Child Nutrition Program Operations During Summer 2022 and School Year 2022-23

Frequently Asked Questions

About

This document includes frequently asked questions (FAQs) and guidance related to child nutrition program operations during summer 2022 and school year 2022-23. Recent updates are highlighted in yellow.

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Child Nutrition Program Waivers and Implementation

1. **What waivers are currently in place for summer 2022 for the Summer Food Service Program?**

   For SFSP operations in 2022, CDE is approved for all available waivers. Waivers include non-congregate meal service and parent/guardian pickup. CDE approval is required prior to use of the waivers, and sponsors can request approval by completing the SFSP Waiver Request Form.

   Additionally, as of June 30, sponsors may add non-area eligible sites to their existing application packet in the Colorado Nutrition Portal. Use the new site request form to request new site additions to your application. All sites must be approved before meals can be served. **Contact your CDE point person with any questions.**

    View this comparison chart to see program year 2022 operations compared to usual program operations.

2. **Can sponsors serve multiple days' worth of meals with the non-congregate meal service and parent/guardian pickup waivers?**

   Sponsors may serve meals for multiple days at one time. Sponsors <u>will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility.</u> Sponsors may only provide meals for the site's approved meal types (breakfast, lunch, snack, supper) and only one meal for each approved meal type per day may be provided. Daily meal count forms must be used to record multiple days of meals served.

3. **What data sources should be used to determine area eligibility for Summer Food Service Program sites for summer 2022?**

   Sponsors should use the most recent school year or census data to qualify their sites. If the site does not meet eligibility requirements based on School Year 2021-22 October count school data or the most recent census data, sponsors may use alternative options to determine site eligibility for this summer only:

   - Option 1: Use SY 2019-20 October count data. If this option is selected, it establishes eligibility until September 30, 2024 (i.e. two program years).

   - Option 2: Use SY 2021-22 Community Eligibility Provision data.

   No waiver is required to utilize this flexibility for summer 2022 operations. Contact your CDE Point Person to utilize this flexibility.

4. **What waivers are currently in place for school year 2022-23 for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program?**

   For School Year 2022-23, CDE has been approved for all available waivers for NSLP and SBP.
   Waivers that require CDE approval:
   - Non-congregate feeding and parent/guardian pickup when impacted by COVID-19,
   - Waiver of offer versus serve at the high school level,
   - Meal time requirements,
   - Alternate sites for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program when impacted by COVID.

   Waivers that do not require prior CDE approval:

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- Food Service Management Company contract duration,
- Local wellness policy triennial assessment due date,
- On-site reviews and reporting,
- Carryover eligibility,
- Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) requirement

Sponsors will need to complete the SNP Waiver Request Form or FFVP Waiver Request Form for the waivers that require CDE approval.

5. **What qualifies as "when sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19"?**

The waivers are intended to provide needed flexibility to support sponsors to safely serve meals to their community. The U.S. Department of Agriculture expects that flexibilities under the waivers requiring a request will only be implemented when meal service is limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. Impacted by COVID-19 could include, but is not limited to, staffing issues, supply chain issues (e.g. vendor delays, limited products), increase in COVID-19 cases (e.g. utilize CDPHE map rates), preventative COVID -19 spread, following guidance from the local health department, following guidance and recommendation from local school district, etc. For questions on waivers, contact Megan Johnson at johnson_m@cde.state.co.us or Kerri Link at link_k@cde.state.co.us.

Summer Food Service Program Operations in 2022

1. **How do sponsors apply to participate in the Summer Food Service Program for summer 2022?**

Sponsors will apply through the Colorado Nutrition Portal and complete the SFSP application.

2. **Can sponsors serve meals prior to their SFSP application being approved?**

No. Sponsors may not begin site operations until the application has been approved. In addition, any changes to program operations such as serving days, times, etc. must be updated in the site application and approved before then can be implemented.

3. **How do SFSP sponsors record meals when multiple meals are distributed?**

Sponsors may serve meals for multiple days at one time. Sponsors can count meals on the day they are distributed for each meal type served. Sponsors are not required to have separate meal count forms for the days meals are intended to be eaten. For example, if 3 days' worth of meals are served, a sponsor will have one breakfast meal count form and one lunch meal count form that shows 3 days' worth of meals distributed at that site. Sponsors will need approval from CDE to implement. Daily meal count forms must be used to record multiple days of meals served.

