



HNS 08-2023

MEMORANDUM

Original Signed

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

From: Melissa Conner, Senior Deputy Associate Superintendent
Health and Nutrition Services

Date: August 07, 2023

Subject: Reminders for School Food Authorities Serving Meals During School Year 2023-2024

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 2023-2024 (SY 2023-24). This guidance also pertains to SFAs participating in the USDA Foods in Schools Program and the 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 includes a series of questions and answers [Attachment A] intended to provide clarification to program operators.

SY 2023-24 Operation Reminders

As a reminder, all transitional waivers resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have expired and SFAs must meet all programmatic requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs including the transitional nutrition standards. The transitional nutrition standards took effect on July 1, 2022, and are intended to give schools time to transition from pandemic operations toward more nutritious meals. USDA implemented the Sodium Interim Target 1A effective for school lunch beginning in SY 2023-2024. For the school lunch meal pattern only, there is a required 10% decrease in the sodium limit for 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 standards established in 2012. The current transitional nutrition standards for milk, whole grains, and sodium are outlined in the chart below.

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Milk	Participants ages six and older may be offered flavored low-fat (1%) milk in addition to flavored nonfat milk and unflavored nonfat or low-fat milk				
Whole Grains	At least 80% of the grains served in school lunch and breakfast each week must be whole grain-rich				
Sodium	Lunch Meal Pattern Sodium Target 1A (mg) Daily Amount Effective July 1, 2023				
	Grades	K-5	6-8	K-8	9-12
		≤1,110	≤1,225	≤1,110	≤1,280

ADE would also like to remind operators of the NSLP that [SP 11-2023](#) (Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2023-2024) provides SFAs with a positive or zero balance in the nonprofit school foods service account, as of June 30, 2022, and exemption from the paid lunch equity (PLE) pricing requirements found at [7 CFR 210.14\(e\)](#). SFAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2022, must follow PLE requirements according to [7 CFR 210.14\(e\)](#) when establishing their paid lunch prices for SY 2023-24. SFAs may use the forthcoming SY 2023-24 PLE tool, or an equivalent procedure, to determine their required paid lunch prices. SFAs that do not qualify for the exemption of PLE requirements, must submit the PLE tool, or equivalent procedure, to their HNS Specialist as part of the application process to support paid lunch price determinations.

Annual Application Requirements

This portion of this memorandum will review the required items for applying to participate in school meal programs including USDA Foods in Schools in SY 2023-24. Items include:

- CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications
- CNPWeb Checklist Items
- Additional required documentation
- myFOODS Activation

SFAs may refer to the [2023-2024 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.

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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 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* which provides details about the CNPWeb and completing the fields required in the sponsor and site applications. This guide is available on the [NSLP Online Training Library](#).

CNPWeb Checklist Items

Checklist items are generated based on the entity's operational details and each item must be submitted for approval along with the CNPWeb applications. Checklist items can be referenced within CNPWeb once the site and sponsor applications have been submitted. Applications will not be approved until all checklist items required for operation have been received and approved by HNS. The following is a list of checklist items that may be required:

- 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 required documentation

There are additional documents that may be required but that are not included in the checklist within CNPWeb. Program operators may be requested to submit area eligibility documentation. Sites operating At-Risk/ASCSP which intend to establish eligibility by using school-level data from a site other than the site operating At-Risk/ASCSP, require supporting area eligibility documentation. This documentation must reflect that the site is within the attendance area of another school that meets area eligibility.

myFOODS Activation

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SFAs must have an active status in myFOODS to utilize their entitlement dollars provided through the USDA Foods in Schools program for SY 2023-24. myFOODS is an online portal that collects entity-level information including contact and billing information, as well as site-level delivery information required by ADE's contracted warehouse, US Foods. Activation of myFOODS allows program operators to spend their entitlement through the USDA Foods in Schools program and the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh program. myFOODS activation must be completed prior to ordering materials.

Returning operators should reference the [2023-2024 School Meals Application Checklist](#) to ensure all activation activities are completed. Steps include:

- Submission of the school calendar and Purchase Order (PO) or Letter of Responsibility (LOR) to US Foods, the contracted warehouse for USDA Foods in Schools program.
- SY2023-24 Catering contract verification for SFAs intending to participate in the Alternative Delivery Site Agreement.

SFAs that have not previously participated or accessed their entitlement for USDA Foods in Schools, DoD Fresh, or need access to the myFOODS or FFAVORS systems, should e-mail HNS at USDAFoods@azed.gov. Staff are available to discuss the entitlement program and aid in utilizing the myFOODS and FFAVORS systems.

SFAs will communicate with their HNS Specialist to complete the annual application requirements for SY 2023-24. The contact information for the assigned HNS Specialist can be found at the top of the sponsor application in CNPWeb.

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Questions and Answers

HNS has released answers to the following questions to further clarify guidance for SY 2023-24 applications.

CNPWeb Applications

1. 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 *Type of Food Service* field and must 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.

2. 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.

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

SPOs include Provision 2, Provision 3, and Community Eligibility. 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 of the site applications.

4. 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 and is sent to the person listed as the School Food Authority Contact and Program Contact within the NSLP sponsor application for SY 2023-24. Contact information does not roll over from previous year operations to ensure current contacts and email addresses are entered.

Eligibility Documents for School Meal Benefits

5. 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.

6. 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 distribution to households. Please note that removing fields from any of the templates is not

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permitted and will not be approved. Reformatting the existing fields does not qualify as customization.

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

Required Documentation

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. Is it required to submit the Free and Reduced-Price Policy 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 the 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 CNP Web application process.

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