



# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

HNS # 07-2025

Original Signed

## MEMORANDUM

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

**From:** Melissa Conner, Senior Deputy Associate Superintendent  
Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services Division

**Date:** July 2, 2025

**Subject:** State-funded Reimbursement for Reduced-Price Meals in School Year 2025-2026

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The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the availability of State-funded reimbursement in School Year 2025-2026 (SY 2025-26) for reduced-price meals claimed by School Food Authorities (SFAs) operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

### Reduced-Price Meals

Under traditional operations of the NSLP and SBP, families with students who qualify for reduced-price meal benefits may incur a fee of up to \$0.40 for each lunch and up to \$0.30 for each breakfast. Within the state fiscal year 2026 budget, the Arizona legislature appropriated one-time funding to reduce or eliminate copayments that would otherwise be charged to children eligible for reduced-price meals.

SFAs shall communicate the availability of breakfast and lunch meals at no charge to families whose children qualify for reduced-price meal benefits.

To obtain the per meal reimbursement, all SFAs, except those operating CEP or Provision 2 or 3 in a non-base year, shall continue to follow their Free and Reduced-Price Policy which includes the distribution of the Household Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, use of the *CNP Direct Certification* system to certify students for free or reduced-price meal benefits, and track the eligibility on the benefit issuance document. Meals served to children certified as eligible for reduced-price meal benefits are then claimed in the reduced category of the *CNPWeb* monthly claim. SFAs must also notify families and offer meals free of charge to the students who are certified as eligible for reduced-price meal benefits.

The state appropriation will be provided to the NSLP and SBP operators by ADE as a per-meal reimbursement. If the appropriated amount is insufficient to cover all meals served to students certified as eligible for reduced-price meal benefits, ADE will reduce the funding proportionately and notify the impacted SFAs.

Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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**Deadline for Accessing State-Funding for Reduced-Price Meals**

The state-funded reimbursement for reduced-price meals will not be available after June 22, 2026. With the exception of claims for the months of April 2026, May 2026 and June 2026, SFAs shall continue to adhere to the monthly claim for reimbursement requirements for the duration of SY 2025-26. SFAs must submit claims within 60 calendar days of the last day of the claim month to receive reimbursement. Claims may be submitted as soon as the 1st of the month following the claim month. To be eligible for the additional state-funded reimbursement for reduced-price meals served in April 2026 and May 2026, operators must submit the claim for reimbursement no later than **June 22, 2026**. SFAs operating the NSLP and/or SBP in June 2026 for 10 days or less, and who intend to claim reimbursement for reduced-price meals, shall combine the meals served in June with the meals claimed for May and submit the May claim for reimbursement no later than June 22, 2026. NSLP and SBP meals served in June for 11 or more days will be ineligible to receive the additional state-funded reduced-price meal reimbursement.

ADE provides the [Claiming Calendar](#) as a tool to assist SFAs with the monthly claim for reimbursement deadlines.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this memo, please contact your assigned Health and Nutrition Services Specialist or submit a request for service through HelpDesk by using the link: <https://helpdeskexternal.azed.gov/>.

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