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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms Used in Child Nutrition Programs

A

Adverse Action — Change in benefit level; or termination due to a change in eligibility status.

Alabama School Nutrition Association (ASNA) — The state affiliate of the American School Food Service Association.

American Dietetic Association (ADA) — The professional association for dietitians.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) — A law established in 1990 to prevent discrimination in employment against qualified individuals who have a disability.

American Association of School Business Officials (AASBO) — The professional association for individuals involved in school business functions.

Appeals — The process by which a household may challenge the decision made by the school food authority (SFA) with respect to an application the family has made for free or reduced-price meals.

Attendance factor — Attendance as a percentage of enrollment, at either the school or school food authority level. In the absence of a local attendance factor, the school food authority can use the annually assigned Federal factor.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA) — The figure representing a school’s or school system’s attendance per day averaged over a period of time.

Average Daily Membership (ADM) — The average daily number of students enrolled.

Average Daily Participation (ADP) — The number obtained by dividing the total number of meals claimed during a reporting period by the number of operating days in the same period.
Balance sheet — A financial statement that shows the financial condition of a fund at a given point.

Batch cooking — Food prepared in small quantities to meet service needs for a specified period of time. Other terms are “cooking to the line” or “just-in-time cooking.”

Bid award — Award of a contract to a successful bidder signifying acceptance of the bid or proposal.

Buy America — A provision in Federal regulations that instructs school food authorities to purchase supplies produced or manufactured in the USA whenever possible.

Cash in lieu — Monies issued for purchase of foods instead of receipt of commodity foods. This is authorized by statute when commodity foods are not purchased in quantities intended or in certain statutory pilot school districts and states.

Categorical eligibility — Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals that is based on the child receiving Food Stamps or Family Assistance (FA).

Catered meals — Meals prepared and/or served by the child nutrition program through a written contract to a group, organization, child care or Head Start, including another school. Such meals are not claimed as reimbursable by the SFA.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) — A Federal food assistance program administered by the Alabama State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs that provides reimbursement for meals served to children and adults attending eligible child care/day care centers and homes.

Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) — Programs administered and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Afterschool Snack Program.

Choice menu — A breakfast or lunch menu that provides multiple, creditable menu items within one or more required meal components.

Claim for reimbursement — Request made to the Alabama State Department of Education (SDE accounting) for reimbursement of program meals served.

CN Label (Child Nutrition Label) — A USDA labeling program that provides a special label for certain foods showing how the food item should be credited to meet menu plan requirements. For food-based menu planning systems, a CN label indicates a product’s component and quantity contributions to program meals. A CN label is not a statement of quality.
**Coach** — A process that involves teaching a person how to do something and encouraging him/her to continue to do it.

**Code of ethics** — The SFA’s approved statement of personnel responsibilities during the implementation of the procurement plan to assure fairness and prevent conflicts of interest.

**Commodity foods (donated foods)** — Agricultural food items made available by the USDA to participants of the Child Nutrition Programs.

**Competitive foods** — Foods sold to students at school during lunch periods in competition with the School Lunch Program. See also “Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value” which may not be sold in the foodservice area during the meal period.

**Complete application** — An application for a free or reduced-price meal that contains all the required information for making an eligibility determination.

**Component** — For food-based menu planning systems, one of the four food groups which comprise the reimbursable school lunch and school breakfast (milk, meat or meat alternate, fruits/vegetables, and grains/bread).

**Convenience food** — A purchased food item that has been prepared or partially prepared to decrease labor hours needed for preparation and/or service.

**Coordinated Review Effort (CRE)** — A Federally-prescribed review system used by the state agency to monitor school food authority programs.

**Corrective action plan (CAP)** — A plan developed by the school food authority to address Federal/State review findings, including those from CRE and School Meals Initiative (SMI) reviews.

**Cycle menus** — A series of menus that is repeated. Such menus are advantageous for forecasting, purchasing, scheduling, and other management functions.

