

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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DATE: December 05, 2015

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SUBJECT: Rural Designations in the Summer Food Service Program

TO: Regional Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All Regions

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

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 operate in rural areas may incur higher costs than other sponsors [44 FR 36365, January 2, 1979]. As a result, 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>.

In circumstances where OMB designates an area as “Metropolitan,” the State agency may designate a site located in that area as rural for purposes of SFSP. In addition, if a site is located in a rural “pocket” within a “Metropolitan” area, and with approval by the appropriate FNS Regional Office, the site may be designated as rural. A ‘pocket’ within a metropolitan statistical area is an area geographically isolated from urban centers.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas for the entire United States now may be accessed through the FNS Area Eligibility Mapper at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/areaeligibility>. Using the site address, State agencies and sponsors may use the Mapper to determine if a site may be designated as rural for purposes of SFSP. Instructions for using the Mapper are available at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Census%20Instructions%202014_0.pdf.

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