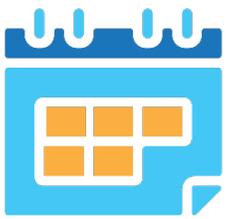


Monitoring for FY 2021

Making the Most of Offsite Monitoring



USDA has provided [Monitoring Flexibilities for Fiscal Year 2021](#). While monitoring is still required, Sponsors may complete visits through a desk review.



Make a Plan:

This year will be stressful enough, take some time at the beginning of the fiscal year to plan out monitoring visits.

- Set specific dates for each required monitoring visit; write them in a planning calendar or schedule in your online calendar application – make sure that visits are within the required time frames (if applicable) – write in guidelines (no more than 6 months elapsing between visits for CACFP, or within the first 4 weeks of site operations for SFSP)
- In your plan: decide which site to visit, meal type for observation (if applicable) and whether the visit will be announced or unannounced
- Provide a little wiggle room – don't schedule the visit for the very last day it is due – allow for unexpected changes to avoid being derailed
- Conduct training for all monitoring staff – maintain training documentation

Prepare Sites and Staff:

Things will look very different this year, so it is important to set the stage for what is to come.

- Discuss the monitoring waivers in annual training or through email communications
- Ensure that sites have the capability to send documents in a timely manner if asked – do they have a scanner, camera, email access or a scanning app on a smartphone (ex. Scannable, or Google Drive)
- Work closely with all monitoring staff
- Prepare and review procedures specific to offsite reviews – detail steps monitors will be required to take, documents they will require, and timelines for review, corrective action, and closure
- Be prepared to answer questions and concerns



Consider Documentation:

Determining the documents required beforehand will eliminate needless back and forth.

- Make a list of all documents required to complete the monitoring visit report
- Review each section and consider the corresponding records; menu records, attendance lists, training documents, medical statements, licensing verification, etc.
- Make a checklist for sites; send the checklist with your document request to make sure that each item is provided



Meal Observations are a Click Away:

There are many ways to conduct the required meal observation.

- Request pictures of the meal with all meal components served in the serving sizes provided to participants
- Consider conducting a “live” meal observation with a FaceTime or Skype call during the designated meal service
- Allow sites to video the meal service on a phone and send via email or text message



Defining Unannounced Reviews:

How can an offsite desk review be an unannounced review?

- Most Important – Write a procedure to address each aspect of the organization’s offsite (desk) monitoring reviews
- Define what makes a review “unannounced” and stick to that definition
 - Maybe calling a site and requiring the information from the day before
 - Perhaps calling a site in the morning and requiring photos/video and other documentation for lunch that day
- Remember that site staff must not be made aware of the review, at any time, prior to the call for documentation
- All reviews should follow the organization’s written procedure for the duration of the waivers