**D**

**Danger zone** — The range of temperature between 40° F and 140° F where rapid and progressive growth of disease-causing organisms can occur in potentially hazardous foods including milk or milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, or foods containing any of these as ingredients.

**Debarment/suspension** — An action or sanction, as outlined in Federal regulations, placed on companies or individuals for cause that restricts their participation as a supplier or vendor. SFAs are required to obtain certification from potential vendors regarding debarment/suspension.
**Diet prescription** — An individualized, approved list of allowable and unallowable foods for a student with special dietary needs, as provided by a recognized medical authority or practitioner.

**Direct certification** — The process of establishing a student’s categorical eligibility for benefits by obtaining documentation directly from the state or local Food Stamp or Family Assistance office. The documentation states that the children are from households currently receiving Food Stamps or Family Assistance benefits. Households determined eligible for meal or milk benefits through direct certification are not required to submit a free and reduced-price application to the school.

**Disposable ware** — Single-service products made of paper, plastic, or styrofoam, including plates, cups, bowls, trays, and flatware. Also included may be straws and paper napkins. Also called disposables.

**Department of Education** — DOE or SDE (Alabama State Department of Education)

**E**

**Economic unit** — A group of related or unrelated people who share housing and/or all significant income and expenses of its members.

**Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual (FNS-274)** — A USDA publication (the green book) providing detailed guidance for eligibility determination.

**Eligibility status** — The level of benefits a student is approved to receive, either free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

**Expenditures** — Expenses or costs to operate the program including salaries and wages, employee benefits, purchased food products, donated commodities, food production supplies, general supplies, purchased services, property operation and maintenance, miscellaneous, capital outlay, indirect costs, and fund transfers-out.

**F**

**Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)** — Also known as the Federal Wage and Hour Law. A measure enacted by the Congress of the United States in 1938 to eliminate labor conditions injurious to the health and efficiency of workers and unfair methods of competition based on conditions. It provides for a minimum wage.

**Family Assistance** — Any individual or group of individuals currently certified to receive assistance under the Family Assistance (FA) Program in a state where the standard of eligibility for FA benefits does not exceed the income eligibility guidelines for free meals or milk benefits. An older term is Aid to Families with Dependent Children.
Federal Register — Document that provides a uniform system for making available the public regulations (proposed, interim, and final) and legal notices issued by Federal agencies. It can be accessed through the Internet.

FIFO — First in, first out method of stock rotation.

Financial report — Financial statements, including notes, necessary for the fair presentation of the financial position and results of the operation of an entity.

Fiscal year (FY) — The Alabama state fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30. The Federal fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30.

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) — A unit of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that administers the following Programs: Child Nutrition; Food Stamp; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and Food Distribution.

Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office (FNSRO) — One of six regional offices in the United States. The Southeast FNSRO is located in Atlanta, Georgia.

Food item — 1. Generally, any food or combination of foods. 2. One of five required foods for a reimbursable lunch using food-based or traditional menus: meat/meat alternate, milk, grains/bread, and two servings of fruits or vegetables or a combination of both.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value — Categories of foods defined in the Federal regulations which may not be sold in the foodservice area during the meal period. They include: 1) soda water (soft drinks); 2) water ices; 3) chewing gum; 4) certain candies — hard candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn.

Forecasting — Predicting the amount of food to prepare using historical data from production records.

Free and Reduced-Price Policy Statement — A statement of policy of the SFA including the meals served, prices charged, eligibility standards and criteria with exceptions, nondiscrimination practices for eligibility recipients, collection procedures, and income accountability.

G

H

HACCP — Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points, a system for monitoring the foodservice process to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. HACCP focuses on how food flows through the process from purchasing to service.

Household — A group of related or unrelated individuals who are not residents of an institution or boarding house, but who are living as one economic unit.
Income Eligibility — Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals that is based on the sum of the gross income and household size compared to the income eligibility guidelines (IEG) for either free or reduced-price meals.