4. **Is Offer versus Serve allowable under the Summer Food Service Program?**

Yes, offer versus serve is allowable and sponsors have the option to implement this menu planning method.

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Child Nutrition Program Options During School Year 2022-23

1. **What program are sponsors to operate during school year 2022-23?**

   All sponsors operating during the school year must operate under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. NSLP and SBP meal patterns and reimbursement rates must be followed.

2. **Can the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program food items be served and consumed during other meal services or outside of the regular school day?**

   No, FFVP food items cannot be served or consumed during other meal services.

3. **Can the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program be served at an alternate site when impacted by COVID-19?**

   FFVP may be served at an alternate site when impacted by COVID-19. This flexibility will only be allowable when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors must apply via the FFVP Waiver Request form and obtain CDE approval to use the FFVP alternate site waiver.

4. **Is parent or guardian pick-up allowable for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program when impacted by COVID-19?**

   Yes. Parent or guardian FFVP pick-up is allowable when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors must apply via the FFVP Waiver Request form and obtain CDE approval to use the parent or guardian pick-up waiver.

Applications

1. **How do sponsors apply to participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs** fo**r school year 2022-23?**

   Sponsors will apply, as normal, through the Child Nutrition Portal. Contact your CDE Point Person if you need support with your application.

2. **Can sponsors serve meals prior to their NSLP application being approved?**

   Yes. Sponsors must serve meals in accordance with their NSLP application. Due to state agency approval timelines, reimbursable meals can be served and claimed prior to renewal application approval. All documentation and meal counting and claim requirements still apply.

Meal Site Eligibility

1. **What data sources should be used to determine area eligibility for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program sites for school year 2022-23?**

   Sponsors must use the most recent school year data (XLS) available on the CDE Pupil Membership webpage to qualify sites for FFVP.

2. **What data sources should be used to determine area eligibility for the Afterschool Snack Program sites for School Year 2022-23?**

Sponsors should use the most recent school year or census data to qualify their sites. If the site does not meet eligibility requirements based on School Year 2021-22 October count school data or the most recent census data, sponsors may use alternative options to determine site eligibility:

- Option 1: Use SY 2019-20 October count data. If this option is selected, it establishes eligibility for two program years.

- Option 2: Use SY 2021-22 Community Eligibility Provision data.

No waiver is required for this flexibility for school year 2022 operations. Contact your CDE Point Person to utilize this flexibility.

Menu Planning

1. **Is there a specific age/grade group that should be used for menu planning?**

Sponsors should plan menus to meet the NSLP and SBP age/grade group requirements based on the student grades at each site. The meal patterns were designed to meet the food and nutritional needs of the average student in each age/grade group.

2. **Under the National School Lunch Program, what meal pattern should be used for pre-K students?**

Pre-K students who eat meals separately from older students, such as in the classroom, must follow the pre-K meal pattern. If pre-K students eat meals with older students, such as in the cafeteria, they are considered "co-mingled" and may follow the NSLP meal pattern.

3. **Will plated meals be required to contain full servings of all components, including meeting vegetable subgroup requirements?**

Yes, meals that are plated or pre-plated for students must meet all component and quantity requirements for the applicable meal pattern and grade group. Sponsors may choose to plate certain components while allowing students the ability to select the additional components needed to make a reimbursable meal. If sponsors choose to partially plate meals for students, the plated components must meet quantity requirements.

4. **What meal pattern requirements are in place for School Year 2022-23? Specifically, which sodium tier is in place and what percentage of grains must be whole grain-rich?**

On March 2, 2022, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – Final Rule that is in place for School Years 2022-23 and 2023-24. For School Year 2022-23:

- Sponsors may offer flavored low-fat milk to K-12 students and co-mingled pre-K students in NSLP and SBP. When offering flavored milk, sponsors must also offer non-flavored milk as part of the milk variety requirement. Flavored low-fat milk will also be allowed in the Special Milk Program and as a competitive beverage.

- At least 80% of the grains served in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program each week must be whole grain-rich. Each serving line must be assessed for compliance separately. For

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example, if students are able to choose from the main entrée line or a daily sandwich line, both lines must offer at least 80% whole grain-rich grains over the week.

- The weekly sodium limit for NSLP and SBP will remain at Target 1 in school year 2022-23. For NSLP only, there will be a 10% decrease in the limit in school year 2023-24.

