

Orientation to the National School Lunch Program



Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education





Disclaimer

This training was developed by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services Division (HNS). The content in this training is intended for professionals operating one or more USDA Child Nutrition Programs in Arizona under the direction of ADE. The information in this training is subject to change. Attendees are encouraged to access professional development materials directly from the training library to prevent use of outdated content.

Intended Audience

This training is intended for School Food Authorities (SFAs) operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). All regulations are specific to operating the NSLP under the direction of ADE.

Objectives

At the end of this training, attendees should be able to:

- Plan menus that meet USDA nutrition requirements for reimbursable meals, including calculating meal components.
- Certify, process, and verify free and reduced price meal eligibility benefits in compliance with Federal regulations.
- Implement a system of checks and balances to ensure accuracy and integrity of meal counting and claiming, funds collected, and record keeping.

TRAINING HOURS

Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title: Online Course:
Orientation to the National School
Lunch Program

Key Area: 1000 - Nutrition, 3000 -
Administration

Learning Code: 1110, 3110, 3310

Length: 1 hour

Quiz Time



Throughout this guide, there will be comprehension quiz questions to test your knowledge and help you apply what you're learning. Be sure to review these quiz questions and answers available within the guide.

The question mark icon below will indicate a comprehension quiz question.



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Definitions and Overview of Child Nutrition Programs

SECTION 1





Definitions

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), a division within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), administers the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) at the federal level and communicates regulations with each state agency. In Arizona, the state agency of administration is the Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) Division at the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). ADE then operates the program through legal agreements with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs).

Local Educational Agency (LEA)

A public board of education or other public or private nonprofit authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state. This also includes Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIAs), education service agencies, and a consortia of those agencies.

School Food Authority (SFA)

The governing body responsible for the administration of one or more schools, and has the legal authority to operate the program therein or be otherwise approved by FNS to operate the program.

School Nutrition Program Director

The individual directly responsible for the management of the day- to-day operations of school food service of a participating school under the jurisdiction of the SFA.

Child Nutrition Programs



National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

The NSLP ensures that nutritious lunches, meeting specific meal pattern requirements, are made available to all children in eligible LEAs participating in the program. Meals provided through NSLP are reimbursed according to the income eligibility of the students involved, making it a vital resource for promoting healthy eating habits among school children.

Key Features:

- Nutritious lunches
- Meal pattern compliance
- Availability to all children in eligible LEAs

Reimbursement Structure:

- Based on the income eligibility of participating students
- Supports affordability and accessibility for a diverse student population

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

The SBP aims to provide nutritious breakfasts to students and promote a healthy start to their day. With a focus on accessibility and affordability, this program helps ensure that students have the fuel they need for optimal learning.

Key Features:

- Daily breakfast options
- Nutrient-rich meals



Child Nutrition Programs

After-school Care Snack Program (ASCSP)

The After-School Snack Program offers students a wholesome snack to bridge the gap between lunch and dinner. This initiative supports students' nutritional needs, especially those participating in after-school activities.

Key Highlights:

- Balanced snack options
- Convenient for students in extracurricular activities
- Participation open to eligible schools

At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program (At-Risk)

The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program is a vital initiative aimed at addressing the nutritional needs of children in afterschool programs in eligible areas. This program ensures that children, particularly those at risk of food insecurity, have access to wholesome meals beyond regular school hours. Designed to support the overall well-being of participating students, At-Risk provides nourishing and balanced meals that contribute to their physical health and academic success.

Program Focus:

- Provision of meals for children in afterschool programs
- Targeted towards areas with identified food insecurity risks
- Supports children at risk of inadequate nutrition

Child Nutrition Programs



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

FFVP introduces students to a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, encouraging healthy eating habits. By providing fresh produce as snacks, this program contributes to overall wellness and nutrition education.

Program Components:

- Weekly distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Educational activities promoting healthy eating
- Focus on elementary schools with priority given to lower income elementary schools

USDA FOODS

USDA provides entitlement dollars to ADE who then provide these dollars to participating LEAs. LEAs use the entitlement dollars to purchase USDA Foods to use in the meals for SBP, NSLP, ASCSP, and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

The Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program stands as a dedicated nutritional initiative, prioritizing the health and well-being of eligible school children. This unique program allows Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) the flexibility to utilize their USDA Foods entitlement dollars to procure fresh produce for incorporation into school meals.

Farm to School Program and School Garden Program

Helps schools connect with local producers and educates students by bridging the gap from field to plate. School Garden Program enhances the learning environment by implementing active and memorable lessons that develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Child Nutrition Programs



Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a vital initiative committed to ensuring the nutritional well-being of children and adults in eligible care settings. This program provides funding and support to participating Pre-K, Head Start, and Adult Care centers, enabling them to offer nourishing meals and snacks. (Note: if a site has Pre-K and Head Start as well as School-Aged students (K-12), that site may operate the NSLP.)

Program Scope:

- Targets child care centers, adult day care centers, and family child care homes
- Extends support to various care settings for children and adults
- Emphasizes balanced nutrition for participants of all ages

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

SFSP provides kids and teens in low-income areas with free snacks and/or meals during the summer months and during periods when area schools are closed for school breaks.

Quiz Time

Which program focuses on nutritious lunches, meal pattern compliance, and availability to all children in eligible LEAs that has a reimbursement structure based on the income eligibility of participating students ?

A CACFP

B NSLP

C ASCSP

D FFVP



Quiz Time

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B NSLP

C ASCSP

D FFVP

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) ensures that nutritious lunches, meeting specific meal pattern requirements, are made available to all children in eligible Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) participating in the program. Meals provided through NSLP are reimbursed according to the income eligibility of the students involved, making it a vital resource for promoting healthy eating habits among school children.



NSLP Operators



SECTION 2

Sponsoring Entities

In Arizona, an entity recognized as part of the educational system is identified by a nine (9) digit CTD number.

If you are unsure of your CTD, visit the ADE School Finance webpage to find a list of fundable and active LEAs.

If you are an RCCI, contact HNS at (602) 542-8700 or email ContactHNS@azed.gov for more information.



CTD/CTDS NUMBER

CTD: ADE identifies each LEA, district or charter holder by a (nine) 9 digit number. Each site is identified by the CTDS; the 9 digit number plus 3 digits unique to that Site.

“C” = County number (2-digits long)

“T” = Type number (2-digits long)

“D” = District/Charter Holder ID number (2-digits long)

“S” = School Site ID (3-digits long)

Sponsoring Entities

SCHOOLS

Schools are defined per [ARS 15-101](#) as, any public institution established for the purposes of offering instruction to pupils in programs for preschool children with disabilities; kindergarten programs or any combination of grades one through twelve.

Common types of schools include:

- Accommodation School - A school that provides services to homeless children, military reservation, or alternative education programs.
- Charter School - Public school established by contact with the state board of education, or state board for charter schools, to provide learning that will improve pupil achievement.
- Private School - Non-public institution where instruction is imparted.





Sponsoring Entities

RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS (RCCIS)

RCCIs are institutions that maintain children in residence, which operate primarily for the care of children.

