



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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SUBJECT: Rural Designations in the Summer Food Service Program - Revised

TO: Regional Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All Regions

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify guidance on rural designations in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and highlight the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Rural Designation Map, a new tool available to assist State agencies and sponsors in designating sites as rural. This memorandum supersedes SFSP policy memorandum *Using Metropolitan Statistical Area Data for Determining Rural Administrative Reimbursements*, March 26, 2004.

FNS has long recognized the additional cost of operating SFSP in rural America. In 1978, FNS conducted a study investigating the costs of administration of the SFSP in rural communities. According to the study, sponsors that prepare their own meals and sponsors that operate in rural areas may incur higher costs than other types of sponsors [44 FR 36365, January 2, 1979]. Consequently, additional reimbursements are provided to sponsors for meals served at rural sites and for self-prepared meals [7 CFR 225.9(d)(8)(iii)].

SFSP regulations define *rural* as any area in a county which is not a part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area or any “pocket” within a Metropolitan Statistical Area which, at the option of the State agency and with FNS Regional Office concurrence, is determined to be geographically isolated from urban areas [7 CFR 225.2].

A *Metropolitan Statistical Area* is defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as a location where there is at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory, which has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties, based upon census data. For more information, see OMB Bulletin No. 13-01, *Revised Delineations of Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Micropolitan Statistical Areas, and Combined Statistical Areas, and Guidance on Uses of the Delineations of These Areas*, February 28, 2013, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf>.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas for the entire United States now may be accessed through the FNS Rural Designation Map. State agencies and sponsors may use this map to determine if a site may be designated as rural by entering the site location. Instructions for using the map are available on the map link at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/rural-designation>.

If a proposed site was considered rural for SFSP purposes in the past, but the map does not reflect that designation, the State agency is strongly encouraged to consult the appropriate FNS Regional Office and seek approval to designate the site as rural. If a new proposed site, not recognized as rural in the map, is identified by the State agency to in fact be located in a rural pocket within an area designated as an urban Metropolitan Statistical Area, the State agency is also encouraged to consult with the appropriate FNS Regional Office and seek approval to designate the site as rural. The State agency must inform the Regional Office that the site is located in a rural pocket, but is not required to submit additional data for review.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this information to Program operators immediately. Program operators should direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the appropriate State agency. State agency contact information is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Original Signed

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Child Nutrition Programs