5. **Are sponsors able to apply for a meal pattern exemption waiver?**

No. There are no meal pattern waivers in place for school year 2022-23. Sponsors must plan meals to meet all meal pattern requirements. Previously approved meal pattern waivers due to COVID-19 or due to documented sponsor hardship are no longer valid.

However, the Colorado Department of Education School Nutrition Unit opted into the nationwide waiver to Allow Fiscal Action Flexibility for Meal Pattern Violations Related to COVID-19 Supply Chain Disruptions Impacting School Meals in School Year 2022-2023. This allows CDE School Nutrition the flexibility to not take fiscal action for meal pattern violations when due to supply chain disruptions. Sponsors may complete this Fiscal Action Waiver Form to notify CDE School Nutrition that they are projecting and/or are currently experiencing ongoing supply chain disruptions. For one time or short-term (lasting two weeks or less) meal pattern violations, sponsors may document this on-site (i.e. on production records or inventory forms) and do not need to complete this form. Supporting documentation will be assessed during Administrative Reviews and may be requested outside of a review.

6. **What are best practices for menu planning for the 2022-23 school year?**

- Identify which NSLP and SBP menu items fit your staffing capacity and planned meal service model(s).
- Communicate with distributors to determine which items may have low stock and which will be readily available and make menu adjustments accordingly.
- Continue to develop and communicate back up plans for unexpected supply chain, delivery, or staffing emergencies.
- Plan for participation to vary at the beginning of the school year.
- In additional to planning menus, allow time to retrain staff and students on selecting reimbursable meals, Offer versus Serve, self-serve stations and salad bars as needed.
- Plan to assess menus often to encourage participation. Recipes for school nutrition can be found on the menu planning webpage.

7. **Are sponsors required to make water available to all students during meals?**

Yes. Water must be available to all students, free of charge, and without restriction during both breakfast (when served in the cafeteria) and lunch.

Civil Rights/Special Dietary Needs

1. **If meals are being served in the classroom, do teachers need to complete civil rights training?**

Teachers must complete Civil Rights training if they are involved in the service of or counting and claiming of meals. If meals are being consumed in the classroom but the teacher is not involved in any other capacity, training is not required. The sponsor must track all training. Training formats, such as the Meals in the Classroom

Teachers Training memo, self-study guide and PowerPoint slide deck can be found on CDE School Nutrition website.

2. **Are schools required to accommodate special dietary needs when meals are served in the classroom or a grab and go option?**

Sponsors are required to continue to accommodate special dietary needs regardless of the meal service model. Best practices to consider include:

- Use a consistent process to separate and identify special dietary meals and communicate to all who will be involved with meal service; for example, teachers serving meals in the classroom.
- Assess menus to make sure accommodations can be made within a modified cycle menu, if applicable. For example, if the salad bar was previously used to accommodate many special diets, different products may need to be added to the menu.
- Assess the district's special dietary needs policy to ensure it still meets the needs of the sponsor and families. For example, if you did not allow special dietary needs forms to roll over from year to year previously, you could consider allowing it to streamline paperwork.
- Identify communication needs with school administrators, teachers, and parents. Resources can be found on the special dietary needs webpage.

3. **Where should sponsors display "And Justice for All" posters?**

The "And Justice for All" poster must be prominently displayed in all locations where meals or other program services are distributed. A poster is not required to be displayed in every classroom when meals are served in classrooms. Posters must be displayed when meals are being served from stationary vehicles but are not required for vehicles making door-to-door deliveries.

USDA has not provided CDE School Nutrition with copies of the And Justice for All poster to provide to sponsors. It is still required to display the poster and paper copies of the poster may be used.

4. **What documents must include the USDA non-discrimination statement?**

Sponsors should include the non-discrimination statement on all publicly facing program materials. The full non-discrimination statement must be included in vital program documents, such school meal eligibility information, and the main nutrition program webpage. The abbreviated non-discrimination statement may be used when there is not sufficient room for the full statement, such as on monthly menus. The shortened statement reads: This institution is an equal opportunity provider. The full non-discrimination statement has recently been updated and can be found on USDA's civil rights webpage. Both the full and abbreviated statements must be copied exactly.

Meal Counting and Claiming

1. **Can meals be provided to children not enrolled in the school district?**

Students enrolled in a different district or School Food Authority can be claimed if the student is visiting for curricular activities and claimed under the student's known eligibility status. If the student is not visiting for

curricular activities, the student must be counted and charged as a visitor (the school/district can choose to cover the cost for visiting student meals). Students eating at a different site but in the same district should still be claimed at the site in which they are enrolled.

