



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Alexandria, VA
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DATE: November 29, 2005

SUBJECT: School Meals Programs: Second Extension of Waivers Due to
Emergency Conditions Caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

TO: Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Agencies
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

This memorandum announces the extension of waivers for disaster conditions resulting from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The following apply in the presidentially-declared disaster areas that are phasing-in operations:

- Schools may serve all meals free to attending children if unable to maintain normal accountability systems;
- Schools have meal planning flexibility with regard to the service of milk and other component requirements. In addition, flexibility is allowed for the time of meal service and offer versus serve.

States may extend the above provisions until February 28, 2006, as needed, on a school by school basis.

In addition, schools in either the disaster areas or that were closed due to use as shelters may extend the eligibility from the previous school year an additional 30 operating days from the date school returns to session. This is in effect for the remainder of School Year 2005-06.

We would like to clarify the two issues raised by your offices. First, what is meant by "normal accountability systems" as some school food authorities (SFAs) indicated that their pre-hurricane system was not operable and continued to claim all meals free. If the SFA is now able to accurately count and claim meals by category using a manual or other alternate system, it cannot claim all meals free because its pre-hurricane ("normal") system is not operating. The other point we'd like to clarify concerns homeless declarations made by the school district's homeless liaison. Any child who was designated homeless by the liaison is eligible for free meals for the school year; these children are not subject to the 45-day re-evaluation. However, children certified by school administrators based on their homeless status due to the hurricanes are subject to the 45-day re-evaluation. Therefore, every 45 days, the school official must continue to determine if the household's status remains unchanged.

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We will continue to monitor the situation in these areas to determine if additional extensions are appropriate. If there are any questions concerning this memorandum, State agencies should contact their Regional office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stanley C. Garnett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and "G".

STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division