Income eligibility guidelines (IEG) — Income ranges, based on household size, within which students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Guidelines are issued annually.

Inventory turnover rate — The number of times in a given time period when the dollar value of inventory is replaced. Best practice for child nutrition programs is inventory turnover of two to three times per month.

Just-in-time preparation — Timing the preparation of foods just in time to be served. Such preparation provides for the best quality and for maintenance of nutrient content. Similar terms include “batch cooking” and “cooking to the line.”

Meals per labor hour (MPLH) — Productivity rate used in the foodservice industry. It is calculated based on meal equivalents served per labor hour worked.

Menu item — 1. Generally, any food item or combination of food items that is on the menu. 2. One of three categories - milk, entree, or side dish - contained in a menu planned using the nutrient-standard menu planning system. A menu item may be a single food or a combination of foods, as defined by the menu planner for a particular menu.

Multiple menus — More than one menu. Typically, each menu is offered on a separate service line or at a different service station. Each multiple menu may also be a choice menu.

National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) — A national center funded by USDA to provide education, research, and resources for the operation and management of Child Nutrition Programs. (Phone: 800-321-3054)

Nutrient analysis — An evaluation of the nutritional content of foods using a computer with a USDA-approved software program.

Nutrient standards — Requirements of Federal regulations for planning and analyzing menus to meet established nutrient criteria.

Nutrition education — A multidisciplinary program by which scientifically valid information about foods and nutrients is imparted in a manner that individuals receiving
such information will understand the principles of nutrition and seek to maximize their well-being through food consumption practices.

**Nutrition Education and Training Program (NET)** — A USDA program originally funded in 1978 that provides nutrition education and training for all populations served by Child Nutrition Programs.

**O**

**Offer versus serve** — Provision of the reimbursable meals program under which a student may select fewer than all the required menu items.

**On-site preparation** — Food prepared in the school kitchen where it is to be served.

**Operating days** — Days when school meals are served.

**Other costs** — All other costs except food and labor. Such costs generally include disposable ware, chemicals, supplies, and services.

**P**

**Paid meals** — Meals sold to students who are not eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Paid meals are reimbursed at an annually, Federally-prescribed rate.

**Participation** — Number of students taking part in the Child Nutrition Program, i.e. accepting or purchasing reimbursable meals.

**Perpetual inventory** — An inventory system where the level (number) of the units of a product on hand on any date may be obtained directly from records, without resorting to physical inventory.

**Physical inventory** — A regularly scheduled physical count of products on hand, showing quantities, descriptions, including units of measure and price, and value of property or products.

**Plate waste** — Food served to but not eaten by students (food thrown away).

**Point of choice** — The locations in the service area where customers select their foods.

**Point of sale** — The point at which the food and beverage is transferred to the customer and the point at which the determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable breakfast or lunch has been served to an eligible student.

**Post-costing** — A method of costing after a meal has been served to include food cost for all foods used in production of the meal.
**Pre-costing** — A method of costing standardized recipes, convenience products (or menus) before preparation in order to determine how the menu item fits in the budget or average food cost for the meal.

**Processing contract** — Agreement entered into by a state or school food authority to turn commodity foods into another or similar product, e.g. ground beef into hamburger patties.

**Procurement** — The process by which products are obtained for the production of school meals. This includes purchasing, receiving, storage and inventory functions.

**Procurement plan** — The plan approved by the school board that details the procedures the school system will use to comply with all local, State, and Federal procurement regulations. The plan must address competition, comparability, documentation, and code of ethics.

**Procurement standards** — Guidelines for the procurement of supplies, equipment, and services by Federal assistance programs.

**Product movement** — The movement of products from the distributor to school sites or from the district warehouse to school sites.

**Production methods** — Descriptions of the methods used to prepare meals, such as scratch cooking, convenience product reheating, or rethermalization, as in cook-chill.

**Production schedule** — A daily work schedule that assigns job tasks for the production of a specific menu. The schedule should include a start time, end time, and a time standard (how long the task should take to complete).

