

06.30.2017 Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals: Questions and Answers

USDA [released a memo](#) that offered guidance on serving meals to preschoolers when they are in the same service area at the same time as grade K-5 students. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recognizes the counting and claiming challenges that school nutrition professionals face when preschoolers and K-5 students are co-mingled for meals. Due to these operational challenges and the stakeholder feedback that was collected, a single menu can be served to preschoolers and K-5 students when they are in the same service area at the same time. Schools where this applies may choose to follow the grade-appropriate meal patterns for each grade group, which USDA encourages, or serve the K-5 meal pattern to both grade groups. Additional guidance on the National School Lunch Program's and School Breakfast Program's infant and preschool meal pattern requirements will be issued soon, and in the meantime, a [Question and Answer](#) section was also included in this memo.

06.29.2017 2017 Edition of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals

The School Year 2017-18 version of the [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) was released in a [memo](#). The manual contains detailed information on federal requirements, policies, and procedures regarding school meals, and can be used to help state agencies and local educational agencies accurately determine, certify, and verify children's eligibility for free or reduced price school meals and free milk. The manual has six sections: Getting Started, The Basis of Eligibility, Establishing Eligibility, The School Meal Application, Confidentiality and Disclosure, and Verification. USDA also released [a version of the manual](#) with the changes from the previous edition highlighted. These changes include added regulatory and FNS policy memoranda citations, as well as links to the School Programs Policy Page. Questions and Answers were also added to the end of each section. State agencies should distribute this information to program operators immediately.

06.30.2017 Local Agency Procurement Reviews for School Food Authorities

A [USDA FNS memo](#) was released regarding procurement reviews for local school food authorities (SFAs). The memo amends guidance provided in SP 45-2016 *Draft Tool for Local Agency Procurement Reviews for School Food Authorities in SY2016-2017* and clarifies expectations for state agency oversight of SFA procurement procedures. Previously, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) established a three-year cycle for procurement reviews that corresponded to the three-year review of SFAs that contract with a food service management company, and were encouraged to be conducted during the same three-year review cycle as the Administrative Review (AR). Based on the feedback that FNS received, they recognize that the required procurement review procedures can be challenging due to lack of resources, reviewer expertise and budget constraints. So now, FNS is allowing state agencies to either continue completing procurement reviews on the same three-year cycle as ARs or to conduct the reviews on an alternate cycle, though it must still be no longer than three years. State agencies must notify their appropriate FNS Regional Office of their procurement review cycles by October 1, 2017.

06.30.2017 Compliance with and Enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the National School Lunch Program

There are upcoming enhancements to the [Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order/Receipt System \(FFAVORS\)](#) that will be taking place around the beginning of School Year 2017-18. Due to these changes, the Department of Defense (DoD) surcharge on orders will no longer be deducted from NSLP entitlement funds in FFAVORS. The change will make it easier for schools to

July
2017

Edition No. 50
08.03.2017

POLICY UPDATE



Questions or comments?

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compare the price of produce available through FFAVORS with what can be purchased from other sources. Also, NSLP customers will be able to apply more of their entitlement balance directly to food purchases. More information about the [USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#) is available on the USDA's website.

07.17.2017 Identifying Regulatory Reform Initiatives

USDA is [requesting ideas](#) from the public on how they can provide better customer service and remove unintended barriers to participation in federal programs like school meal programs. USDA is especially asking for public ideas on regulations, guidance documents, or any other policy documents that are in need of reform; for example ideas to modify, streamline, expand, or repeal those items. As subject matter experts in school nutrition, your input is essential to these efforts. Stay tuned for SNA's action alert requesting your comment and providing a simple way for you to submit it in just a few clicks.

07.24.2017 FNS Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The USDA has submitted three information collection requirements to the OMB to be reviewed and cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The three information collections come from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) agency within the USDA, and are titled: *Evaluation of the Direct Certification with Medicaid for Free and Reduced-Price Meals Demonstration*, *Evaluation of the School Meal Data Collection Process* and *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. Comments on the submission are requested regarding (1) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. More information about the information collections, as well as how to submit your comments for the OMB Review comment request, can be found in [this Federal Register Notice](#).

07.25.2017 2017 Edition of Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008 made changes to the meaning and interpretation of the term "disability" in order to make it more broad and easier for individuals to establish that they have one. The USDA released, [in a memo](#), its 2017 Edition of [Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs](#), which provides additional guidance on how the broader version of the ADA can be implemented in school cafeterias nationwide. School food authorities (SFAs) should be working collaboratively with families to ensure equal access to school meal programs for children with disabilities.

07.28.2017 Reimbursement Rates and Value of Donated Foods

On July 28, the USDA released new reimbursement rates for the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#), [Special Milk Program](#), and [Afterschool Care Programs](#). Reimbursement rates for the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#) are also available. A third notice announces the [value of donated foods](#) including the national average value of donated foods or cash in lieu of donated foods for each lunch served by schools participating in the NSLP and for each lunch and supper served by institutions participating in the CACFP.

The new rates and value of donated foods apply to School Year 2017-18 and are effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

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