



Module 3 – Meal Counting and Site Operations

Target Audience

- Designated Officials/Authorized Representative
- Summer Food Service Program Administrator
- Site Supervisors
- Site Monitors

Estimated Time Required

- 35 minutes

Objectives

- Review procedures for site operations
- Review Offer verses Serve requirements
- Review “Traveling Apple” policy
- Review procedures for counting and consolidating meals for reimbursement claim

Tasks

- Read lesson
- Review sample forms, Web sites and resources
- Complete and submit online quiz

Meal Service

- Any combination of two meals can be served and claimed **except** lunch and supper at Open and Closed-enrolled sites.
- Camps and migrant sites may claim up to three meals per day.
- Meals must meet the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) standards as described in the "Menu Planning" module.

Waiver of Meal Time Restrictions in the SFSP

Sponsors are no longer required to ensure that specific periods of time elapse between meal services. Sponsors are to:

- Serve meals at a reasonable time for the type of meal served
- Maintain food temperatures as required by State and local health department
- Allow enough spacing between meal types to prevent food waste

Updates are included in USDA's Policy Memo SFSP-08-2014 on Meal Service Requirements on USDA's Web page at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP08_SFSP08-2014os.pdf.

Offer versus Serve (OVS) Meal Service

The USDA now allows all sites to use “offer versus serve” (OVS). OVS permits children to decline a certain number of menu items they do not intend to eat. It is designed to reduce food waste and food costs while still maintaining the nutritional integrity of meals. Please note:

- Only three food components are required for a reimbursable lunch.
Three items are required to be taken for a reimbursable breakfast.
- There is no OVS option for snacks.
- OVS is an option in SFSP, not a requirement.
- School Food Authorities (SFAs) electing to use OVS and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns must follow the OVS requirements of those programs.
- Non-school SFSP sponsors electing to use OVS must follow the revised OVS requirements for the SFSP meal pattern as described in USDA’s Memo SFSP 08-2014 “Meal Service Requirements” on USDA’s Web page at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP%2008_SFSP%2008-2014os.pdf and USDA’s Policy Memo 05-2015 Summer Meal Program Questions and Answers 2014 at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SFSP%2005-2015os.pdf>.

OVS requirements for non-school SFSP are as follows:

- **Breakfast:**
 - Sponsors must offer four different food items. The four food items must include:
 - One serving of fruit/vegetable
 - One serving of bread/bread alternate
 - One serving of fluid milk
 - the fourth food item can be a different fruit/vegetable, bread/bread alternate, or meat/meat alternate.
 - a child must take three of the four food items and may only decline one food item.

- **Lunch or Supper:**
 - a sponsor must offer five food items. The five food items must include:
 - One serving of meat/meat alternate (1 component)
 - Two different servings of fruit/vegetable (1 component)
 - One serving of bread/bread alternate (1 component)
 - One serving of fluid milk (1 component)
 - A child must take at least three of the four components and may only decline one component.

Sites using unitized meals may use OVS; however, as noted above, children still may only refuse one food item at breakfast and one of the components offered at lunch or supper. Sponsors using vended meals can request an exemption to the unitizing requirement for certain components of the meals.

Sponsors must request the meal service option they plan to use on the CNP site application. Whichever meal service option is approved, that method must be used until a site revision is requested and approved; or when the State agency staff communicates to the sponsor/site that it must switch to serving unitized meals.

OVS tips for success:

- Offer all food items to each child, including the last to be served, and do not urge children to decline any part of the meal.
- Ensure site staff and children know how many food items are contained in each combination food so they know what item(s) can be declined. Combination foods are dishes like pizza and burritos with more than one food item that cannot be separated.
- Contact your local environmental health department to determine if you need a certified food handler and/or health cards at each site prior to starting OVS. Serving bulk foods usually requires a certified food handler for the site but using individually pre-packaged food usually does not.

Site Rules

Sponsors are encouraged to establish site rules in accordance with SFSP guidelines. These site rules may include language such as:

- Meals are for children 18 years or younger.
- Food cannot be taken from the site. If you must leave before finishing your meal, ask the site staff what food items (if any), you may take with you.
- Meals only served during the posted meal times.
- Meals must be eaten on site.
- Second meals may be served **only** after all children have received a first meal.
- Parents may assist their children in carrying their meals or opening meal packages; parents may not consume any part of the meal.
- A site maybe closed if these rules are not followed.

Taking Meal Components Off-Site: “Traveling Apple” Policy

- Site staff may permit a child to leave with only one non-perishable fruit, vegetable, or grain item, to be consumed later.
- Children MAY NOT leave with the main entrée, milk, or other designated foods.
- Site staff must be trained as to what food items may leave the site.

Sponsors should only use this option if they have adequate staff to monitor the sites to ensure issues with food safety and program integrity do not arise. For more details, please refer to 2016 Administrative Guidance for Sponsors.

Transport Records/Delivery Receipts

Transport records/delivery receipts allow sponsors to track meals prepared and delivered by type (breakfast, snack, lunch, supper). Please note:

- Vended programs must support this information with a signed transport record/delivery receipt.
- Programs with a central kitchen are encouraged to support this information with a signed transport record/delivery receipt for good program management.

Point-of-Service Meal Count

Sponsors must take meal counts:

- At the point-of-service where the person counting the meal can see that all components have been accepted by the SFSP participant
- That includes the number of complete breakfasts, lunches, snacks or suppers served as first and second meals.
- That are served to Program adults and non-Program adults.
- Of meals that are damaged, incomplete or of other non-reimbursable meals and leftover meals.