**Profit and loss statement** — Statement of Revenue and Expenditures reflects the financial results of the operation of the program for a given period of time.

**Purchase system** — A system of purchasing to achieve competition and comparability by the use of purchasing methods, contract management, and other activities to get desired products at the lowest price.

**Q**

**Quality score card** — A tool for evaluating the quality of a prepared menu item before it is placed on the service line. See *Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals* for a variety of quality score cards.

**R**

**Records maintenance** — Records and documentation must be maintained in files for four years plus the current year for a total of five years.

**Registered dietitian** — A nutrition professional who has completed a prescribed curriculum leading to a B.S. degree, completed a prescribed practice in a dietetic internship
or other approved program, successfully passed a registration exam, and maintains required
continuing education.

**Regulations** — Federal requirements open to public comment which are found in the
Federal Register and then permanently published in the Code of Federal Regulations. Title 7
of the Code of Federal Regulations includes parts that relate directly to Child Nutrition
Programs:

- 7 CFR Part 210 National School Programs
- 7 CFR Part 215 Special Milk Program for Children
- 7 CFR Part 220 School Breakfast Program
- 7 CFR Part 225 Summer Food Service Program
- 7 CFR Part 226 Child and Adult Care Food Program
- 7 CFR Part 227 Nutrition Education and Training Program
- 7 CFR Part 240 Cash in lieu of Commodities
- 7 CFR Part 245 Determining Eligibility for Free/Reduced Price Meals
  and Free Milk in Schools
- 7 CFR Part 250 Food Distribution Program

Current Child Nutrition regulations are available at:
http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html

**Reimbursable meal** — Combinations of food items served to students at breakfast and
lunch that meet either nutrition standards and calorie levels or the meal pattern specified in
Federal regulations and priced as a unit.

**Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI)** — A public or nonpublic institution that
(1) maintains children in residence, (2) operates principally for the care of children, and (3) if
private, is licensed by the State or local government to provide residential child care services
under the appropriate licensing code. These include, but are not limited to, homes for
individuals who are mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed, and unmarried mothers and
their children, orphanages, temporary shelters for abused or runaway children, and juvenile
detention centers.

**Revenue** — Income received from State sources, Federal sources, other local sources,
student and adult meal sales, contract meal sales, other sales, miscellaneous other revenue
(rebates, sale of surplus equipment, etc.) interest, and fund transfer-in.

**S**

**State Administrative Expense Funds (SAE Funds)** — Federal funds paid to the state
agency according to an established formula for administration of Child Nutrition Programs.
The formula includes the reimbursement paid to school districts in the second preceding
year.

**Satellite food service** — A food delivery system where food is transported and served at a
different site than the preparation site.

**School Breakfast Program (SBP)** — The program under which participating schools
operating a nonprofit foodservice receive cash assistance in accordance with 7 CFR Part 220.
School food authority (SFA) — The governing body which is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate the program therein. The school system superintendent is typically the person authorized by the governing body to sign legal documents for the SFA.

School food service (SFS) — Term sometimes used to describe Child Nutrition Programs that operate in K-12 schools.

School Nutrition Association (SNA) — The professional association for individuals working in the school foodservice industry.

School nutrition program (SNP) — Term sometimes used to describe Child Nutrition Programs that operate in K-12 schools.

Section 4 funds — Federal funds appropriated for all lunches; usually called general assistance funds.

Section 11 funds — Federal funds appropriated for free and reduced-price meals; usually called special assistance funds.

Section 32 commodities — Commodities purchased by funds received by the Secretary of Agriculture from 30-percent of customs receipts (tariffs).

Serving area — The area in the cafeteria where food is served. A variety of methods of service may be used including self-serve, traditional line, plated meals, or pick-up items. Also called service area.

Severe Need Reimbursement — Reimbursement for breakfast paid to SFAs that served 40% of their lunches in the free or reduced-price category in the second preceding year.

