Ohio | Department of Education

National School Lunch Program Fact Sheet

The Ohio Department of Education, Office for Child Nutrition, in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture, administers the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, After School Care Snack, and Government Donated Food (Commodity) Programs among others.

Nationally, over 25 million students in over 90 thousand schools and agencies participate in Child Nutrition Programs, making them one of the country's largest food service operations. Ohio's food service programs serve over 1 million meals daily at over 4,000 sites.

The goals of the Child Nutrition Programs are:

- Safeguard the health and well- being of the nation's children;
- Encourage domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural foods; and
- Give children an understanding of the relationship between proper eating habits and good health.

Who can apply to participate in the lunch program?

- Any school of high school grade or under recognized by the State of Ohio as operating under public or nonprofit private ownership;
- Any public or nonprofit classes of pre-primary grades when conducted in the aforementioned schools;
- Any public or nonprofit, private licensed Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI).

What qualifies a student to participate?

Any student of high school grade or under who is enrolled in an educational unit of high school grade or under in a participating school or a child under 21 chronological years of age who is enrolled in a participating RCCI. Additional benefits may be available to a student when his or her guardian submits a Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application or the student is deemed eligible through the Direct Certification process. Based on the household size and income, the student may be eligible for meals free or at a reduced price. Schools may charge no more than $0.40 for a reduced-price lunch. Schools must meet the Paid Lunch Equity in Pricing rule, which determines the price of lunches served to students who pay the full-paid meal price (not eligible for Free or Reduced-price meals). Full-paid meal prices must be at least the difference between the Free and Paid rate of reimbursement. Schools must also operate the National School Lunch Program as non-profit programs.

What are the meal service requirements for lunch?

To be eligible for reimbursement and government donated foods, participating schools and agencies must prepare and serve meals that meet federal nutrition requirements. The reimbursable meal must be priced as a unit and available to all students regardless of their ability to pay. Meal service for lunch must be between 10:00am – 2:00pm.

Schools must follow the food based menu planning option which involves planned menus meeting at least minimum daily quantities of fluid milk, meat or meat alternate, vegetables, fruits, and grains.

Schools must also ensure the children are offered a variety of vegetable subgroups weekly, milk must be 1% or fat-free unflavored or fat-free flavored, all of the grains offered to students must be whole grain rich. For more information, visit the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Nutrition Standards for School Meals website at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm

What reimbursement will the school or agency receive?
The school or agency is reimbursed for each complete meal served to an eligible student. Reimbursement rates are applied based on the student's eligibility category paid full-price, reduced-price, or free. The school is responsible for accurately counting the meals served to students daily by eligibility category. In addition, a government donated food entitlement is earned for each lunch served.

What records must be kept?
The following are required records that must be kept for three school years plus the current year:

- Daily menus and production records;
- Daily meal count and cash receipt worksheets (CN-7) Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Applications and Direct Certification Match Results Reports;
- Monthly inventories of food, labor and supplies Monthly records of program costs;
- Verification records; and
- Records of On-site Accountability Reviews (if more than one site).

To apply for one of the Child Nutrition Programs or to obtain additional information, please contact the Office for Child Nutrition at:

ODE, Office for Child Nutrition
25 South Front Street, Mail Stop 303
Columbus, OH 43215-4183
(800) 808-6325 (toll-free) or (614) 466-2945, (614) 752-7613 (fax)

Additional information, including current reimbursement rates and student income eligibility guidelines, is available at: **www.education.ohio.gov** -or-**www.fns.usda.gov**

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