A sample Daily Meal Count Form that meets all of these requirements can be found in the SFSP Resource section on the NDA CNP website. The USDA SFSP guidance materials are available on the USDA's SFSP Resource Web page" at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/handbooks> or in the SFSP resource section on the NDA CNP website <http://nvcnp.doe.nv.gov>

Daily Meal Counts and Consolidation

Accurately completing meal counts is one way to prevent meals from being disallowed. The person counting the meals must sign the Daily Meal Count Form immediately after the meal service.

- The total number of meals available is documented in section one of the Daily Meal Count Form, “total meals available”. The “total meals available” should match the total number of meals in Section nine on the Daily Meal Count Form. This number includes leftover meals as well as newly prepared or delivered meals.
- Meal counts are recorded by site staff utilizing the Daily Meal Count Form by crossing off a number as each meal is served.
- **With State agency approval**, it is acceptable to use an alternate method to count meals, such as a mechanical hand counter, tallies or tickets. Record those counts on the Daily Meal Count Form under sections 2-5 and total in section 6. Indicate on the Daily Meal Count Form the alternate method used.
- Track meals served to program adults and non-program adults separate from meals served to children.
- Prior to submitting your monthly claim, it is highly recommended to use a weekly or monthly consolidation form to reduce errors. Sample consolidation forms can be found in the Reference Materials section in the back of the USDA 2017 Administrative Guidance for Sponsors.
- Sponsors should build edit checks into their procedure for meal counts to ensure accuracy (i.e. second level review by another staff member).

Eligible First Meal

Eligible first meals are those that are served to children that include all food components to meet the meal pattern requirements.

Eligible Second Meals

- Second meals may be served after all children have received a first complete meal at open and closed enrolled sites.
- If seconds are served, sponsors may be reimbursed for up to two percent of all eligible first meals served as second meals for all sites during the claiming period.
- Camp sites cannot claim second meals.

For example, if 100 first meals and five second meals were served during the month of July, the sponsor may be reimbursed for 102 meals. Of the five seconds that were served, two are reimbursable (two percent of 100).

Meal Counting for Camps

Camp sponsors can only be reimbursed for meals served to children who are eligible for free or reduced price-meals.

- Meal Count Worksheet for Camps (a roster) can be used to take an actual count of meals served. Attachment 16, in the USDA 2017 Administrative Guidance for Sponsors provides a format to collect actual meal counts by child, by eligibility category, by meal for a week.

Field Trips

To be reimbursed for meals taken on field trips, the sponsor must:

- Report all field trips to the State agency using the Site Change and Field Trip form which is available in the forms download section of NDA CNP SFSP application.

Fax (702-668-4580) or email tkratz@agri.nv.gov the field trip form to the State agency no later than 5:00pm on the day of the field trip. A signed copy of the form will be returned to the sponsor/site after approval.

- Conduct a point-of-service meal count at the field trip location where meals will be served.
- Document meals by using a meal count form.
- Maintain documentation that all meals taken on the field trip complied with the meal pattern requirement and food safety regulations.
- If the site is approved to be closed on the trip date, best practice is to post a notice to announce when the site will be closed and when it will resume meal service.

Unacceptable Meal-Counting Methods

- Meal Counts based on the number of trays or plates available and left over after the meal service.
- Meal Counts taken at the beginning of the serving line without checking to see if the meals served were reimbursable at the end of the service line.
- Meal Counts based on the number of children in attendance.
- Meal Counts based on the number of tickets distributed for meals, not tickets received.
- Meal Counts based on the number of meals received.
- Meal Counts based on previous meal counts.
- Claiming the number of meals prepared or ordered as the number served.
- Claiming the same number of meals every day; this is referred to as “Block Claiming”.

Meal-Counting Red Flags

- Excessive leftovers (no upward or downward adjustments)
- Incomplete paperwork (Daily Meal Count Forms, Monitoring Reports, Transport Records, Menu Records)
- Lack of documented follow-up by sponsor or monitor on meal count problems identified during a site visit or site review
- Claiming meals above the State agency approved Average Daily Participation (ADP)

Common Errors

The following are common errors which may result in a loss of reimbursement. Failure to:

- Request prior approval for a change in meal times
- Request prior approval for a change in serving dates
- Request prior approval for a change in an increase to the ADP (CAP)
- Complete and submit a site application for site approval
- Consolidate sponsor claim after entering site claim(s) information
- Report Field Trips prior to the trip date

Summary

- Adhere to your approved meal time(s), meal date(s), and site(s) ADP as approved in the CNP.
- Submit site level changes to meal services time(s), meal services date(s), and ADP using the Site Change and Field Trip Form no later than 5:00pm on the day of the change.

- Fully complete the Daily Meal Count form with edit check to ensure accurate SFSP reimbursement.
- Ensure all meals are eaten on site, except those fruit, vegetable, and grain items that qualify under the “traveling apple” policy.
- Whenever possible, report field trip(s) **prior** to the trip date.

Resources

For more information about meal counts, see the USDA 2016 Administrative Guidance for Sponsors

Program Staff

Your summer food Staff at the Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Division is the best resource for questions you may have about SFSP requirements.

Diane Hogan, Nutrition Programs Professional

E-mail: dhogan@agri.nv.gov

Phone: 702-668-4582

Tammy Kratz, Program Officer

E-mail: tkratz@agri.nv.gov

Phone: 702-668-4584