2. **How do sponsors accurately record and claim meals under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs?**

   Sponsors must use edit checks to accurately count and claim meals served under all child nutrition programs. An edit check ensures that meal counts do not exceed the enrollment (by eligibility type) times an attendance factor. Meal counts must also be tracked per student and claimed per student free, reduced-price or paid eligibility status. Sponsors can use classroom rosters or a point of sale to track individual student meals. For counting and claiming resources including edit check templates, visit the How to Claim webpage.

3. **How do sponsors record meals when multiple meals are distributed?**

   Sponsors may serve meals for multiple days at one time when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors can count meals on the day they are distributed for each meal type served. The method chosen to record multiple meals must track meals for each specific student and must also be claimed at the students individual free, reduced-price or paid eligibility status. Sponsors may need to work with their point of sale vendors to accurately track multiple days of meals being served at one time.

4. **How do sponsors record meals when providing meals to one group of students in the school building and also providing grab-n-go meals for other students at the same site?**

   Sponsors can offer multiple types of meal service when impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors must track meals served separately to these groups of children. The sponsor would track meals served on a meal count form, for each meal type served, to students receiving meals in the school building and use separate meal count sheets for students receiving grab-n-go meals. All meals must be tracked for each specific student and must be claimed at the students individual free, reduced-price or paid eligibility status.

5. **What methods can sponsors use to track student meals for meals in the classroom?**

   Teachers may use classroom rosters or sponsors may use their point of service program. If a point of service program is used, one best practice is to provide a laminated classroom sheet with a dry erase marker for teachers to mark meals and then return to school nutrition staff to enter meal counts into the electronic POS. All meals must be tracked for each specific student and must be claimed at the students individual free, reduced-price or paid eligibility status.

6. **How do sponsors claim meals for students that may be enrolled in other schools?**

   Students receiving a school meal should be claimed at the school site in which they are enrolled and meals must be claimed based on the student's eligibility status. As best practice, meals should be claimed based on the school the student is enrolled in. It is important to claim students at their enrolled site because this affects future severe need reimbursement rate, provisional program eligibility, and breakfast after the bell participation (for more information see the Meal Counting and Claiming back-to-school guidance). If that is not feasible, and

your tracking system allows, meals may be claimed by the school the student ate at or picked up a meal from. It is also important to ensure the system to track and claim meals does not allow duplicate meals to be claimed.

7. **How do sponsors accurately record and claim meals when parents or guardians pick up meals for their children?**

Sponsors may allow parents or guardians to pick up meals for their students when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors should have a procedure in place ensuring the students are in attendance of the school by either requesting a student ID or student name. Meals can then be tracked and claimed accordingly by that student name or ID. Ensuring meals are tracked by students will mitigate students receiving more than one breakfast and/or lunch per day.

8. **Will students eligible for reduced-price meals receive breakfast and lunch at no cost in School Year 2022-23?**

Yes. The start smart and reduced-price lunch protection act will be reinstated starting in SY 2022-23. The Start Smart and Reduced-Price Lunch Protection Act covers the reduced-price co-pay for students eligible for reduced-price meals in grades PK-12 for breakfast and lunch. Students eligible for reduced-price meals are not charged for breakfast or lunch at the point of service. However, the student's status must be recorded as reduced-price at the local level and must be claimed as reduced-price when submitting claims for reimbursement.

Meal Service

1. **Can sponsors feed kids through a grab-and-go concept?**

Sponsors may serve meals in a non-congregate setting (grab-and-go) when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors will need to complete the SNP Waiver Request Form for CDE approval.

2. **Can multiple meals be served at one time and in bulk?**

Sponsors may serve meals for multiple days at one time and/or in bulk when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors will need to complete the SNP Waiver Request Form for CDE approval. Sponsors may determine what meal service model works best to meet the needs of their community.

3. **Are schools with a 4-day school week allowed to offer meals on the fifth day?**

If school instruction is occurring on the fifth day, meals may be claimed under the state waiver request to allow non-congregate feeding. If school instruction is not occurring, then meals may not be claimed under the National School Lunch Program. This waiver will only be allowable when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and sponsors will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors will need to complete the SNP Waiver Request Form for CDE approval.