This includes but is not limited to: homes for the mentally, emotionally, or physically impaired and unmarried mothers and their infants; group homes; halfway houses; orphanages; temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children; long-term care facilities; and juvenile detention centers. Institutions with temporary clientele, such as runaway shelters, are eligible to participate as long as the institution operates on a continuous basis.



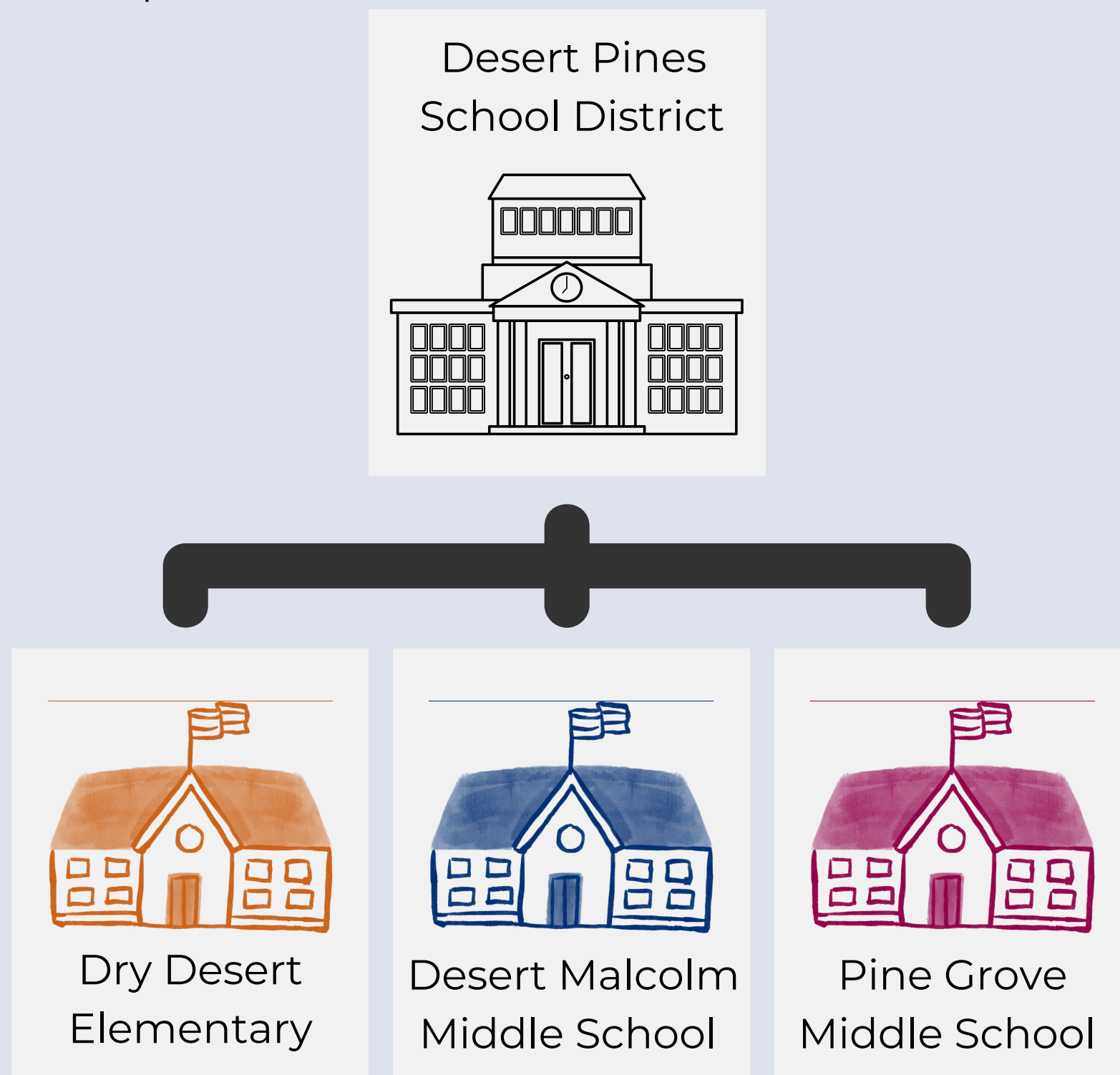
Sponsoring Entities

INELIGIBLE OPERATORS

The following listed programs are not eligible to apply as their own sponsor. They may participate in the program if sponsored by, and physically located in an eligible school, meeting the definition in [ARS 15-101](#). Should these programs want to participate independently from a participating school, they are advised to inquire about the CACFP.

- Pre-primary (Pre-K) classes
- GED programs or regular high school completion programs
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs

Example:



Sponsor and Site Organization

In Arizona, locations where program meals are served are referred to as sites. Sites must have a shared governing body that has the legal authority to operate school nutrition programs, referred to as a LEA or sponsor. While operating the program, there are required reporting and program duties at the Sponsor level and the Site level.

Example:

Desert Pines School District sponsors three sites that serve program meals: Dry Desert Elementary, Desert Malcolm Middle School, and Pine Grove Middle School.

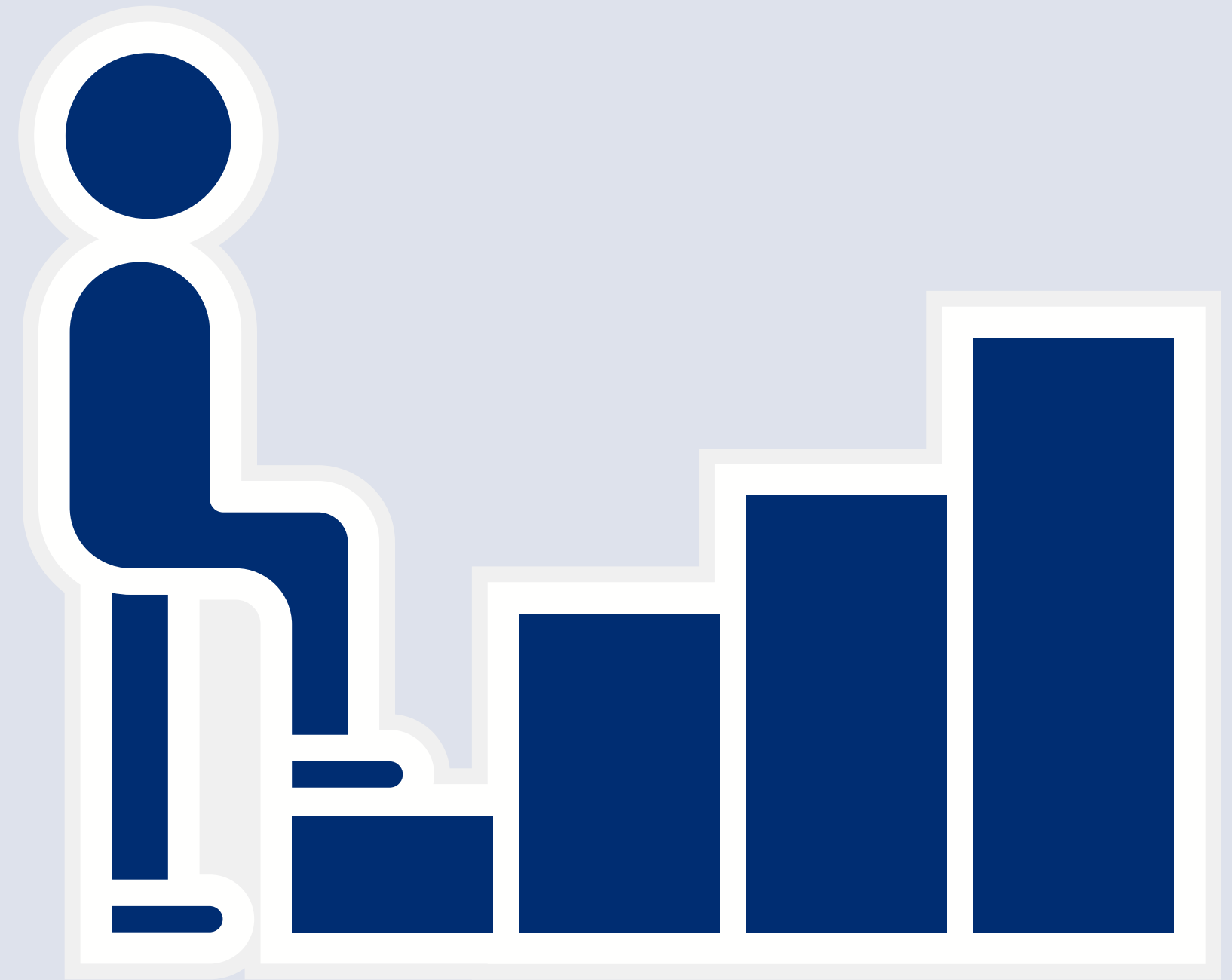
ADE will hold the Sponsor accountable for NSLP requirements at all sites during the program year.

