

## **Family Day Care Home Sponsoring Organizations Monitoring Waiver**

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

Ohio Department of Education  
and Workforce,  
Office of Nutrition  
Brigitte Hires, Administrator  
25. S. Front St.  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-425-9760  
Brigitte.Hires@education.ohio.gov

2. Region:

Midwest

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

Ohio Family Day Care Home (FDCH) Sponsoring Organizations currently in good standing and approved to operate the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

4. 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]:

Ohio has seen a decline in Family Day Care Home (FDCH) Sponsors in the past 10 years and now only have seven sponsoring organizations to support the entire state. Sponsor administration costs are more than the approved sponsor organization reimbursements leading sponsors to leave the program.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), FDCH sponsors demonstrated their ability to successfully utilize technology for offsite monitoring visits. Requiring all FDCH monitoring visits to be performed onsite creates significant travel costs, particularly in a vast state like Ohio. Additional challenges include:

- According to a survey conducted by the National Council of Nonprofits in April 2023, nationwide staffing shortages affect 75% of nonprofits. Staffing shortages experienced by Ohio nonprofits negatively impact the public services they offer. FDCH sponsors continue to work on staffing and are specifically targeting areas where providers are located.
- Reimbursement rates have not kept up with rising CACFP costs, such as staffing, travel, and technology.
- Ohio has a large amount of rural area but the number of FDCH's there have decreased. This has made travel to those remote locations inefficient and costly.
- Ohio roads are frequently closed for construction in the summer months,

preventing access to an area. This can lead to last-minute rescheduling of onsite visits.

- FDCH providers sometimes need to close unexpectedly due illness (i.e. COVID, cold/flu/rsv). If a monitor is not given enough notice, they may have already traveled to the area, creating additional costs for the sponsor to pay for another travel day. Additionally, requiring all monitoring to be done onsite and in-person creates additional risks that a FDCH monitor will pick up an illness from a child and transmit it to other FDCH's they visit.
- Mileage reimbursement cost has increased, and gas prices continue to climb which is an increased burden for the planned travel.

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

**CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM**

**DEW is requesting a waiver of the requirement that CACFP monitoring requirements included in 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii) be conducted onsite. Specifically, we're requesting that FDCH sponsor in Ohio can choose to perform up to one offsite monitoring review per FDCH provider that has not been in serious deficiency in the past 12 months per Program year for sites that are at least 30 miles away from the home sponsor's office.**

**6. Detailed description of alternative procedures and anticipated impact on Program operations, including technology, State systems, and monitoring:**

**FDCH sponsors will be required to apply to DEW for use of this waiver. Each sponsor may request to use this waiver to allow one offsite monitoring visit per FDCH provider that have not been in serious deficiency for the past 12 months per Program year.**

**FDCH sponsor waiver request:**

**Each FDCH sponsoring organization will submit to DEW a written request to utilize this monitoring waiver. Within the request, sponsors will submit a copy of their updated monitoring policies and procedures, including offsite monitoring procedures, a policy for the use of an offsite visit, and an integrity plan to ensure all monitoring requirements are met. These components will be added to the sponsor's Management Plan.**

**For DEW approval, FDCH monitoring policies and procedures must include, at a minimum:**

- How the sponsor will conduct an off-site monitoring visit;**
- How the sponsor will track, identify, and report which monitoring visits was onsite vs. offsite;**
- How the sponsor will track to ensure all visits are spaced, unannounced, completed, and how they will address providers that are unavailable for and offsite unannounced visit;**
- How the sponsor will meet required reporting elements;**
- How the sponsor will determine if a FDCH provider is eligible for offsite monitoring;**
- How the sponsor will determine if a particular task needs to be conducted onsite or offsite and the rationale; and**
- How the sponsor will meet all other monitoring requirements included in the monitoring policies and procedures in the management plan.**

**Offsite Review Process**

**Technological advances provide more options for effective monitoring than ever before. During the COVID-19 PHE, FDCH sponsors created procedures for offsite monitoring visits that provide excellent customer service and show respect for the licensed daycare home provider as a professional in their field. FDCH sponsors in Ohio utilize KidKare for online access to offsite visit forms. These forms provide a variety of reporting features based on whether the visit is completed onsite or offsite.**

**If there is a compelling reason that a monitoring visit be performed offsite, that information must be clearly described on the monitoring visit form. Prior to any FDCH visit, sponsor monitors can review provider records online. These records include meal counts, attendance, 5-day reconciliation, licensing verification, application, agreement, provider's own children, special diets, etc.**

**To begin an offsite visit in real-time, the sponsor monitor calls the FDCH provider and immediately starts a video/virtual monitoring visit (either scheduled or unannounced). During the call, the monitor has the provider use the camera to observe critical review**

pieces, such as meal count records, children in care, and the meal service. Cell phones and tablets are most frequently used for the visual portion of an offsite review.

7. **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 currently no State level regulatory barriers related to this specific issue.

8. **Anticipated challenges State or eligible service providers may face with the waiver implementation:**

At this time, the Ohio Department of Education does not anticipate challenges from the waiver. Rather, the waiver will decrease the administrative burden on sponsors and the state agency while maintaining integrity of the program and the expected compliance to the regulations.

9. **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 establishment of this waiver will not increase the overall cost of the Program to the Federal Government.

10. **Anticipated waiver implementation date and time period:**

Waiver implementation would start immediately and expire September 30, 2025.

11. **Proposed monitoring and review procedures:**

State agency staff in the Office of Nutrition will monitor implementation of this waiver.

12. **Proposed reporting requirements (include type of data and due date(s) to FNS):** Ohio Department of Education will adhere to all reporting requirements as prescribed by the USDA.

13. **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]:**

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<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Food-and-Nutrition/Resources-and-Tools-for-Food-and-Nutrition/Food-and-Nutrition-Waivers>

14. **Signature and title of requesting official:**



Title: Administrator

Requesting official's email address for transmission of response:

[Brigitte.Hires@education.ohio.gov](mailto:Brigitte.Hires@education.ohio.gov)

Phone: 614-466-0522

**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:**

**Date Received:**.....

**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:**

**Recommend Approval**

**Recommend Denial**

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**(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;**

**(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or**

**(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).**

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