Special Assistance Provision II — A Federal paperwork reduction program under which schools serve meals to all students at no cost to the student, but earn no additional Federal or State funds to do so.

Special needs students — Students who have a physical or mental impairment, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, that substantially limits one or more major life activities, who have a record of such impairment or who are regarded as having such an impairment.

Staff — A group responsible for the operations of a program.

Staffing pattern — A school plan that defines the number of employees needed based on participation in breakfast, lunch, a la carte service, and other meals. The staffing pattern should be based on defined school productivity goals or meals per labor hour.

Standard of Identity — Government standard for content, preparation, and labeling of a food. Standards of Identity dictate specific (and optional) ingredients a food must contain.
when a product is to be labeled or identified by a common product name. Standards for meat products are developed by the Department of Agriculture and for other food products by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**Standardized recipe** — A recipe that has been tested for quality and yield.

**State Agency (SA)** — The agency in the state that has jurisdiction over specific Federal Child Nutrition Programs, i.e. the Alabama State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs.

**Statement of Revenue and Expenditures** — A statement that reflects the financial results of the operation of the program for a given period of time. It includes: 1) the total revenue available to the program by source; 2) a list of total expenditures by category; and 3) net excess or deficit (loss) to the program for the period of the statement.

**Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** — A USDA-funded program created to ensure that children in low-income areas continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast.

**TEAM Nutrition** — A program that provides schools with nutrition education materials for children and families and technical assistance materials for CNP directors, managers and staff.

**Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** — A Federal program that helps supplement the diets of low income Americans by providing them with healthful food at no cost.

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** — Federal agency which administers the Special Nutrition Programs, including National School Lunch Program; School Breakfast Program; Summer Food Service Program; Women, Infants, and Children; Child and Adult Care Food Program; Food Stamp Program; Food Distribution Program; and Nutrition Education and Training Program.

**Work simplification** — Performing job assignments in a more direct and efficient manner.
Additional Programs

Provisions 1, 2 & 3

Traditionally, school officials annually distribute free and reduced price meal applications to households of all enrolled children and make determinations of eligibility for free and reduced price meals on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). They also count the number of meals served by type (free, reduced price, and paid meals) at the point of service on a daily basis to claim Federal Reimbursement. In an effort to reduce paperwork and other administrative burdens at the local level, Congress incorporated into Section 11(a)(1) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 USC 1759a) three alternative provisions to the traditional requirements for annual determinations of eligibility for free and reduced price school meals daily meals count by type. These alternatives are commonly referred to as Provision 1, Provision 2, and Provision 3.

Alabama Procedures:

SFA’s desiring to participate in any of the provisions must follow a three step process.

1. Request permission from the State CNP director,
2. Have an audit to determine eligibility,
3. And establish base year percentages.

Additional 4-year extensions to Provision 2 and Provision 3 must be quested from the State CNP director.

The meal type for Provision 2 on the application/agreement Schedule A cannot be selected until the SFA is approved by the State agency.

Federal Guidelines:

The Federal regulations for Provision 1, 2, and 3 are found in 7 CFR, Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk in Schools. At the present time, Alabama does not have any schools on Provision 3. For more information visit http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/prov-1-2-3/Prov2Guidance.pdf

Provision 1 reduces the application burdens by allowing schools where at least 80 percent of the children enrolled are eligible for free and reduced price meals to certify children eligible for fee meals for a 2 year period. Schools continue to take daily meal counts of the number of meals served to children by type as the basis for calculating reimbursement claims.

Provision 2 requires that the school serve meals to participating children at no charge but reduces application burdens to once every 4 years and simplifies meal counting and claiming procedures by allowing a school to receive meals reimbursement based on
claiming percentages. Additional 4-year extensions to Provision 2 are possible when certain conditions are met.