Application Process

Prospective entities of the NSLP may contact (602) 542-8700 or email ContactHNS@azed.gov to start the application process. SFAs must complete a series of steps when applying to be a sponsor for any child nutrition program.



Locate the “Apply to Operate the National School Lunch Program” accordion on the [ADE Health and Nutrition Services NSLP webpage](#) for additional information.



Quiz Time

How can prospective entities begin the application process?

- A** Contact (602) 542-8700 or email ContactHNS@azed.gov
- B** Start serving meals and send ADE a letter with the meal counts
- C** Contact USDA directly



Quiz Time

How can prospective entities begin the application process?

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ADEConnect and Applying to Operate NSLP

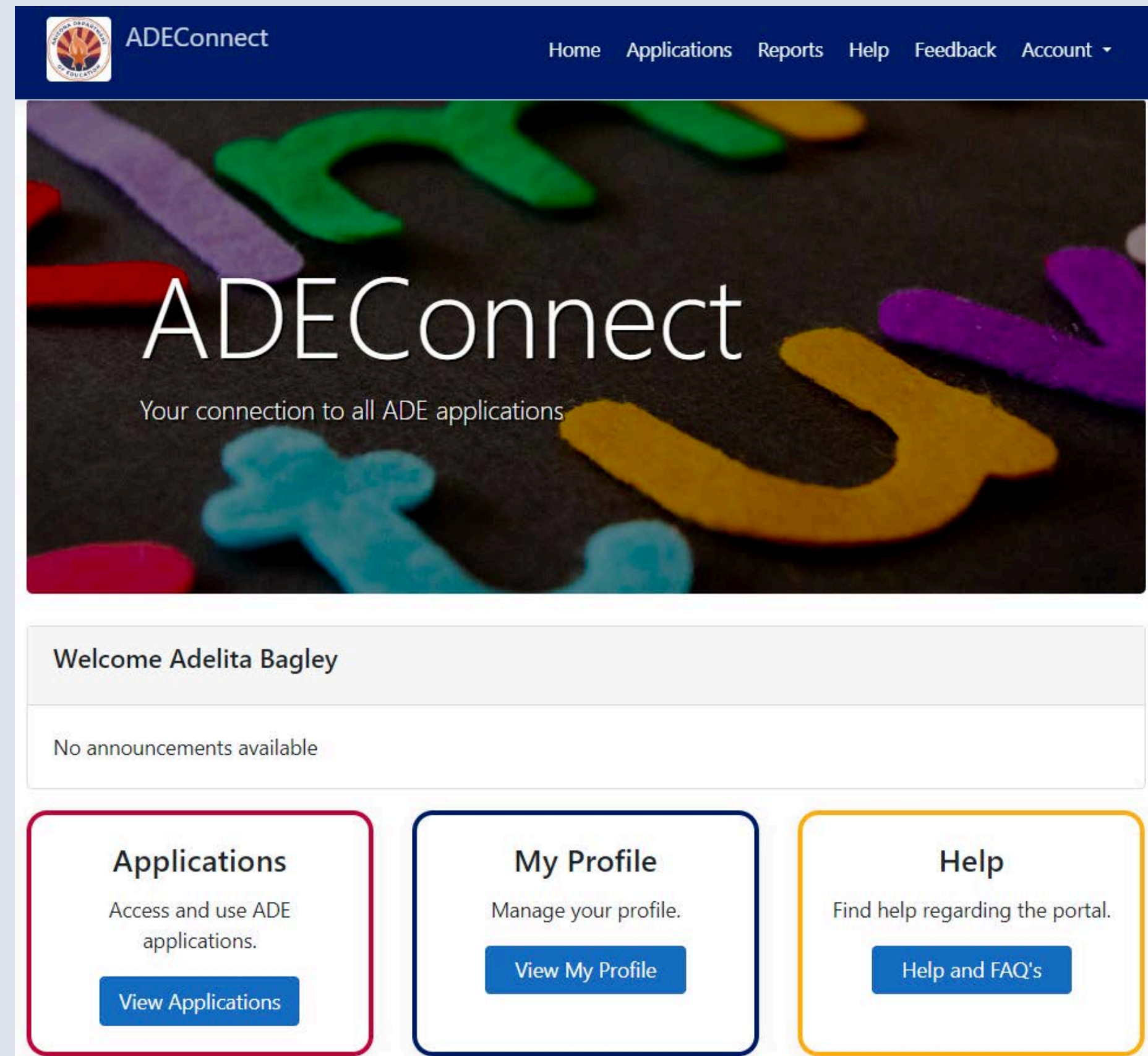
SECTION 3



What is ADEConnect?

ADEConnect serves as a centralized portal encompassing various web applications within ADE, specifically tailored to provide uniform access to systems related to the child nutrition programs.

Upon receiving a username and password, users will find a consolidated list of requested web applications from different ADE units on their homepage.

