

THE ISSUE: FOOD ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

As school closures and enforced containments continue due to COVID-19, access to food may be compromised. Although the USDA has started to create opportunities for some students to have access to food, it is not enough. ALL children - regardless of income - need access to nutritious food during this unprecedented pandemic.

- Immediate access for students to our nation's food supply should be paramount.
- Current USDA regulation flexibilities do not go far enough. Providing waivers for congregate feeding at meal sites is inadequate and will not give all students access to food.
 - Deploying Summer Food Service models is only an option in eligible areas (50% or more of students qualifying for meal benefits). Other areas or sites would be required to verify family income and feed only those specific students.
- Students not currently eligible for meal benefits may quickly become needy due to the loss of family income.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

To ensure food access in all impacted communities, The USFA is calling for:

- Nutrition program income eligibility rules to be suspended and/or broadened
- Enable local decision-making for food distribution, without being hampered by applying for waivers and other regulatory constraints.
- Allow for multiple meals to be provided/delivered at once.
- Provide federal and state (where applicable) meal reimbursement for all student meals served, regardless of family income.

WHO IS USFA?

The Urban School Food Alliance consists of 12 of the nation's largest school districts, representing 3,600,000 students. 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