4. **Are sponsors able to provide weekend or holiday meals to students?**

No. Sponsors (not including Residential Child Care Institutions) may not provide weekend or holiday meals through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs when school is in session during the regular

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school year in 2022-23. Weekend or holiday meals may be provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program. USDA encourages schools to consider participating in CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals.

Up to 1 meal and 1 snack can be provided through the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program after the school day ends or during holidays, school breaks, or weekends. For more information about how to apply for the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Program, contact Meghan George-Nichols at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

During unanticipated school closures, weekend meals can be provided under the SSO. For more information on unanticipated school closures, visit the emergency feeding webpage.

5. **If students are in school for half of the day and then go home for the afternoon, can a grab and go lunch be sent home with the student?**

Sponsors may offer grab and go meals under the non-congregate meal service waiver. This waiver will only be allowable when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and sponsors will need approval from CDE to implement. Sponsors will need to complete the SNP Waiver Request Form for CDE approval.

6. **Are there restrictions on the length of meal service?**

Sponsors may serve meals outside of traditional meal service windows when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility. Sponsors will need to complete the SNP Waiver Request Form for CDE approval.

7. **Can students with a sack lunch purchase milk?**

Yes. Selling milk à la carte during a meal service is permitted. Sponsors may also choose to cover the cost of milk for these students using the general fund.

8. **Are longer lunch periods allowed to accommodate social distancing in the cafeteria and/or classrooms?**

Sponsors may serve meals outside of traditional meal service windows to accommodate social distancing when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and will need approval from CDE to implement this flexibility.

School Nutrition recommends working with your superintendent, principals, teachers and local health department to determine what is needed to accommodate social distancing. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) published Considerations for Schools and Interim Guidance for School Administrators and the School Nutrition Association (SNA) has also published best practices to consider when planning for meal service.

9. **If schools extend time for lunch, does that need to be indicated in official bell schedules or can schools just wiggle room as it's available?**

Colorado state law establishes interconnected requirements concerning school calendars, instructional hours, student attendance and school finance. Bell schedules and calendars are used to determine the total amount of instructional time in order to meet these requirements. As such, it is important that bell schedules accurately reflect the actual instructional hours provided to students. Lunch is not part of the instructional day (1CCR 301-

39-2.06(2)(a), therefore adjustments to the lunch period may impact compliance with the instructional hour requirements. In some cases, it is necessary for schools to adjust calendars and/or bell schedules throughout the year. When changes are made, districts and schools should ensure that they remain in compliance with the requirements. CDE's School District Calendar Guidance is a helpful resource to consider.

10. **Is Offer versus Serve required at the high school level if meals are served in the classroom?**

Offer versus Serve (OVS) at the high school level may be waived for the 2022-23 school year under a state waiver to allow OVS Flexibility for Senior High Schools. This waiver will only be allowable when the sponsor, county and/or operations are impacted by COVID-19 and sponsors will need approval from CDE to implement. Sponsors will need to complete the SNP Waiver Request Form for CDE approval.

11. **Is Offer versus Serve signage required to be in each classroom if meals are served in the classroom?**

Signage identifying a reimbursable meal is not required for meals in the classroom or where posting the signage is determined to be problematic. Best practice is to have signage available to help both students and school administrators (such as teachers) determine what a reimbursable meal is.

12. **Must sponsors comply with the Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program this school year?**

The Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program requires sites mandated to participate in the program to provide a free meal to all students enrolled at that school site. If a student is enrolled at a school site required to participate in the Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program, that student must receive a free meal wherever they are allowed to receive a breakfast. Sponsors must also ensure that the student is categorized and claimed in their correct eligibility category. View Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program sites mandated to participate in School Year 2022-23.

Food Safety

1. **What food safety guidelines should sponsors follow for back to school?**

Your local public health agency is the ultimate authority on food safety related questions. It is important to contact the LPHA first since they are best connected to the current COVID-19 situation in their areas. It will be school district and, in some cases, building centric when establishing a plan for providing meals to students. Sponsors should work on appropriate guidelines for individual schools in their districts and run their plan by their LPHA for review and feedback.

For nationwide recommendations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning. The CDC focuses on layered prevention strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. The strategies for everyday operations include staying up to date on vaccinations, staying home when sick, optimizing ventilation systems, following proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, plus cleaning and disinfecting.

For state-level guidance, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment published Practical Guidance for operationalizing CDC's school guidance. CDPHE also offers helpful cleaning guidance including specific recommendations for schools.

