coronavirus-information-for-parents-and-staff/>

^{vi} <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/news/cdc-guidance-on-coronavirus/>

^{vii} <https://achieve.lausd.net/latestnews>

^{viii} <http://covid19.dadeschools.net/#/>

^{ix} <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/coronavirus-update>

^x https://www.ocps.net/departments/exceptional_student_education/related_services/school_health_services/coronavirus_disease_2020

^{xi} https://www.palmbeachschools.org/news/what_s_new/march_2020/coronavirus_prevention_and_readiness_update_2

^{xii} <https://www.philasd.org/coronavirus/>