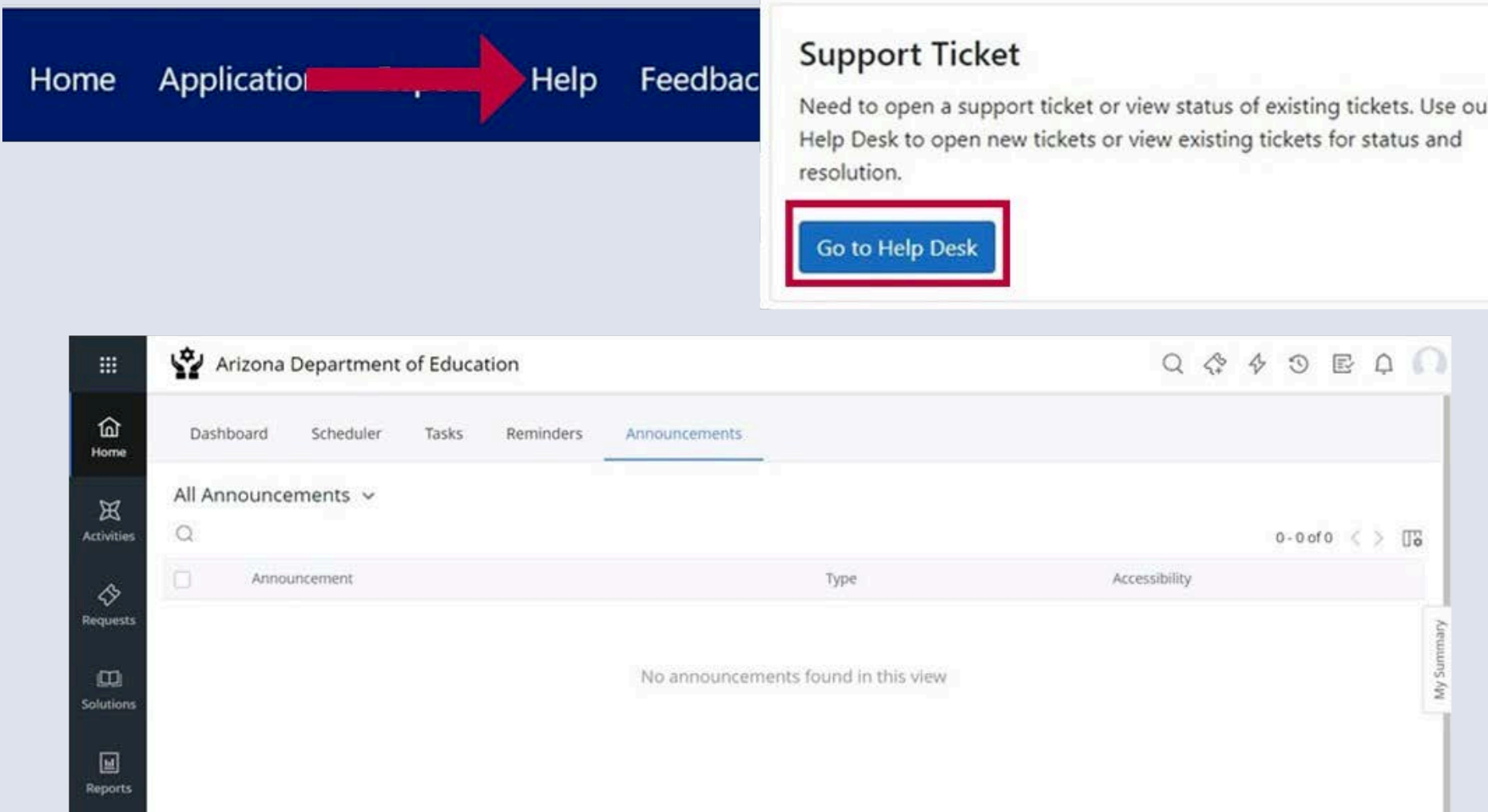


ADE Help Desk

The help desk portal can be accessed through the ADE homepage. Users may submit tickets through the help desk for assistance and solutions to technical difficulties with ADEConnect or any of its applications.

To access the help desk:

1. Locate the "Help" text on the upper right hand side corner of the ADEConnect homepage.
2. Click on this button and locate the "Support Ticket" section. Click on "Go to Help Desk"



User Management

User management is LEA controlled by the designated Entity Administrator (EA). New users must contact their local EA for access. ADEConnect provides a search feature for those who need to locate their local EA. It is recommended that only those individuals who will be completing specific tasks request access to ADEConnect applications.



PLEASE NOTE

All applications within ADEConnect will be needed at some point in the program year for required reporting to ADE. A “backup” user is recommended for sensitive deadlines.

Requesting a New User Account

1. Go to <https://adeconnect.azed.gov>.
2. Locate the "Help" text on the upper right hand side corner of the ADEConnect homepage.
3. Click on this button and locate "Find an Administrator" section. Click on Search.
4. Find your education entity in the drop down and click "Search."
5. Contact your EA to request access to an ADEConnect account.


The screenshot shows the ADEConnect homepage. Step 2 points to the 'Help' link in the top navigation bar. Step 3 points to the 'Search' button in the 'Find an Administrator' section. Step 4 points to the 'Select Education Organization' dropdown menu in the 'Find Administrator' section.

2 Home Applications Reports **Help** Feedback Account ▾

Find an Administrator

Looking for an administrator that can assist you with your ADEConnect access. Locate the contact information of an ADEConnect administrator that is assigned to your organization.

3 Search

 ADEConnect

Find Administrator

Education Organizations

Select Education Organization

Search Reset

CNPWeb

The most used application in ADEConnect is CNPWeb. CNPWeb houses the **online site and sponsor applications and claiming system**. Annually, sponsors must agree to sponsor sites by submitting online applications for each site participating in NSLP, as well as a sponsor application.

Annual submission and approval of the site and sponsor applications is required in order for SFAs to claim reimbursements for meals served under the School Nutrition Programs

PLEASE NOTE

At the end of each school year, ADE prepares the CNPWeb system for the upcoming program year. Starting June 1st, the CNPWeb in ADEConnect is ready to accept site and sponsor applications to participate in NSLP the upcoming program year

Applications Process

SUBMITTING SITE/SPONSOR APPLICATIONS

Each year, SFAs must submit their site/sponsor applications to notify ADE of their NSLP participation.

For guidance on submitting site and sponsor applications, view the online training: [Step-byStep Instruction: How to Submit Site and Sponsor Applications in CNPWeb](#).



CNPWeb Application



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

My start date is August 15th. If the site and sponsor applications were never submitted to ADE for approval, will the site be able to claim for reimbursement in CNPWeb?

Since the applications were not submitted, a claim would not be generated for the site to claim. Once the application has been submitted and approved the SFA will be able to submit the claim in CNPWeb.

If the Food Program Permanent Service Agreement is approved during the application process, why is it necessary to submit additional site and sponsor applications through CNPWeb?

The Food Program Permanent Service Agreement is a legally binding contract between the SFA and ADE stating if the SFA participates in the NSLP, the SFA will abide by all regulations set forth by the program. The CNPWeb applications are annual applications of participation that once approved, allow the SFA to submit claims for reimbursement. The application also houses relevant contact and program operation information that should be updated regularly.