2. **What are the food safety inspection requirements for schools?**

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The requirement under 7 CFR 210.13(b) is for schools to obtain annually two food safety inspections each school year, regardless of the meal program provided. More information on food safety inspections including a request for health inspection letter can be found on the CDE Food Safety webpage.

Procurement

1. **What strategies can School Food Authorities use to manage supply chain challenges?**

   - Communicate regularly to your school community so they understand the challenges you're working through. View communication tips and talking points on our Back to School Planning webpage.

   - Work closely with your distributors/manufacturers – in addition to sharing any updated forecasting information you have, ask them to share updates on product availability and what alternate products may be available. Additionally, lead times for products may be longer than they have been in the past – anticipate delays when you are placing orders.

   - Consider more local purchasing – in addition to being a great way to support your local economy, local suppliers may not be as impacted by national disruptions in shipping and transportation.

   - Menu planning – some SFAs have found success in publishing menus a few weeks at a time, rather than monthly menus. This can give you flexibility to update the menu based on product availability. Additionally, you could consider offering less items per day to reduce the number of products you're ordering.

   Each SFA may experience unique supply chain challenges. The Back to School Planning webpage has additional resources to support supply chain challenges including communication toolkits, resources from CDE and partner organizations, and webinar recordings. We will continue to update this webpage as more resources become available.

Professional Standards

1. **Will all School Food Authority staff have to meet the training hour requirements for School Year 2022-23?**

   Yes. Sponsors operating the National School Lunch Program must meet professional standards training requirements. School Nutrition allows the sponsor flexibility to complete annual training requirements over a two-year period. All training must be tracked on a training tracker with the key area and learning objective codes. Regardless of which child nutrition program is being operated this school year, all staff must complete the annual civil rights training. For more information, visit the Professional Standards webpage.

School Wellness Policy

1. **When are the Local School Wellness Policy Requirements triennial assessments due?**

   The state request to extend the deadline to complete the triennial assessment allows for assessments to be on June 30, 2023. View the webpage for additional resources.

Reviews

1. **Will CDE School Nutrition conduct school meal Administrative Reviews in the 2022-23 school year?**

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Yes. CDE School Nutrition will maintain the planned review schedule and reviews will be conducted on-site.

The review schedule for this school year along with the five-year review and the Masterclass technical assistance cycle can be found on the administrative review webpage. Procurement reviews will take place in conjunction with the administrative review. For questions, contact your CDE Point Person, who is also your reviewer.

2. **Are sponsors required to complete monitoring on-site?**

The state request to waive onsite monitoring allows sponsors to conduct monitoring offsite through desk reviews and/or phone calls with site staff. The monitoring form must still be completed annually.

Financial Management

1. **How do sponsors determine adult meal pricing under the School Nutrition Programs (SBP & NSLP)?**

Per 7 CFR 210.14(f), the adult meal price must cover the cost of adult meals and ensure that Federal reimbursements are not subsidizing these meals. View this adult meal pricing resource.

At a minimum, sponsors should be charging adult meals at the free reimbursement rate for SBP/NSLP plus USDA Foods entitlement per meal.

2. **Are sponsors required to complete the USDA Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool?**

For School Year 2022-23, sponsors are not required to submit the Paid Lunch Equity tool to our office or increase paid student prices. This allows schools to price their paid lunches at a level that best addresses local needs. This flexibility does not apply to adult lunch prices. Sponsors are still encouraged to review their budget and assess paid lunch prices using the PLE tool to ensure costs are covered and the paid lunch prices this school year don't adversely affect the nonprofit food service account in future years. Updated resources can be found on the PLE webpage.

Some considerations:

- Reimbursement will return to NSLP rates

- Reimbursement is based on student eligibility (free, reduced or paid)

- Increased food costs

- Fluctuation in participation

- Meal quality should not decrease if a school decided to lower their paid lunch prices

For questions, email GFPLE@cde.state.co.us.

3. **What grant code should be used for the School Nutrition Programs (SBP & NSLP)?**

Federal Child Nutrition Programs	CFDA#	Grant/Project	Source Code
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	10.553	4553	4000
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	10.555	4555	4000

Please find the link to the chart here.

4. **Do sponsors need to complete a Nonprogram Revenue Tool (NPR) for SY 2022-23?**

    The Nonprogram Revenue (NPR) Tool must be completed annually. NPR Tools are only collected for those sponsors undergoing an Administrative Review in School Year 2022-23. Sponsors must continue to price nonprogram foods to cover their costs. For more information, please visit the Nonprogram Revenue page.

