



HNS 06-2022

MEMORANDUM

To: All School Food Authorities Operating the National School Lunch Program

From: Melissa Conner, Associate Superintendent
Health and Nutrition Services

Date: June 21, 2022

Subject: Applications for School Food Authorities Serving Meals During School Year 2022-2023

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance for School Food Authorities (SFAs) applying to operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and/or Afterschool Care Snack Program (ASCSP) and At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during School Year 2022-2023 (SY 2022-23). This guidance also pertains to SFAs participating in USDA Foods in Schools Program and USDA Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (USDA DoD Fresh).

SFAs are encouraged to prepare and submit all components of the application as early as possible and should allow three weeks for the application approval process to be completed. SFAs must ensure that all applications and all required components are submitted with adequate time for approval and to meet claiming deadlines.

This memorandum is written based on current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) guidance. If any new guidance or clarifications are received after this memo is distributed, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services Division (HNS) will release an additional revision. This memorandum includes a series of questions and answers [Attachment A] intended to provide clarification to program operators.

USDA Transitional Waivers for SY 2022-23 Operations

In May 2022, ADE submitted to USDA FNS a series of individual state waivers to assist program operators as they transition from operations under COVID-19 nationwide waivers for the upcoming school year. Program operators will only use these flexibilities for the duration and extent they are needed and when operators are able to demonstrate meeting eligibility based on defined circumstances. With the exception of the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) waiver, Waiver #25, the waivers do not impact application guidance for operators for SY 2022-23 and applications should reflect normal pre-COVID (congregate) operations.

ADE requested from USDA FNS a PLE waiver, Waiver #25 (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*) to provide schools with the flexibility to not raise their paid lunch prices in SY 2022-23. This provides schools the flexibility to price their paid lunches at the level they decide is best, based on their local needs. This includes decreasing paid lunch prices from their previous levels; however, schools should carefully review their budgets before adjusting their paid lunch prices in SY 2022-23. Operators electing to use this waiver will submit a site application with a paid lunch price that best meets their local needs. No further documentation will be required.

USDA did not offer a meal pattern waiver. ADE would like to remind operators that on February 4, 2022, USDA announced updates to the school nutrition standards. These transitional standards, which begin in SY 2022-23 and currently run through SY 2023-24, are intended to give schools time to transition from current pandemic operations toward more nutritious meals. Beginning in SY 2022-23 (*July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*):

- Milk: Schools and childcare providers serving participants ages six and older may offer flavored low-fat (1%) milk in addition to nonfat flavored milk and nonfat or low-fat unflavored milk;
- Whole Grains: At least 80% of the grains served in school lunch and breakfast each week must be whole grain-rich; and
- Sodium: The weekly sodium limit for school lunch and breakfast will remain at the current level in SY 2022-23. For school lunch only, there will be a 10% decrease in the limit in SY 2023-24. This aligns with the U.S Food and Drug Administration’s recently released guidance that establishes voluntary sodium reduction targets for processed, packaged, and prepared foods in the U.S.

All other nutrition standards, including fruit and vegetable requirements, will remain the same as the 2012 standards.

HNS will issue separate guidance which will provide an overview of all offered flexibilities in Arizona and how the waivers may be implemented by program operators.

Annual Application Requirements

This portion of this memorandum will review the required items for applying to participate in school meal programs and USDA Foods in Schools program for SY 2022-23. Items include:

- CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications
- CNPWeb Checklist Items
- Additional documentation requested by the HNS Specialist
- myFOODS Activation

SFAs are encouraged to review the [2022-2023 School Meals Application Checklist](#) to ensure all application requirements are completed.

CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications

Each school year, SFAs are required to submit a sponsor application and an application for each site via CNPWeb. The Sponsor application collects entity level information including contact information, program beginning and end dates, as well as indication of approved participation in one of the Special

Provision Options (if applicable). The site application collects site level operational information including site contact information, meal service types, and identifies the site's intended participation in one or more of the Child Nutrition Programs.

