



Summer Feeding Options for Schools Webinar

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The following are the answers to the questions asked in HNS' **Summer Feeding Options for Schools webinar**. Please note that operators are responsible for remaining up-to-date on program guidance/regulations. The answers provided reflect the information available at the time of the live webinar and may be subject to change.

When can families start applying for the SUN Bucks benefits?

Now. Some children in Arizona will automatically receive benefits and do not need to apply. To ensure eligible students receive SUN Bucks benefits, there are a few actions required by the School Food Authority. Please visit azed.gov/hns/s-ebt-sun-bucks-information-administrators-and-school-leaders --> Operational Guidance Accordion to access a memorandum, trainings, and resources for support.

Students who are not determined as automatically eligible for benefits but believe they may be able to submit a SUN Bucks application for consideration by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Information is available on the SUN Bucks webpage for Parents and Families - azed.gov/SUNBucks.

Can Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) operators follow the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal pattern for meal service but still claim SFSP reimbursement rates?

School Food Authorities (SFAs) operating the SFSP may choose to follow either the NSLP Meal Pattern or the SFSP meal pattern. Regardless of the meal pattern selected, the SFSP reimbursement rate will be received for eligible meals claimed. Community Organizations must follow the SFSP meal pattern.

The following questions on this Question and Answer document are about serving non-congregate meals, which is only allowable at eligible rural sites. For more information, please contact your assigned HNS Specialist.

Are all summer feeding sites allowed to offer non-congregate meals?

No. To be considered to operate a non-congregate meal service, operators must meet all of the following eligibility criteria and be approved for non-congregate feeding by ADE HNS:

- Be in good standing, meaning the operator meets all Program responsibilities, is current with financial obligations, and, if applicable, has fully implemented all corrective actions.
- Be designated as rural.
- Be located more than 2 miles away from another site. Sites cannot be located in close enough proximity that each site could serve the same children the same meals.
- Be in an area eligible to participate in SFSP (Summer Food Service Program) or SSO (Seamless Summer Option).

For more information, please review the following resources:

- [Offering a Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service](#)
- HNS 03-2026: [Application for Summer Meal Programs](#)

When offering a curbside multi-day meal service, are operators required to provide a PRINTED menu to each family or can the online menu be referenced?

As non-congregate meals are only to be provided in rural areas, USDA requires all related documentation to be printed to ensure access. Therefore, the menu must be printed and include the Non-discrimination statement.

SUMMER FEEDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS WEBINAR

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

During covid, operators were able to offer some bulk items, for example: a whole cucumber or 5 lb bag of carrots, to cover a couple days' worth of the vegetable component. Is this still allowable as long as operators can document how the bulk item covers the minimum portion size over several days?

Yes, bulk meal distribution is permissible for eligible operators providing non-congregate meals in rural areas.

Please note, per 7 CFR 225.16(i)(3), in addition to the required food components in the proper minimum amounts for each reimbursable meal being served, bulk meal or multi-day issuance meal packages must include a menu with portion sizes which clearly identifies the food items that make up a reimbursable meal, and preparation directions. Bulk food items provided must require minimal preparation. Bulk meal components being provided as ingredients for recipes that require further preparation such as chopping, mixing, baking, etc., may only be offered with State agency and FNSRO approval.

Can ADE provide an example of a compliant menu for multi-day meal distribution?

Although dated School Year 2022-2023, the following resource from USDA provides helpful examples and tips for offering a multi-day meal distribution. For additional support, operators are encouraged to connect with their HNS specialist or submit a Peer-to-Peer Support Request to connect to another field expert.

- [School Meals Programs: Providing Multiple Meals at a Time During School Year 2022-2023](#)

Please note, operators are responsible for adhering to current program guidelines.

When offering a curbside multi-day meal service, are operators required to provide a PRINTED copy of storage and reheating instructions to each family or can this information be referenced electronically?

Yes. As specified by USDA in the Non-Congregate Question and Answer memorandums, all documentation provided to families must be printed and contain the non-discrimination statement.

Are families required to take milk when picking up meals? If operators select Offer Versus Serve (OVS), can families decline some or all of the milk offered?

In some cases, with State agency approval, SFA sponsors may use OVS as outlined in Program regulations at 7 CFR 225.16(f)(1)(ii). Non-SFA sponsors may not use OVS as part of their non-congregate meal service, consistent with the limitation similarly established in the NSLA at 42 USC 1761(f)(7).

SFAs utilizing OVS must be able to follow the SFSP or Seamless Summer Option (SSO) OVS meal service parameters in their entirety as stipulated in the table on the following page. When using OVS in a non-congregate setting, SFAs should consider the unique service situations of each site, as well as each site's ability to follow appropriate safety measures. As a reminder, OVS is not intended to be a way to circumvent meal pattern requirements or eliminate specific components.

USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) encourages SFAs that wish to use OVS to think creatively about how to implement this flexibility while ensuring that all meal service requirements are met. A few best practices when using OVS in non-congregate settings include, but are not limited to:

- Buffet style meal pick-up for daily non-congregate meal service operations;
- Pre-ordering or online ordering system where children can choose their meal items prior to meal pick-up or delivery; and
- Gathering participant feedback and adjusting meal service flexibilities (bulk food items and multi-day meal issuance) and menus, as needed.

For questions regarding OVS waivers, please contact your assigned HNS specialist.

SUMMER FEEDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS WEBINAR

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OFFER VERSUS SERVE & RURAL, NON-CONGREGATE MEAL SERVICE

		SFSP	SSO
Breakfast			
Offered	Fruit/Vegetable	One serving	One serving
	Bread/Grain	One serving	One serving
	Milk	One serving	One serving
	Additional Requirements	One additional serving of fruit/vegetable, bread/grain, or a serving of meat/meat alternate	One additional serving of fruit/vegetable, bread/grain, or a serving of meat/meat alternate
Served	A child must take at least three of any of the four food items offered and may choose to take all four items.		
Lunch/Supper			
Offered	Meat/Meat Alternate	One serving	One serving
	Fruit	Two servings of fruit and/or vegetables (two different food items)	One serving
	Vegetable		One serving
	Bread/Grain	One serving	One serving
	Milk	One serving	One serving
Served	A child must take at least four of any of the five food items offered and may choose to take all five items.		