Provision 3 requires that the school serve meals to participating children at no charge but reduces application burdens and meal counting and claiming procedures by allowing a school to receive a comparable level of Federal cash and commodity assistance as the school received in the last year in which free and reduced price eligibility determinations were made, adjusted for enrollment, inflation, and operating days if applicable for a period of up to 4 years. Additional 4-year extensions to Provision 3 are possible when certain conditions are met.

Severe Need Breakfast

Section 201 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 amended section 5 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 addresses severe need. Section 5(d) provides the criteria for determining schools eligibility for severe need assistance under the School Breakfast Program.  

Schools must have served 40% or more of their lunches to free or reduced price students in the second preceding year in order to receive severe need assistance. Using information gathered from financial information submitted to the State Agency, severe need will be calculated for you. For more information visit the attached link.  
http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/memos/Severe%20need%20Assistance%20for%20the%20School%20Breakfast%20Program.pdf

Safety Net

Born during the Great Depression, but growing to maturity during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, food assistance programs have provided a safety net to help U.S. households purchase sufficient food. For economists, a safety net is a policy that ensures a minimum income, consumption, or wage level. Safety nets can be viewed as social insurance to help people through livelihood shocks and stresses, such as those caused by illness, unemployment, or job displacement.

The original intent of food assistance programs was to increase food access and reduce food insecurity. During the last few decades, food assistance programs, particularly the school meals programs and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), have also been promoted as a nutrition safety net offering access to essential nutrients and minerals.

In the school meals program safety net is defined as additional funding provided to schools that during the last school year served 60% or more of lunches as free or reduced priced.
Area Eligible Snack

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) now offers cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children after their regular school day ends. Afterschool snacks give children a nutritional boost and draw them into supervised activities that are safe, fun and filled with learning opportunities.

In order for a site to participate, the school district must run the NSLP and sponsor or operate the afterschool care program. Additionally the school district must sponsor or operate an afterschool care program which provides children with regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment.

In order to be reimbursed, the snacks must contain at least two different components of the following four: a serving of fluid milk; a serving of meat or meat alternate; a serving of vegetable(s) or fruit(s) or full strength vegetable or fruit juice; a serving of whole grain or enriched bread or cereal.

An afterschool care program site is "area eligible" if it is located at a school or in the attendance area of a school where at least 50 percent of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced price meals. For example, if a high school with less than 50 percent free or reduced price school enrollment is located in the attendance area of a middle school that has 50 percent or more of the enrolled children eligible for free or reduced price meals, then the afterschool care program located in the high school would be area eligible.

For more information on the Afterschool Snack Program visit
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Afterschool/default.htm

Seamless Summer

The Seamless Summer Option combines features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This option reduces paperwork and administrative burden, making it easier for schools to feed children from low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods and, for year-round schools, long school vacation periods (generally exceeding 2-3 weeks).

As of September 2006 schools will not be granted a school year extension. Therefore to operate programs outside of the traditional school year, the Seamless Summer Option should be used. A separate application must be submitted for the Seamless Summer Option (SSO).
School districts participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to apply for the Seamless Summer Option. Once approved through their governing State agency, school districts serve meals free of charge to children, 18 years and under, from low-income areas.

The same NSLP and SBP rules apply for meal service. Meals served are reimbursed at the NSLP and/or SBP “free” rates. Allowable meals may include breakfast, am snack, lunch, pm snack, and supper. Up to two types of meals per day can be reimbursed (three for migrant sites and camps).

The various types of sites allowed to participate in this option include:

- **Open sites**: all children eat free in communities where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free/reduced price school meals.
- **Restricted open sites**: sites that meet the open site criteria, explained above, but are later restricted for safety, control, or security reasons.
- **Closed enrolled sites**: may be in any community for an enrolled group of low-income children and meets the 50% criteria explained above. This excludes academic summer schools.
- **Migrant sites**: serving children of migrant families.
- **Camps**: residential or non-residential camps.