The annual submission and approval of the site and sponsor applications is a required step for SFAs to submit reimbursement requests for meals served under the Child Nutrition Programs listed below.

- NSLP
- SBP
- SMP
- ASCSP
- At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of CACFP

SFAs electing to operate NSLP and/or SBP under a Special Provision Option must have completed the provision application process prior to CNPWeb application approval. The deadline to apply for Provision 2 or Provision 3 has been extended to June 30, 2022. ADE will accept new Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) applicants or current CEP participants applying to reestablish their identified student percentage (ISP) until June 30, 2022.

SFAs adding sites to the CNPWeb system must complete and submit the [Add/Change/Delete Form](#) to HNS to add a new school to the online application. Additional sites that are legally separate from the SFA must also include an Inter-Agency Partnership Agreement.

SFAs are encouraged to review *Step-by-Step Instruction: How to Submit Site and Sponsor Applications in CNPWeb* that provides step by step instructions on navigating CNPWeb and completing the fields required in the sponsor and site applications. The training is available on the [NSLP Online Training Library](#).

CNPWeb Checklist Items

Checklist items are generated based on the entity's operation and must be submitted for approval along with the CNPWeb application. Checklist items can be referenced within CNPWeb once site and sponsor applications have been submitted. Applications will not be approved until all checklist items required for operation have been received/approved by HNS.

- Custom, scannable, or electronic household meal application, parent letter, and/or notification of meal benefits
- Contractual agreements for vended meal service (Food Service Management Company, Caterers, SFAs serving as caterers)
- At-Risk Meals Component Principal Addendum
- Department of Economic Security (DES)/ Department of Human Services (DHS) License
- 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status
- Free and Reduced-Price Policy Statement/Addendums
- Food Program Permanent Service Agreement

Additional Documentation Requested by the HNS Specialist

There are additional items HNS collects that do not generate a checklist item within CNPWeb. Program operators may be requested to submit the following documentation to support the information entered in the submitted application.

- Area eligibility documentation for sites operating At-Risk/ASCSP that are using school level data other than the site. This documentation must reflect that the site is within the attendance area of another school that meets area eligibility.

myFOODS Activation

SFAs must have an active status in myFOODS to utilize their entitlement dollars provided through the USDA Foods in Schools program for SY 2022-23. myFOODS is the online portal that collects entity level information including contact and billing information, as well as site level delivery information required by the US Foods Warehouse. SFAs will need to submit (outside of myFOODS) a new purchase order and a school calendar to US Foods. Activation of myFOODS allows program operators to spend their entitlement through:

- USDA Foods in Schools program
- USDA DoD Fresh program

Returning operators should use the [2022-2023 School Meals Application Checklist](#) to ensure all activation activities are completed. myFOODS activation must be completed prior to ordering materials from USDA Foods or DoD Fresh. For SY 2022-23, an approved CNPWeb application is *not* required prior to ordering.

SFAs that have not previously accessed their entitlement for USDA Foods in Schools or USDA DoD Fresh may do so at any time. SFAs will contact HNS to discuss the entitlement program and to begin the process of establishing a myFOODS account and delivery sites.

SFAs will communicate with their HNS Specialist to complete the annual application requirements for SY 2022-23. The contact information for the assigned specialist can be found at the top of the sponsor application in CNPWeb.

Questions and Answers

HNS has released answers to the following questions to further clarify guidance for SY 2022-23 applications.

General

1. What Public Health Emergency (PHE) waivers are available for my standard, daily operations to allow for non-congregate or parent pick up in SY 2022-23?

The waivers available for SY 2022-23 are precautionary or “in case of emergency” waivers. SFAs will only be able to use the waiver flexibilities if a COVID-19 emergency prevents congregate meal service.

CNPWeb Applications

2. How should SFAs be instructed to complete Section 4. General Information on the NSLP site application when the site has a contract with a caterer?