5. **Are sponsors required to implement an Unpaid Meal Charge Policy?**

    Yes. Sponsors must utilize their previous Unpaid Meal Charge Policies. CDE recommends sponsors review the previous policy to assess for any needed updates. It is required that the policy is widely communicated to households and CDE highly encourages this is done frequently and thoroughly near the start of the school year. For resources, including Unpaid Meal Price Policy Checklists, visit the Unpaid Meal Charges webpage.

6. **Are sponsors permitted to operate a non-pricing breakfast program?**

    Yes. Sponsors can operate a non-pricing, or universal free, breakfast program *only* if the sponsor has sufficient funds to cover the cost of breakfast meals for paid students. Sponsors that choose to operate a non-pricing breakfast program must continue to meet all program requirements including the meal pattern requirements. Students must continue to be counted and claimed as normal and are not all claimed at the free rate.

7. **What are the Federal Reimbursement Rates for School Year 2022-23?**

    The **Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022** was signed into law on June 25 and provides additional support and resources to help Child Nutrition Program operators continue to serve healthy meals to children this summer and provide support to schools for the coming school year. The act provides temporary additional reimbursements of:

    - 40 cents per lunch served through the National School Lunch Program.

    - 15 cents per breakfast served through the School Breakfast Program.

    Final reimbursement rates for School Year 2022-23 can be found on the how to claim website and include the temporary additional reimbursements as part of the total reimbursement for each meal. Rates of Reimbursement | Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)

8. **How will severe need breakfast and lunch rates be determined for School Year 2022-23?**

    For the 2022-23 school year, July 2019 through February 2020 lunch counts will be used for severe need determination.

School Meal Eligibility

1. **If sponsors collect applications in May and June for Summer P-EBT, does the eligibility extend to the 2022-23 school year?**

    No. Eligibility determinations must be made every school year. Families that apply before July 1, 2022 must complete a new application for the 2022-23 school year. Households that apply over the summer including after July 1 up to August 26, 2022, may be eligible for school year and/or summer P-EBT benefits.

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2. **With the return to free and reduced-price applications to determine school meal eligibility, where can the most up-to-date meal applications and supporting materials be found?**

   All CDE Nutrition school meal eligibility templates—including the free and reduced-price application, income eligibility guidelines, and template letters to households—can be found on the CDE School Meal Eligibility webpage.

3. **Is Verification required this school year?**

   Yes, all sponsors collecting and processing free and reduced-price applications are required to complete verification and to complete the Verification Collection Report. CDE School Nutrition will send reminders about this process to the individuals listed as the Free and Reduced-Price Contact in the SNP Sponsor Applications in the Portal. All information about verification and the VCR can be found on the School Meal Eligibility webpage.

4. **Is it a requirement to publish the public release of eligibility criteria for the 2022-23 school year?**

   Yes. CDE School Nutrition will publish a statewide public release in July on behalf of all sponsors stating NSLP operations including the availability of school meals and the eligibility criteria. Sponsors may publish their own public release but are not required to. Templates for the public release are available on the School Meal Eligibility webpage.

5. **Do stimulus payments or the Child Tax Credit payments count as income when determining eligibility for free or reduced-price meals?**

   COVID related stimulus payments *do not* count as income when determining free or reduced-price meal eligibility.

   However, the monthly Child Tax Credit payments *do count* as income when determining eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals. In general, any regularly received monies should be counted as income unless stated otherwise in the Eligibility Manual.

6. **What documentation is allowable for use in the 30-day carryover period for School Year 2022-23?**

   In standard operation, sponsors are allowed to use prior year school meal eligibility data to carryover benefits for the first 30 operating days of the new school year. This allows time for families to complete and submit free and reduced-price applications and for the districts to process them without interrupting the students' meal service. Last year (School Year 2021-22), all meals were served at no cost to all students in districts operating under the Seamless Summer Option. Because of this, sponsors may not have adequate benefit issuance documentation for students to accommodate the carryover period. This year, sponsors that operated under the Seamless Summer Option in School Year 2021-22 and do not have eligibility determinations from School Year 2021-22 are allowed to use the most recent free and reduced-price determinations starting with School Year 2019-20 during the 30-day carryover period of School Year 2022-2023 (i.e., approved free and reduced-price applications, direct certification lists, liaison lists, etc.).