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POLICY UPDATE



08.03.15 Q&As on Final Rule "Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs"

[Several Q&As](#) on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) have been updated to clarify meal pattern flexibilities and share links to technical assistance resources. An asterisk (*) indicates new and/or revised Q&As. Minor changes throughout the document include the removal of outdated references and citations, removal of outdated questions, and miscellaneous editorial changes for content clarification.

07.31.2015 Service of Traditional Foods in Public Facilities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has released a [memo](#) providing guidance on allowable donations and serving of traditional food through food service programs, including those operated by Indian tribes and tribal organizations. Traditional foods are defined as "food that has traditionally been prepared and consumed by an Indian tribe".

07.21.2015 Updated Offer vs Serve Guidance for the NSLP and SBP Beginning SY2015-16

USDA has provided an [updated guidance manual](#) for operators using Offer Versus Serve (OVS), which is optional at all grade levels for breakfast and required at the senior high school level only for lunch. This guidance is intended to clarify the requirements of OVS, specifically related to what students must take in order to have a reimbursable meal. An amendment to this guidance has been made under the milk option section to make it clear that while water must be available to students during meal service, operators may not offer water as an alternative to milk, as water is not considered part of the reimbursable meal. The [highlighted version](#) of the manual indicates the latest changes.

07.17.15 Federal Register Notice: New NSLP, SBP, and CACFP Reimbursement Rates and Donated Foods Value

The USDA has released new reimbursement rates for the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#), and the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#). The USDA also released the new value of [USDA donated foods](#). The new rates apply to School Year 2015-16 and are effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. Click on the links to see the exact rate adjustments.

07.10.15 New Edition of Eligibility Manual for School Meals

In [this memorandum](#), the USDA announced the release of the July 2015 version of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals. The USDA provides an [un-highlighted](#) and [highlighted](#) version of the eligibility manual. Major changes and clarifications are indicated in the highlighted version. Key changes include:

CITIZENSHIP AND LEGAL STATUS: LEAs are prohibited from requesting citizenship or immigration status on the application because citizenship or immigration status is not a requirement for participation in the school meal programs, and may pose a barrier to participation and deter otherwise eligible households from applying.

INDICATION OF "NO INCOME": Applicants without income are requested to write a "zero" in the applicable field or mark "no income." **The application must convey to the applicant that any**

income field left blank is a positive indication of no income and certifies that there is no income to report. Applications with blank income fields will be processed as complete.

IN-KIND BENEFITS: In-kind benefits are not cash payments and, therefore, are not considered as income for the purpose of determining free and reduced price eligibility.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HOUSEHOLDS/OTHER SOURCE CATEGORICALLY ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS: Direct certification may be accomplished by the LEA or school through the exchange of a fax or e-mail list of eligible children with appropriate agency officials. The LEA must have documentation of the procedures that will be followed for exchanging information and confirming the children's status.

VERIFICATION FOR CAUSE: Determining officials are strongly encouraged to contact the household during the certification process to clarify any information that is unclear or questionable, before certifying the application and proceeding with verification for cause.

"NEED TO KNOW": The LEA may disclose children's eligibility status only to persons determined to be "directly connected" with the administration or enforcement of a Federal education program, State education program, State health program, or a means-tested nutrition program, as well as to persons directly connected with the Comptroller General Office or law enforcement for an authorized activity.

Read the full [highlighted version](#) of the eligibility manual to see all updates in this edition.



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