

# CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM STATE WAIVER REQUEST

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

# MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE)

# Office for Food and Nutrition Programs (FNP)

# 135 Santilli Way, Everett, MA 02149

# Robert M. Leshin, DirectorRobert.M.Leshin@mass.gov781-338-6477

# Region:

Northeast

# Eligible service providers participating in waiver and affirmation that they are in good standing:

The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE)is requesting the waiver on behalf of all National School Lunch Program (NSLP)/ School Breakfast Program (SBP) Sponsors and Child and Adult Food Care (CACFP) Sponsors determined to be in good standing in the State of Massachusetts operating in School Year 2024-2025.

# Description of the challenge the State agency is seeking to solve, the goal of the waiver to improve services under the Program, and the expected outcomes if the waiver is granted. [Section 12(l)(2)(A)(iii) and 12(l)(2)(A)(iv) of the NSLA]:

The National School Lunch Act and National School Lunch Program regulations require schools to operate a congregate lunch service between the hours of 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, and breakfast to be served at the beginning of the school day. CACFP regulations require meals to be served and consumed during the hours of operation, typically during daylight hours.

In the state of Massachusetts, there is a moderate population of students who observe Ramadan. During Ramadan, students fast or refrain from eating during typical daylight hours, including the time that school breakfast and/or lunch is served. Sponsors that serve meals to students who observe Ramadan experience a significant drop in meal service participation and would benefit from having alternative meal service options.

This waiver would allow sponsors to offer meal service options where meals can be taken offsite and consumed after the typical daylight hours. This waiver would provide students/children who observe Ramadan access to healthy and wholesome meals throughout the school year.

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

* Non-Congregate Meal Service (NSLP and SBP)

Under the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1753(b)(1)(A), and the Child Nutrition Act, 42 U.S.C. 1773(b)(1)(A), NSLP and SBP meals must be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants on site.

* Meal Service Times (NSLP and SBP)

Under program regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(l) and 7 CFR 220.8(l), meals served in the NSLP and SBP must follow meal service time requirements.

* Offer Versus Serve (NSLP)

Under the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1758(a)(3), and program regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(e), Program operators of senior high schools (as defined by the State education agency) must participate in offer versus serve at lunch.

* Non-Congregate Meal Service (CACFP)

Under 7 CFR 226.19(b)(6)(iii), CACFP meals must be served and consumed by participants on site.

* Meal Service Times (CACFP)

Under program regulations at 7 CFR 226.20(k) meals served in the CACFP must follow meal service time requirements.

1. **Detailed description of alternative procedures and anticipated impact on Program operations, including technology, State systems, and monitoring:** No expected impacts on technology, State systems, or monitoring.

# 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]:

There are no regulatory barriers at the State level to provide the requested waiver.

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

None identified.

# 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 from non-Federal funds. [Section 12(l)(1)(A)(iii) of the NSLA]:

The waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government.

# Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:

Implementation date requested: February 28, 2025

Time period requested: Effective through March 30, 2025.

# Proposed monitoring and review procedures:

The current NSLP/SBP and CACFP monitoring of sponsors will continue during the administrative review and technical assistance calls. This practice will continue as it is consistent with 7 CFR 210.18 requirements.

# Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNS):

No later than December 31, 2025, DESE will report to USDA the number of sponsors that used this waiver.

# 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://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/newsletter.html>

# Signature and title of requesting official:

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Title: Director, Office for Food and Nutrition Programs

Requesting official’s email address for transmission of response: robert.m.leshin@mass.gov

# TO BE COMPLETED BY FNS REGIONAL OFFICE:

*FNS 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 at Regional Office:**

□ **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**

* + **Regional Office Analysis and Recommendations:**