

# School Nutrition Update

August 25, 2020



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# Program Operations Information

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## ***Lighting our Way Forward...Together***

Since the start of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, three principles have guided School Nutrition:

1. Provide meals to food-insecure, vulnerable students as part of the emergency public health response,
2. Protect the safety, health and well-being of children, staff, families and communities by implementing social distancing and personal hygiene protocols, and
3. Promote program sustainability and integrity.

Please help us to continue letting these principles light our way forward as we face the future together.

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## ***Accountability for Meal Distribution***

Due to COVID-19, there are a variety of distribution options (Meals in the Dining Room, Meals in the Classroom, Grab and Go, Curbside Pickup, Meal Delivery or a Combination of distribution methods) for increasing meal participation. Many School Food Authorities (SFAs) are using a combination of several of these in their different sites or even using several of these at a single site. Internal controls must be established to ensure accuracy of meal counting and claiming. In case there is a desk audit, your documentation must support the claim. Here are some tips to help:

- Claim meals for students enrolled only in your SFA.
- Record meals by eligibility category at the point of service (meals must be counted after selection).
- Claim multiple meals on the day in which the meal was intended to be consumed.
- Prevent overt identification in the meal counting and claiming system.
- Develop written procedures for alternate meal counting and claiming.
- Ensure safe cash handling procedures.
- Follow your local guidance for a meal charge policy.
- Communicate with administration regarding current attendance procedures.
- Key in daily attendance and membership.
- Document the reason for flags/error codes.
- Communicate with your software provider for questions related to the Edit Check Report.

Original source documents that support the meal counts must be retained for the current Federal Fiscal Year, plus the prior three years. Due to the numerous meal distributions and points of sale (rosters, laptops, tablets, etc.), internal controls must reflect accurate counting and claiming. If you have questions, please reach out to your [Operations and Management Consultant](#).

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## ***Considerations for Serving Multiple Age/Grade Groups***

Due to the current state of our School Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 and non-congregate feeding, serving multiple age/grade groups is more complicated. Here are some strategies that may be helpful.

Breakfast

- Consider using the K-12 meal pattern for all age/grade groups.
- Menu 2 oz. of Grain items or 1 oz. of Grain and 1 oz. of Meat/Meat Alternate items to reduce menu fatigue and increase the variety of items served.
- Serve ½ cup fruit (whole, chilled, frozen) and 100% fruit juice daily.
- Consider implementing Offer versus Serve. One consideration could be to bundle a reimbursable meal containing a ½ cup fruit and two other items with additional fruit and milk offerings on the side.

#### Lunch

- Consider planning one menu to meet the minimum requirements for all age/grade groups.
- Plan on serving one to two entrées per day to help simplify your menu.
- Consider serving 2 oz. of Grains and 2 oz. of Meat/Meat Alternates daily.
- For Vegetables, plan to menu two different ½ cup servings daily and offer a ½ cup to 1 cup Fruit based on the age/grade group you are serving.

Please review and ensure compliance with the meal pattern requirements.

- [School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern](#)
- [National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern](#)
- [Afterschool Snack Program Requirements](#)

If you have questions, please reach out to your [Zone Nutrition Specialist](#).

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## Nutrition Education & Promotion

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### ***Connect and Promote through Social Media***

We would love to highlight your efforts to provide nutritious meals and nutrition education to children. Remember to tag and follow us on social media (@Ray4NCKids and @NCSchoolMeals).

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## Continuing Education

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### ***Technical Assistance Time Outs***

NCDPI, School Nutrition will be offering a series of Technical Assistance Time Outs. These short, recorded webinars will provide clarification, reminders, and best practices to help your program operate safely, effectively, and in compliance. Links to all the Technical Assistance Time Outs will be emailed and posted to the Downloads section of the School Nutrition Technology System.

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### ***Virtual Town Hall on School Meals During COVID-19 and Beyond***

As America navigates back to school amid a pandemic and recession, school meals play a crucial role in fighting rising food insecurity. FoodCorps will host a live virtual town hall via Facebook Live on August 25, 10-11 am PT, with school nutrition and hunger relief experts to discuss the current landscape of food insecurity and what's needed to keep kids nourished as we head into a new school year. Learn more [here](#).

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## ***Webinar – Produce Safety University***

As a supplement to the 2020 Produce Safety University Program, the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service Office of Food Safety, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service and Chef Cyndie Story, PhD, RDN, CC, of Culinary Solutions, LLC have developed a webinar series for School Nutrition professionals addressing the most popular Produce Safety University topics. Each webinar is an individual learning opportunity with separate registration for each. All webinars begin at 2 pm CST every Tuesday in August.

- [Register](#) for **The Produce Lab: Quality, Condition, and Safe Handling and Preparation** - August 25

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## ***Webinar - Make School Nutrition an Integral Part of the Education Day, with any Academic Schedule***

You've heard it all: hybrid, virtual, staggered education schedules. How do you ensure school nutrition is an integral part of the education day? Join this webinar, on August 25 at 3 pm ET, with the School Nutrition Association for help to navigate the various scenarios expected this upcoming school year. [Register here](#).

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## ***Virtual Gathering - Garden Educator Distance Teaching and Learning***

Months of distance teaching and learning have led to the development of innovative teaching tools and the launching of new educational program models. This Virtual Gathering on August 26, 11 am-12:15 pm PT, hosted by School Garden Support Organizations, will offer everyone an opportunity to introduce programs that have been developed/adapted to meet the unique educational needs presented by COVID-19 along with other support resources that have been created to share with educators and families. [Register here](#).

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## ***Available Virtual Training Opportunities from ICN, SNA and NCDPI***

The Institute for Child Nutrition (ICN) has compiled videos, fact sheets, posters and other [resources to help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus](#). Online food safety/HACCP training is available on the NCDPI, School Nutrition [website](#) and the ICN [website](#). Additional continuing education resources are available on the School Nutrition [website](#) from NCDPI, ICN, the School Nutrition Association and other agencies and organizations. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics offers [COVID-19 professional resources](#) for Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists (RDNs) and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTRs), and [continuing professional education resources](#). Document all continuing education in which your staff participates.

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# Questions

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If you have any questions regarding these updates, please reach out to your regional consultants. Contact information for your Zone teams can be found [here](#).

Zone	Nutrition	Operations and Management
1	<a href="#">Janette Broda</a>	<a href="#">Diane Shuler</a>
2	<a href="#">Trip Warren</a>	<a href="#">Tara Kelley</a>
3	<a href="#">Katrina Perry</a>	<a href="#">Catherine Masters</a>

4	<a href="#">Flo Smith</a>	<a href="#">Reginald Ross</a>
5	<a href="#">Farzi Katkhordeh</a>	<a href="#">Becky Sharpe</a>
6	<a href="#">Leslie Otts</a>	<a href="#">Gwyndolyn Roberson-McBride</a>
7	<a href="#">Laura Chase</a>	<a href="#">Pam Sheets</a>

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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