Site Claim Index



SUBMITTING SITE CLAIM

Federal reimbursement is provided for each meal that meets program requirements and is served to an eligible student. The claims index in CNPWeb enables sponsors and authorized ADE personnel to add, view, update, revise, and delete site level claims for reimbursement. All reimbursement claims are submitted at the site level.

In CNPWeb, all reimbursement claims are submitted at the site level; reimbursement payments still go directly to the sponsor. **The sponsor cannot submit claims if the application for the sponsor or the particular site is not in “Approved” status.**

For guidance on submitting a claim in CNPWeb, view the how-to guide: [“Step-by-Step Instruction: How to Submit a Claim in CNPWeb.”](#)



Visit the [HNS NSLP Online Training Library](#) and locate the “Counting & Claiming” section for more guidance on submitting claims.

CNPWeb Claiming

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)



When can I submit my claim?

The SFA will submit monthly site-based claims. Claims for the current month can be made starting the 1st day of the month following that claim month. You may submit any day of the month; however, submitting claims submitted by the 10th of each month is a recommended best practice to ensure payment within the same month.

Is there a deadline to submit my claims?

Claims can be submitted for previous months within the 60-day deadline. First-time claims, or revisions of claims submitted past the 60-day deadline can only be submitted as a one-time exception. The one-time exception can only be used once every 36 months. To check your eligibility, email ContactHNS@azed.gov.

Am I able to revise my claim?

Yes. Claims, even in submitted status, can be revised up until the 10th of the month and all reimbursements will come together in that month. Claims in the paid status may be revised and submitted after the original claim has been paid and the additional amount will be added or deducted to the next claim. The revision must be submitted within 60 days of the last day of the month.

ADEConnect Applications

CNP DIRECT CERTIFICATION/DIRECT VERIFICATION

Direct Certification allows SFAs to search a student database to “match” enrolled students who also participate in SNAP, are identified as foster children, or are part of the MEP. These children will automatically have free meal benefits. Sponsors are required to conduct Direct Certification at least three times a year. Sponsors will have the ability to conduct Direct Verification within ADEConnect only during Verification.

ADE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT (APLD)

The application where the child nutrition programs in-person and webinar trainings will be posted and available for registration to SFAs and support staff.

Other ADE Applications

Other ADEConnect Applications		
CNP OPERATION	RELATED APPLICATION	WHAT CAN BE DONE IN APPLICATION?
NSLP/SBP OPERATIONS	CNPWEB	SITE AND SPONSOR APPLICATIONS SUBMIT MONTHLY SITE CLAIMS
DIRECT CERTIFICATION/ VERIFICATION	CNP DIRECT CERTIFICATION/ DIRECT VERIFICATION	IDENTIFY STUDENTS WHO PARTICI- PATE IN SNAP, TANF, MEP OR FOS- TER CARE TO PROVIDE FREE MEAL BENEFITS
TRAINING	ADE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (APLD)	REGISTER FOR ADE CNP IN-PERSON AND WEBINAR TRAININGS
VERIFICATION REPORTING	CNP VERIFICATION REPORTING	REPORT RESULTS OF VERIFICATION ANNUALLY
SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS	CNP SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS	CLAIMING PORTAL FOR LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS AND SUPPLY CHAIN ASSISTANCE

Common Acronyms

Common Acronyms	
ACRONYM	MEANING
ADE	Arizona Department of Education
ADP	Average Daily Participation
AFR	Annual Financial Report
AR	Administrative Review
ASCSP	Afterschool Care Snack Program
BIC	Breakfast in the Classroom
BID	Benefit Issuance Document
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNP	Child Nutrition Program

Common Acronyms	
ACRONYM	MEANING
DC	Direct Certification
DES	Department of Economic Security
DoD	Department of Defense
FDPIR	Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
FSMC	Food Service Management Company
FNS	Food and Nutrition Services
HACCP	Hazzard Analysis Critical Control Point
HNS	Health and Nutrition Services
LEA	Local Educational Agency
LWP	Local Wellness Policy

Common Acronyms

Common Acronyms	
ACRONYM	MEANING
MEP	Migrant Education Program
M/MA	Meat/Meat Alternate
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	Offer Versus Serve
Oz. Eq.	Ounce Equivalent
PLE	Paid Lunch Equity
POS	Point of Service
PY	Program Year
RCCI	Residential Child Care Institution
SBP	School Breakfast Program

Common Acronyms	
ACRONYM	MEANING
SFA	School Food Authority
SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
SMP	Special Milk Program
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SY	School Year
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Operating Your Program



SECTION 4

Student Eligibility

ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS

All schools enrolled in the NSLP or SBP are required to provide eligible children with free and reduced-price meals. SFAs must also maintain adequate documentation to substantiate a child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals when making claims. Reimbursement for served meals is determined based on the participating students' eligibility categories: free, reduced-price, or paid. These reimbursement rates are subject to annual adjustments reflecting inflation rates.

DETERMINING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

SFAs are responsible for ensuring that all households receive either a Direct Certification notification or an application for free and reduced-price school meals. Application materials need not be distributed to households where all children were deemed eligible through the direct certification process. For SFAs opting to distribute application materials via mail, individual student packets, or other methods, precautions must be taken to prevent the overt identification of children already determined eligible through direct certification. When processing meal benefit income eligibility forms based on reported income, SFAs must adhere to the Income Eligibility Guidelines, which can be found on the [NSLP Program Forms and Resources webpage](#).

Meal Benefit Eligibility

Eligibility information should be recorded on the BID and subsequently verified.

All HNS eligibility documents are located in the [Eligibility Documents for School Meal Benefits](#) accordion.

Free	Reduced	Paid
A household application provides income and household size within the 'free' guidelines	A household application provides income and household size within the 'reduced- price' guidelines.	A household application provides income and household size within the 'paid' guidelines.
A student in a household participating in assistance programs such as SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR.		There is no documentation or household application on file for the household.
A student identified as foster		A household application does not provide all the required information.
A student identified as homeless, migrant or runaway		
A student enrolled in Head Start		

Benefit Issuance Document

Record all eligibility determinations on a Benefit Issuance Document (BID). The BID serves as a comprehensive list of students at your site who have been identified as eligible for either free or reduced-price benefits.

SAMPLE BID				
Last Name	First Name	Benefit Status	Method/ Documentation	Certification Date
Coyote	Wiley	Free	Income Application	8/7/20
DeVil	Dusty	Reduced	Income Application	9/17/20
Granger	Hermione	Paid	No Documentation	
Lee	Brock	Free	DC TANF	7/15/20
Potter	Harry	Free	Foster Application	9/3/20
Weasley	Ron	Free	DC SNAP	9/25/20

Note: BID must contain first and last name of the student, method used to determine their benefits (application, direct certification, etc.), meal benefit status and the date it was determined.



All of ADE’s NSLP resources can be found at www.azed.gov/hns/nslp/forms

Direct Certification

CONDUCTING DIRECT CERTIFICATION

CNP Direct Certification is an automated State Matching system created by ADE that communicates directly with the Department of Economic Security (DES). Matches are made between student enrollment records and benefit recipient records from other assistance programs (i.e. SNAP, TANF, FDPIR) Migrant Education Program (MEP), medicaid (DC-M Free/Reduced) and foster care agencies.

