

National School Lunch Program Fact Sheet

Program objective

To provide a nutritious, well-balanced lunch for children in order to promote sound eating habits, to foster good health and academic achievement and to reinforce the nutrition education taught in the classroom. A school lunch will provide 1/3 of the Recommended Dietary Allowances for lunch and be consistent with Dietary Guidelines for Americans and caloric goals.

Eligibility criteria

- All public schools, nonprofit private schools tax exempt under 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and residential child care institutions are eligible to sponsor a program that may begin at any time during the year.
- Participating sponsors receive cash reimbursement which is adjusted annually and donated United States Department of Agriculture commodities based on the number of lunches served to children.

Participation requirements

- Sponsors must annually sign an agreement with the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, New Jersey Department of Agriculture that includes, but is not limited to, the following requirements:
 - o Plan menus which meet specific minimum standards for key nutrients and calories through selection of an approved menu planning system.
 - o Claim reimbursement only for lunches served to children that meet the required meal pattern.
 - o Provide a free or reduced price lunch to any child from a household meeting criteria for eligibility, based on household size and income.
 - o The program must be operated on a nonprofit basis solely for the benefit of all children within the school.
- The intent of the School Meals Initiative regulations is to provide meal that meet the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and are low in fat and sodium and are high in Vitamin A, C and Iron. Sponsors must serve meals in the National School Lunch Program consistent with the menu planning system selected:

Option 1 and 2 – Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (ANSMP)

- Must have a computer and purchase USDA approved software to conduct their own nutrient analysis, or hire a consultant to conduct the nutrient analysis.
- Menus developed based on the analysis of nutrients in the menu items and foods offered over a school week to determine if specific levels for key nutrients and calories are met.
- A minimum of three menu items must be offered, one of which must be an entrée, a side dish and a fluid milk.

Option 3 – Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning

- Menus developed based on the five traditional meal components (meat/meat alternate, breads/grains, two different fruits and/or vegetables and milk) must be offered with each reimbursable meal. The minimum portion/serving requirements for the fruit/vegetable and bread/grain component must be increased based on the grade levels.
- A sponsor must offer all five required food items.
- Nutrient analysis of menu items offered is completed by the state agency.

Option 4 – Traditional Food Based (Only if sponsor participated in the NSLP in 1994-95)

- A sponsor must offer all five required food items of the meal pattern.
- Meal pattern consists of:
 - o A two ounce serving (edible portion) of lean meat, poultry, fish, or cheese; one-half cup cottage cheese; or one large egg; or four tablespoons peanut butter; or one-half cup cooked dry beans; or other nut and seed butters or 1 cup yogurt
 - o A three-fourth cup serving of two or more fruits and/or vegetables.
 - o Eight servings per week of an enriched or whole-grain bread or grain product; or rice; or an enriched pasta product.
 - o One-half pint of fluid whole milk and unflavored low-fat milk must be offered.
- Nutrient analysis of menu items offered is completed by the state agency.

Pricing of lunches

- The price charged to paying children is established by the sponsor, but must be within the maximum prices established by the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs.
- The price charged to adults must cover all costs and, at a minimum, exceed the price of children's lunches by a margin established by the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs to compensate for the reimbursement and donated commodities available only for children's lunches.

Record Keeping

- A reimbursement voucher is filed monthly with the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, New Jersey Department of Agriculture.
- Maintain current records to include, but no limited to, applications for free and reduced price meals, edit check worksheets, daily meal counts and income records, daily dated menus, production records, standardized recipes, and manufacturer's nutrition fact sheets for commercially processed foods.
- The required statistical and financial records supporting all reimbursement vouchers must be kept on file for a period of three years following the fiscal year to which they pertain except that, if audit findings have not been resolved, the records shall be retained beyond the three year period as long as required for the resolution of issues raised by the audit.
- All records must be available for administrative review and/or audit by the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Reference: <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture>