FY 2027 CACFP STATE WAIVER REQUEST TEMPLATE FOR SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS TO CONDUCT OFFSITE MONITORING OF DAY CARE HOMES IN RURAL AREAS

Background

Child Nutrition Programs are expected to be administered in accordance with all statutory and regulatory requirements; waivers to the requirements are exceptions. However, Section 12(l) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), 42 U.S.C. 1760(l), provides USDA authority to waive requirements for State agencies or eligible service providers under certain circumstances.

Important FY 2027 revision: This rural-only approach modifies the offsite monitoring waiver approach originally distributed for FY 2027. Effectively with all approvals going forward, a Sponsoring organization must document that the DCH meets at least one of the rural criteria below to be eligible for an offsite monitoring review. Requests that do not satisfy this rural eligibility requirement will not be approved under this approach.

The longstanding interpretation of the authorizing statutory provisions and regulations in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) require sponsoring organizations to conduct monitoring reviews onsite. Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) understands that the use of offsite monitoring in prior years was effective for many sponsoring organizations of day care homes (DCH). This optional waiver request form was designed to streamline the process for State agencies requesting a waiver for sponsoring organizations to conduct one offsite monitoring review only for DCHs located in a rural area and participating in the CACFP.

Rural means:

(1) any area in a county that is not part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area based on the Office of Management and Budget's Delineations of Metropolitan Statistical Areas;

(2) any area in a county classified as non-metropolitan based on the USDA Economic Research Service's Rural-Urban Continuum Codes and Urban Influence Codes;

(3) any census tract classified as non-metropolitan based on the USDA Economic Research Service's Rural-Urban Commuting Area codes;

(4) any area of a Metropolitan Statistical Area that is not part of a Census Bureau-defined urban area;

(5) any area of a State that is not part of an urban area as determined by the Secretary

(6) any subsequent substitution or update of these classification schemes created by Federal governing bodies; or

(7) any 'pocket' within a Metropolitan Statistical Area that, at the option of the State agency and with FNS Regional Office approval, is determined to be rural in character based on other data sources.

State agencies and eligible service providers are encouraged to submit complete waiver requests as soon as possible. Implementation of this waiver will begin on the date of approval through September 30, 2027.

FY 27 CACFP OFFSITE MONITORING OF DCHs IN RURAL AREAS WAIVER REQUEST

1. **State agency submitting waiver request and responsible State agency staff contact information:**

   State agency:

   The office of Superintendent of Public Instruction-Washington State

   Date (Click on box to select date):

   10/22/26

   Mailing Address:

   PO Box 47200 Attn: Child Nutrition Services, Olympia, WA

   Name and Title of person completing this form:

   Arianne McConchie, Child and Adult Care Program Supervisor

   Name and Title of person to whom the response should be addressed:

   Leanne Eko, Chief Nutrition Officer

2. SSE Hub (Click on box to select):

Western

3. Affirmation that eligible service providers participating in the waiver are in good standing:

Please check one: Yes ☒ No ☐

If No, please explain:

_____

i. How many sponsoring organizations, in good standing, with DCHs in rural areas as defined above, are eligible to apply for this waiver?

4

ii. How many DCH providers, in good standing and located in a rural area as defined above, are eligible to receive one offsite monitoring visit?

170

4. Description of the challenge the State agency is seeking to solve as it relates to conducting onsite monitoring visits, the goal of the waiver to improve services under the Program, and the expected outcomes if the waiver is granted. [Sections 12(l)(2)(A)(iii) and 12(l)(2)(A)(iv) of the NSLA]:

■ Allow sponsoring organizations to conduct one offsite monitoring visit only for DCHs located in a rural area and participating in the CACFP to reduce administrative burden while ensuring all review elements are met within the timeframes set forth in regulation.

i. Please describe the rural characteristics and the current challenges and burdens that impact the sponsoring organization's ability to monitor eligible DCHs on-site.

Challenges include travel time and distance to reach rural areas for monitoring purposes. Burdens include the administrative costs associated with travel to rural locations (labor, mileage, per diem).

ii. If citing distance criteria, also provide a description of the travel burden such as mile radius, travel time, or multiple modes of transportation required to review the DCH on-site.

Over the past 10 years the number of FDCH Sponsors in our state has been reduced from 12 Sponsors to 6. Our Sponsoring organizations were located throughout the state and maintained a smaller radius of travel for provider

iii. Please describe how this waiver will address the challenges and burdens selected above.

Reducing travel to rural areas saves costs associated with administrative expenses.

iv. Please describe how the implementation of this waiver will sustain participation in the Program for sponsoring organizations and DCHs.