CNP Direct Certification must be conducted at a minimum of three times per program year. This should be done at different intervals to ensure all households who have not yet matched in CNP Direct Certification and who are participating in assistance programs receive free meal benefits.



Directly certified students are free-categorically eligible (except DC-M Reduced) and benefits should be extended to other students in the household.

Identifying Homeless, Migrant, and Runaway Children

CHILDREN WHO ARE HOMELESS, MIGRANT OR RUNAWAY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE MEAL BENEFITS.

- Homeless– state of not having a consistent place to sleep, determined by the homeless liaison
- Migrant– confirmed status through the Migrant Education Program (MEP)
- Runaway– confirmed status through the Runaway Youth Homeless Act (RYHA)

Homeless, migrant, and runaway children are considered other source categorically eligible for free meal benefits.



The free meal benefits do not extend to any other students in the household.

Other Source Categorically Eligible

CATEGORIES WHICH MAKE CHILDREN AUTOMATICALLY ELIGIBLE FOR FREE BENEFITS

In addition to homeless, migrant, and runaway children, the following categories also qualify as other source categorically eligible.

- Enrolled in a Federal Head Start Program;
- Enrolled in State-funded pre-kindergarten classes using identical or more stringent eligibility criteria than the Federal Head Start Program;
- Enrolled in Even Start - a participant in a Federally-funded Even Start Family Literacy Program for pre-school and pre-kindergarten children;
- Determined to be a foster child whose care and placement is the responsibility of the State or is formally placed by a court with a caretaker household, and the State retains legal custody of the child.



A child's eligibility for free meals under Other Source Categorical Eligibility does not extend to any other child in the household.

Distributing and Collecting Household Applications

Families are required to fill out the application for complimentary and reduced-price meals administered by the SFA. This application serves to document household and income details. Utilizing the Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs) furnished by ADE, schools will assess whether a household qualifies for free or reduced-price benefits.

In instances where households communicate in a language other than English, SFAs are obligated to furnish translated versions of the applications. The USDA offers translated materials in 49 diverse languages.

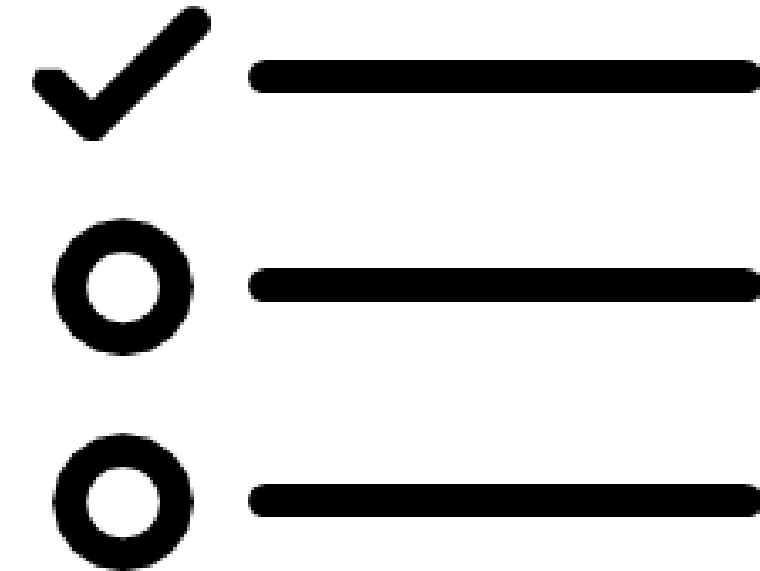
Application Process

**1**

**FAMILY FILLS OUT
HOUSEHOLD
APPLICATION**

**2**

**SCHOOL REVIEWS APPLICATION.
IF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS
PROVIDED, INCOME ELIGIBILITY
GUIDELINES MUST BE USED**

**3**

**THE APPLICATION IS
EITHER FREE, RE-
DUCED, OR PAID**

Note: Find provided templates and the IEGs on the [NSLP Program Forms and Resources webpage](#).

Verifying Student Eligibility

Every SFA is required to annually confirm the eligibility of children selected from a sample of household applications that have been approved for free and reduced-price meal benefits for the current school year.

VERIFICATION

Verification involves the school officials validating the accuracy of the information provided in a household application. The LEA is responsible for submitting annual Verification Summary Report (VSR) to the ADE online. The report details the outcomes of the verification process and must be done utilizing the CNP Verification Reporting application in ADEConnect.

- ✔ **Verification is conducted October 1 - November 15th of each school year.**
- ✔ **The verification report must be submitted by February 1st of the school year.**



SFAs are encouraged to follow the **verification best practices** calendar.

Charging for Meals

There are three categories for meals: **free, reduced, and paid**. Free meals must always remain free. For reduced meals, there is a specific limit, and the charge should not exceed \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch. However, SFAs are required to calculate prices for paid meals. To determine the paid meal price, SFAs must calculate the meal production cost, which includes food costs, labor costs, and program operating costs.

FREE

Meals must
be free of
charge

REDUCED

The most you may
charge is \$.30 for
breakfast and
\$.40 for lunch

PAID

Set price to avoid
deficits in non-
profit food service
account.

Note: You may never charge a child for a meal or snack through At-Risk Afterschool Meals, and you may only charge for snacks through the ASCSP, if the site is neither site nor area eligible.

PLE Requirements

SFAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of Dec. 31, are required to establish prices for paid lunches according to the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) provisions implemented in NSLP regulations. **Any SFA with a positive or zero balance in its nonprofit school food service account is exempt from PLE pricing requirements.**

Adult Meals

The cost of adult meals must be adequately priced so that the payment covers the overall cost of the lunch. In non-pricing programs, the cost of the adult meal should be at least the amount of reimbursement received for a free lunch. SFAs may use the [Adult Meal Pricing Tool](#) provided by ADE to justify their adult meal prices. This should be done at the beginning of every school year, and documentation must be maintained on file for Administrative Reviews.

General Program Areas

In addition to eligibility and meal pattern requirements, SFAs must also ensure all requirements of the general program areas are met. This chart highlights general program areas. The key terms/responsibilities list is not exhaustive.

General Program Areas	
GENERAL PROGRAM AREA	KEY TERMS/ RESPONSIBILITIES
Verification	Verification Report
Civil Rights	Nondiscrimination Statement Public Media Release Limited English Proficient Households Procedures for Civil Rights Complaints "And Justice for All" Poster visible at all Points of Service Annual Internal Staff Trainings Medical Statement for Students with Special Dietary Accommodations
Resource Management	Maintain a nonprofit foodservice account Paid Lunch Equity Revenue for non-program foods Manage unpaid meal charge policy
Monitoring Responsibilities	On-site monitoring form
Local Wellness Policy	Active document containing goals for nutrition education, physical activity, other school-based activities to promote wellness and nutrition Guidelines for all foods available on campus as well as plans for measuring implementation.