SFAs must have an approved vendor contract on file inclusive of all Child Nutrition Programs the site(s) are intending to operate. SFAs will select the drop-down option “Catered” in the field *Type of Food Service* and provide the name of the caterer on the site application. This will generate a Checklist Item for HNS to confirm the vendor contract has been approved.

3. How should SFAs access CNPWeb when Internet Explorer is no longer available?

Microsoft Edge has a feature called, "Reload in Internet Explorer Mode" that allows customers to use Edge and enable IE Mode to access CNPWeb successfully.

4. How should SFAs indicate Special Provision Option (SPO) participation on the NSLP site and sponsor applications?

SFAs must have applied for and been approved by ADE to operate a SPO separate from the CNPWeb applications. SFAs will indicate the SPO status by using the dropdown in Section 5 of the sponsor application as well as Sections 8 and 9 in the site applications.

5. What is the required meal price for Paid Lunch Equity for SY 2022-23?

The SY 2022-23 required meal price is \$3.31. See question #6 for guidance on this year’s PLE waiver.

6. My organization did not increase our lunch price. Will my application be rejected?

No. Normally, SFAs would be required to submit documentation demonstrating a positive balance in the non-profit food service account as of December 31, 2021. This year, the PLE waiver provides schools with the flexibility to not raise their paid lunch prices in SY 2022-23. This provides schools the flexibility to price their paid lunches at the level they decide is best based on their local needs.

7. Why didn't the contact information roll over from last year?

The accuracy of contact information on the site and sponsor applications is critical for HNS to provide SFAs with program information throughout the year. Our primary method of communication will be via email, sent to the person listed as the School Food Authority Contact and Program Contact within the NSLP sponsor application for SY 2022-23. Contact information does not roll over from previous year operations to ensure current email addresses are entered.

Eligibility Documents for School Meal Benefits

8. Do entities have to use the template provided by HNS?

No. SFAs may choose to use the templates provided by HNS or use a customized template.

9. What does customized mean?

Customization means the use of a self-created template or if the SFA has added additional fields to the HNS template. Use of any template other than the HNS template must be approved by HNS prior to distributing to households. Please note that removing fields from any of the templates is not permitted and will not be approved. Reformatting the existing fields does not qualify as customization.

10. Is it required to put the full Civil Rights Nondiscrimination statement on the household application?

Yes. The long statement must be included in its entirety on all outreach material when notifying participants of how to apply for free or reduced-price meal benefits.

11. Has the Civil Rights Nondiscrimination statement changed from last program year?

Yes. The full statement can be accessed on [USDA's website](#).

Required Documentation

12. What is the At-Risk Meals Component Principal Addendum?

The SFA At-Risk Afterschool Meals Responsible Principals Addendum must be completed by SFAs who intend to participate in At-Risk Afterschool Meals. Information in this addendum is required by CACFP but is not obtained in the CNPWeb site application for NSLP. SFAs are required to include, at a minimum, the school food service director, accountant, and the responsible administrator (principal or superintendent) on the addendum.

13. Does the At-Risk Component Principal Addendum need to be submitted each year?

This addendum is not submitted annually but rather when there is a change in responsible principals.

14. Is it required to submit the Free and Reduced-Price Statement each year?

No. This document is considered permanent unless changes have been made within the organization. Operators should review the current statement and confirm processes stated are still accurate and current. If approved for a Special Provision Option, the entity will have an addendum listed within Checklist Items. This document does not need to be submitted to HNS during the application process.

USDA Foods in Schools/DoD Fresh

15. Do I have to wait until July 1 to complete the activation for myFOODS?

No. US Foods can accept new purchase orders and school calendars now.

16. When is the first date materials will be available?

The first items requested through the Catalog Requisition Process will be available beginning with the August 15, 2022 shipping period. Items will be available on surplus starting in July and will be able to be scheduled for delivery as soon as July 5.

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Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. *mail:*
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. *fax:*
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. *email:* program.intake@usda.gov

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