Allowing virtual monitoring visits to rural areas would greatly offset the cost of

5. Specific Program requirements to be waived (including statutory and regulatory citations). [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(i) of the NSLA]:

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):

■[7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii)]. Frequency and type of required facility reviews.

- Specifically, that all three monitoring reviews must be conducted on-site.

6. Detailed description of alternative procedures and anticipated impact on Program operations, including technology, State systems, and monitoring:

Sponsoring organizations of DCHs must conduct at least one unannounced review on-site annually which includes the observation of meal service. Sponsors will conduct the records review and the meal observation off-site. The provider must make paperwork available to the monitor. Sponsors provide OSPI their anticipated off-site monitoring schedule, with links (TEAM or ZOOM) to the monitoring visits. SA staff will drop in unannounced to a selection off-site monitoring visits monthly.

7. Description of any steps the State has taken to address regulatory barriers at the State level. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:

■ No regulatory barriers are expected at the State level.

If regulatory barriers are expected at the State level, please list steps taken to address them in the box below:

_____

8. Anticipated challenges State or eligible service providers may face with the waiver implementation:

■ No challenges to the State or eligible providers are anticipated with this waiver implementation.

If the State or eligible service providers anticipate challenges implementing this waiver, please explain in the box below:

_____

9. Description of how the waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government. If there are anticipated increases, confirm that the costs will be paid by non-Federal funds. [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(iii) of the NSLA]:

☒ No anticipated increase in Federal Government costs.

☐ Other, please specify:

_____

10. Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:

This waiver will be in effect from **Date of Approval** through **September 30, 2027**.

11. Proposed monitoring and review procedures:

State agencies should provide, in detail, a plan for offsite monitoring visits by sponsoring organizations, including procedures to verify and document that each DCH approved for an offsite review is located in a rural area. Please note that in all cases, sponsoring organizations of DCHs must conduct at least one unannounced review on-site annually which includes the observation of meal service.

i. What oversight measures will the State agency implement to ensure Program integrity?

Sponsors will be provided a list of their providers who meet the eligibility

ii. Please describe the alternative monitoring plan the sponsoring organization plans to implement.

A. Please select which technology platform(s) will be used to conduct the offsite monitoring visit.

Other

B. Please describe how sponsoring organizations will address findings during their offsite monitoring visit.

Monitors will address findings in the virtual environment the same way they would onsite. TA or corrective action may be given and meals may be disallowed. Providers may be declared seriously deficient if findings are significant in nature. Follow up on-site visits will conducted as needed thereafter.

C. How will sponsoring organizations address providers that miss their virtual visit?

Providers will be given two chances for a virtual visit. If the visit is still not completed after the second attempt, these visits must be made in person.

D. Additional information:

12. Affirmation that the State agency will verify rural eligibility and require eligible sponsoring organizations to submit a monitoring plan prior to the approval of utilizing offsite strategies for one monitoring review.

Please check one: Yes ☒ No ☐

If No, please explain:

13. Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNA):

Upon approval, the State agency must report the following on their annual waiver report:

- A description of how this waiver allowed the Program(s) to provide nutritional meals and/or snacks to Program participants;
- A description of how this waiver improved services for the Program(s) participants;
- A description of how the waiver reduced the administrative burden necessary to operate the Program(s);
- A description of how the waiver has facilitated sponsoring organizations' oversight abilities and responsibilities;
- A summary of how many sponsoring organizations utilized this waiver and how many were recruited or retained as a result of the waiver approval;
- A summary of how many DCHs were monitored offsite during the waiver period;
- A summary of program integrity measures taken to identify any misuse of Federal funds and identify fraudulent activities, and, if anything was identified, any actions taken; and
- A summary of any technical assistance measures that were provided by the State agency to sponsoring organizations and to DCH providers by the sponsoring organizations.

Public Notice

Link to or a copy of the public notice informing the public about the proposed waiver [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA]:

https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/child-nutrition

State agency Signature

Signature and title of requesting official:

Arianne McConchie
_____

Title: CACFP Lead Supervisor
_____

Requesting official's email address for transmission of response:

_____

TO BE COMPLETED BY FNA REGIONAL OFFICE:

FNA Regional Offices are requested to ensure the questions have been adequately addressed by the State agency and formulate an opinion and justification for a response to the waiver request based on their knowledge, experience and work with the State.

Date request was received by SSE Hub:

☐ Check this box to confirm that the State agency has provided public notice in accordance with Section 12(l)(1)(A)(ii) of the NSLA.

SSE Hub Analysis and Recommendations:

_____