General Program Areas

In addition to eligibility and meal pattern requirements, SFAs must also ensure all requirements of the general program areas are met. This chart highlights general program areas. The key terms/responsibilities list is not exhaustive.

Stay on track with all program area monthly requirements using the [NSLP At A Glance Calendar](#).

General Program Areas	
GENERAL PROGRAM AREA	KEY TERMS/ RESPONSIBILITIES
Competitive Foods	Smart Snacks
Water Availability	Free potable water is made available during all meal services
Food Safety and Storage Professional	HACCP Food Safety Plan Food Safety Inspections Temperature logs Storage
Standards	Hiring and annual trainings standards for all School Nutrition Program Staff
School Breakfast and Summer Food Outreach	Outreach at the beginning and throughout the program year if operating SBP All sponsors announce availability of SFSP sites, even if not operating SFSP

Quiz Time

What are the three eligibility categories?

- A It's based on age group**
- B Homeless, Migrant, Foster**
- C Free, Reduced, Paid**



Quiz Time

What are the three eligibility categories?

- A** It's based on age group
- B** Homeless, Migrant, Foster
- C** Free, Reduced, Paid

All schools enrolled in the NSLP or SBP are required to provide eligible children with free and reduced-price meals. SFAs must also maintain adequate documentation to substantiate a child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals when making claims.



Food Service

MEAL PATTERN

School meals are required to adhere to meal pattern and nutrition standards aligned with the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The meal pattern dietary specifications establish precise calorie limits to ensure age-appropriate nutrition for students in grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. There are distinct meal patterns for the SBP and for Pre-K students.

Reimbursement from the USDA is contingent upon meals meeting their specified meal pattern criteria. ADE offers comprehensive lunch and breakfast meal pattern charts for 3-7 day operations on the NSLP webpage, accessible under the 'Meal Pattern' accordion.

MENU CERTIFICATION

Before gaining acceptance into the NSLP program, School Food Authorities (SFAs) must undergo menu certification. This entails completing the USDA's menu worksheet to verify that the planned menu aligns with all NSLP program requirements.



More information on Menu Certification can be found at:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/certification-compliance>

Serve Only and Offer vs. Serve

The serve only policy mandates that students must be served all food items in a reimbursable meal during lunch or breakfast. In contrast, Offer vs. Serve (OVS) grants students the flexibility to decline a component of the offered food in a reimbursable lunch or breakfast. The primary objective of OVS is to minimize food waste by empowering students to select the foods they prefer. However, only reimbursable meals under OVS should be accounted for and claimed. OVS is required for grades 9-12 during lunch service.

OVS AT BREAKFAST

For breakfast, schools must offer all three required food components in at least the specified minimum quantities. Components include grains, fruit/vegetables, and fluid milk. Students must be offered 4 food items and choose 3 to qualify as a reimbursable meal. One selection must be 1/2 cup of either fruits or vegetables.

OVS AT LUNCH

For lunch, schools must offer all five required food components in at least the specified minimum quantities. Components include meats/meat alternatives, grains, fruit, vegetables, and fluid milk. Students must choose at least 3 components, and one selection must be 1/2 cup of either fruits or vegetables to qualify as a reimbursable meal.

Determine your Meal Counting Method

MEAL COUNTING

Throughout lunch and breakfast service, SFAs must track the number of reimbursable meals served to students. Each meal should be recorded based on the student's eligibility, resulting in three distinct totals at the conclusion of meal service: free, reduced-price, and paid meals.

POINT OF SERVICE

This policy outlines the designated personnel responsible for inspecting each tray to ensure the inclusion of all required items for a reimbursable meal. This check is conducted at a specific time and location during meal service, such as having a food service worker stationed at the end of the service line to verify the completeness of each tray.

Meal Preparation Methods



SELF-PREP

Food is prepared and served to children at the site.

SATELLITE

The site receives food already prepared via a central kitchen.

CATERED

The site and caterer are in a contract. The caterer provides food to the site.

FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT COMPANY (FSMC)

At the sponsor level, the LEA and the Food Service Management company are in a contract. The FSMC provides food to all the sites. Email HNSContracts@azed.gov for additional information on utilizing a caterer for FSMC.



Food Safety

FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS

All sites are required to have two food safety inspections each program year. Additionally, each site must have a Food Safety Plan based on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. To request a food safety inspection, visit the [AZ Department of Health Services webpage](#) for a listing of county health departments' contact information.

The Institute of Child Nutrition has resources for creating your HACCP Plan and resources under Financial Management to help calculate meal cost. Access their resources [here](#).



After-school Care Snack Program

Every SFA enrolled in the NSLP has the opportunity to partake in the ASCSP. SFAs are encouraged to explore ASCSP participation as it allows them to provide snacks to students engaged in extended school day activities. SFAs are permitted to submit applications for ASCSP participation at any point throughout the school year. Eligibility criteria for ASCSP operation **require sites to have a Free or Reduced percentage of at least 40%.**

MEAL PATTERN

To be counted as a reimbursable snack, the snack must contain at least two of the following four components in the required amounts based on the age of participants:

- Fluid milk
- Meat or meat alternate
- Vegetables or fruits; 100% vegetable or fruit juice
- Whole or enriched grain product

At-Risk Afterschool Meals

At-Risk Afterschool Meals, a CACFP component, provides federal reimbursement for After-school programs serving meals and snacks in low-income areas. Administered by ADE, 'At-Risk' streamlines SFA participation, **requiring a Free or Reduced percentage of at least 50%**. It's a valuable option for SFAs in low-income areas. Those ineligible can explore the ASCSP for snacks as it has a lower percentage necessary to participate. 'At-Risk' is ideal for eligible SFAs serving meals and snacks during weekends and breaks.

MEAL PATTERN

To be claimed for reimbursement, the meals and snacks served under At-Risk Afterschool Meals must follow a meal pattern set by USDA. SFAs have the option to choose from the following meal patterns when serving meals and snacks through At-Risk Afterschool Meals:

- Meal Pattern for Snacks (ASCSP)
- Meal Pattern for the NSLP
- Meal Pattern for the SBP
- Breakfast, lunch, snack, or supper meal pattern under the CACFP

Additional information on At-Risk Afterschool Meals can be found [here](#).

Sample Menu for Snacks (ASCSP).

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI
Grapes	Cucumber Slices	Cheese Stick	Vanilla Yogurt	100% Fruit
Cashews	Hummus	WGR Crackers	Fresh Berries	Juice, Carrots
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Strawberries	Celery Sticks	Sunflower	Grapes	Pinto Bean
Cheese	Peanut Butter	Seeds	Almonds	Dip
Cubes	Dip	Fat Free Milk		Tortilla Chips

Monitoring And Reporting

SECTION 5



Monitoring and Reporting

REPORTING AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

SFAs will need to complete a series of program forms and reports during the school year. Please note, SFAs will be required to submit some of the annual reports to ADE by a given deadline. All reports and forms, regardless if submitted to ADE, must be kept on file at the site or sponsor level.

- Annual Reports
- Monthly Reports
- Daily Reports

SITE LEVEL MONITORING

When operating the NSLP, SFAs must complete a series of checks and balances to verify student eligibility and ensure accurate counting and claiming. These records used to support claims must be retained for 5 years.



