



Food and
Nutrition
Service

December 23, 2020

Braddock
Metro
Center

Rosie Krueger
State Director, Child Nutrition Programs
Vermont Agency of Education
1 National Life Drive, Davis 5
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria
VA 22314

Dear Ms. Krueger:

This letter is in response to the Vermont Agency of Education's (VTAOE) December 2, 2020, request to waive the notification requirements for sponsors in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. VTAOE requested a statewide waiver of SFSP requirements under 7 CFR 225.16(a) to send, on behalf of the Vermont SFSP sponsors, a master list of sites to the Vermont Department of Health. Pursuant to section 12(l) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1760(l)), FNS approves VTAOE's waiver request effective from the date of approval through September 30, 2021.

VTAOE requested a statewide waiver of the requirements at 7 CFR 225.16(a), which require SFSP sponsors to notify the appropriate health department of their operation within two weeks of approval. The State agency was previously granted this waiver for the period of May 26, 2020 to August 31, 2020. According to VTAOE, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a statewide notification of sponsors' operations to the appropriate public health officials would be more effective and efficient than the standard piecemeal sponsor-by-sponsor approach. VTAOE reports that Vermont has a centralized, state-level health department; there are no local, city and county-level health departments in Vermont. VTAOE asserts that the waiver will reduce the administrative burden of SFSP sponsors and the Vermont Department of Health while simultaneously strengthening Program integrity by communicating information directly from one State agency to another. VTAOE proposes to send the Vermont Department of Health a list three times during School Year 2020-2021 and twice during summer 2021 operation. FNS agrees with VTAOE's assessment of the impact the waiver will have on the Program. The reduction of the administrative burden and simultaneous strengthening of Program integrity will support Program service.

FNS approves VTAOE's request to send, on behalf of the Vermont SFSP sponsors, a master list of sites to the Vermont Department of Health. This waiver is effective as of December 23, 2020 and valid through September 30, 2021. The waiver authority at section 12(l) of the NSLA requires FNS to review the performance of any State or eligible service provider that was granted a waiver. Therefore, by December 31, 2021, VTAOE must provide to the FNS Northeast Regional Office a written report quantifying the impact of the waiver, as described below.

The report must include the following:

- A description of how the waiver impacted meal service operations, children's access to nutritious meals, and participation in SFSP;

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- A description of how the waiver reduced the quantity of paperwork necessary to administer the program;
- The total number of sponsoring organizations that used the waiver;
- A summary of benefits and challenges associated with the waiver of the notification requirements for SFSP sponsors.

FNS appreciates VTAOE's commitment to work with sponsors. If you have questions, please contact the Northeast Regional Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Angela M. Kline". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela M. Kline
Director
Policy & Program Development Division

Electronic Copies: Jan Kallio, NERO
Pamela Griffin, NERO