For a complete list of
recordkeeping requirements
visit

www.azed.gov/hns/nslp/forms

Monitoring and Reporting

MENU DOCUMENTATION

USDA requires SFAs to maintain menu and meal service documentation including production records, ingredient and child nutrition labels, and edit checks for each of its schools that participate in the NSLP.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

SFAs are required to maintain supplementary documentation validating their operations. This encompasses supporting documents for student eligibility, such as household applications, Direct Certification, and benefit issuance documents, along with meal count records and any other documentation supporting reimbursement claims. **All records must be kept on file for 5 years.**



For a complete list of recordkeeping requirements visit

www.azed.gov/hns/nslp/forms

The Daily Edit Check serves to pinpoint potential errors in meal counting and claiming procedures at schools. This verification process should be carried out before submitting the daily lunch counts for the monthly reimbursement claim.

Schools employing a computerized meal counting system or those in the process of acquiring one may have access to a computerized edit check feature. It is advisable to inquire with your vendor about the availability of this option.

DAILY EDIT CHECK WORKSHEET

☐ National School Lunch
☐ School Breakfast

School: _____ Enrollment (Membership): _____ Attendance Factor (AF): _____ Month: _____

	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	
Day of Month:	Free Eligible	AF	Free Eligible X AF:	Free Meals Served:	Reduced Eligible	AF	Reduced Eligible X AF:	Reduced Meals Served:	Paid Eligible:	AF	Paid Eligible X AF:	Paid Meals Served:	TOTAL COUNTS:
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
10													
11													
12													
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31													
Meals Served should not exceed Eligible X Attendance Factor (AF). (Column D should not exceed column C). Monthly Totals													

Administrative Reviews

ADE will conduct an Administrative Review (AR) of an LEA at a minimum of every five years. During the AR, ADE will review eligibility determinations, counting and claiming, and ensure the menu is meeting the meal pattern.

In order to successfully demonstrate you are meeting all program requirements, ADE will review supporting documentation provided by the SFA as well as observe on-site operations (i.e. meal service, point of service, counting and claiming). A Procurement Review is also a part of this process and will be conducted the same year.



The assigned reviewer will provide a checklist of documents that must be submitted during the review.

[What to Expect: National School Lunch Program Administrative Review](#)

Quiz Time

How long must records be kept on file?

- A** 1 year
- B** 3 years
- C** 5 years
- D** 10 years



Quiz Time

How long must records be kept on file?

A 1 year

B 3 years

C 5 years

D 10 years



Training and Technical Assistance

SECTION 6



Professional Standards

TRAINING HOURS

Effective July 1, 2015, SFAs must ensure that all new and current school nutrition program staff meet the minimum annual training requirements per USDA’s Professional Standards regulations. These requirements were set forth with the intent of helping employees enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities specific to their position in NSLP.

In addition to the **annually required Civil Rights training**, staff should take trainings specific to their job duties.

All Directors All Managers	12 hours minimum of annual continuing education/training. (This is in addition to the food safety trainings required in the first year of employment)
	10 hours minimum of annual continuing education/training
Other Full-Time Staff	6 hours minimum of annual continuing education/training
Other Part-Time Staff	4 hours minimum of annual continuing education/training
Non-Program Staff	4 hours minimum of annual continuing education/training required only for those non-program staff members that provide support to school nutrition programs throughout the school year

Note: For more information on Professional Standards, visit the [NSLP Training webpage](#), under the "Build Your Employee Training Plans" accordion.

Professional Standards

HIRING STANDARDS FOR DIRECTORS

SFAs must ensure that all school nutrition program directors hired on or after July 1, 2015, meet the professional standards hiring requirements. In order to be compliant, SFAs must retain documentation for their newly hired directors that support their education and work experience (i.e. transcripts, resumes, etc.), and food safety training. SFAs with fewer than 500 students may request a hiring waiver from HNS for a director-level candidate who meets the educational standards but has less than three years of relevant food service experience.



All of ADE's Professional Standards resources can be found at
www.azed.gov/hns/nslp/forms

Resources



HNS Trainings

HNS offers additional opportunities through trainings to learn and practice the fundamentals of NSLP and SBP. HNS has made available web-based trainings that can be found on NSLP Training webpage, under the "Online Training Library" accordion.

Health and Nutrition Services Webpage

HNS's webpage houses all program information, guidance manuals, program forms, meal pattern charts, access to online training, and much more! You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the website and it is also recommended that you add the NSLP webpage to your favorites.

USDA/HNS Memorandums

All USDA and HNS memorandums are readily available on the HNS webpage. USDA communicates with ADE about updated program operations through memorandums. ADE will post all USDA memorandums along with any additional memorandums released directly from HNS to relay state-level regulations. It is important that SFAs read all memos to keep up with Federal and State regulations. Memorandums can be found on the [HNS/USDA Memos](#) webpage.

Contact HNS

Each SFA participating in NSLP has an assigned Health and Nutrition Services Specialist. This person is the Point of Contact for the SFA for program/regulatory questions about all federal meal programs (NSLP/SBO, CACFP, SFSP), and ongoing support. The assigned specialist is responsible for approving the SFA's annual site and sponsor applications in CNPWeb, including any modifications made throughout the school year.

If an SFA's specialist is unavailable, or have general program inquiries, SFAs may also call the main HNS line where the Specialist of the Day will be available Monday through Friday from 8 am until 5 pm at (602) 542-8700. SFAs may also email ContactHNS@azed.gov.



HNS Communications

SFAs listed as Program Contacts in the sponsor applications will receive HNS Communications. Regular emails from HNS Communications include updates on program regulations, announcements, deadline alerts, information about upcoming ADE and partner events, funding opportunities, and more.

SFAs must keep their CNPWeb applications updated with the most recent contact information to ensure that all HNS Communications are received, and no important updates are missed.

Those not listed on the CNPWeb application may [subscribe to receive all HNS Communication updates.](#)



Congratulations

**You have completed the Online Course:
Orientation to the National School Lunch
Program**

Information to include when documenting this
training for Professional Standards:

Training Title:
**Orientation to the
National School Lunch
Program**

**Key Area: 1000 – Nutrition
3000 – Administration
Learning Code: 1110, 3110, 3310
Length: 1 hour**

Please note, attendees must document the amount of training hours
indicated on the training despite the amount of time it takes to complete it.

CONTACT US

If you have a question or require additional assistance, please contact your assigned specialist or contact HNS.



602-542-8700



ContactHNS@azed.gov



www.azed.gov/hns



Certificate

Requesting a training certificate

Please click the button to complete a brief survey about this online training. Once the survey is complete, you will be able to print your certificate of completion from Survey Monkey.



Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title:
**Orientation to the
National School Lunch
Program**

**Key Area: 1000 – Nutrition
3000 – Administration
Learning Code: 1110, 3110, 3310
Length: 1 hour**

Please note, attendees must document the amount of training hours indicated on the training despite the amount of time it takes to complete it.





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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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