For more information visit [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Seamless_Summer.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Seamless_Summer.htm)
Application/Agreement

**Application** — Federal regulations require that each school system (School Food Authority — SFA, or Local Education Agency — LEA) make written application for all schools in which it desires to operate the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program. As of 1999, the Application/Agreement includes all programs: National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Receive Donated Commodities, After School Snack Program, Child Care/Head Start Program, Summer Feeding Program and Special Milk. The Application/Agreement must have all the information needed by the State Agency to determine eligibility. This is a permanent agreement that is kept on file by the State Agency.

**Agreement** — In addition to the Application, the school food authority is required to annually renew an Agreement with the State Agency that outlines its responsibilities for the operation of the program(s) as required by federal regulations.

In 1994, permanent Applications/Agreements were established to simplify the process. The permanent Application/Agreement for a school food authority must be updated annually. The Application/Agreement must be submitted to the State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs and approved 10 days prior to the beginning of program operations in the school system. It is the responsibility of the School Food Authority to submit all required documents by the due date to allow timely completion of SDE approval.

Beginning with the school year 2006-2007 the Applications/Agreements are completed online. The process involves the following steps:

1. A Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price Meals and Application/Agreement confirmation is distributed to SFAs. It is signed by the signature authority/bonded official (most often superintendent) and mailed to the State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs. (This is a one time step and will not be done every year.)
2. Once the hard copy agreement is received and conditional approval is granted, the signature authority/bonded official will receive a user name and password from CNP.
3. The signature authority/bonded official could then log on to the CNP Web site and assign other users.
4. The Application package is completed and submitted electronically to State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs.
5. The Application package is reviewed by the state staff and approval status assigned.
6. SFAs are notified of the approval status.

**File Copy**
Keep a copy of the approved Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price meals and Application/Agreement (Policy Check Sheet, Schedule A, SFA Officials, and Collection Procedures) for your file.
Complete directions for completing the Application/Agreement are found on the CNP Web site. [https://cnpforms.alsde.edu](https://cnpforms.alsde.edu)

**Amending the Application/Agreement**

If there are changes during the school year, the school food authority is required to request an amendment to their approved Application/Agreement. Some changes which require an amendment include:

- Addition or deletion of a School Lunch Program
- Addition or deletion of a School Breakfast Program
- Addition or deletion of an After School Snack Program
- Modifications to the school calendar

The Application/Agreement can be amended during the school year by revising the online application package and resubmitting to the State Agency for approval. After July 1, 2006 hard copy adjustments to the Application/Agreement will not be accepted. All amendments must be made online as submitted as a revision. Approval must be granted for *any additions/revisions before* reimbursement can be paid for meals or snacks provided through the program. Deletion of a program must be submitted and acknowledged by the State Agency *before claims maybe submitted* for the affected period of time.
Counting and Claiming

Approved Collection Procedures

There are a number of collection procedures that school systems can use to meet the requirements of an accurate meal count. SFAs choose the type of procedure that will be used in each of their schools. The collection procedure used must be approved by the SDE. Information on the collection procedure approved for each school in the system is included in the Collection Procedures form in the Application/Agreement completed yearly online. [http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/](http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/) Any changes to the collection procedure must be approved by SDE. The Collection Procedures page of the Application/Agreement gives broad definitions of each collection procedure. Additionally, each school should have a detailed description of how the approved collection procedure will be implemented. It is imperative that the collection procedure in actual use in the school is the same as the procedure approved by the SDE.

Training on Meal Counts, Consolidations, and Claims

All personnel involved in the meal count system must be adequately trained to perform their duties and responsibilities. Written records should be kept to document training. A review of these records can help the CNP director determine who may need training. Any new personnel or substitute personnel involved in the meal count/collection procedures should receive training prior to being given responsibility for the task. The CNP director can determine if other personnel need additional training, coaching, or technical assistance by observing procedures in use and asking questions.

Suggested Areas for Training

- Implementing the collection procedure as it is outlined in the Application/Agreement.
- Correctly operating any mechanical or electronic equipment used to determine the meal count.
- Recognizing a reimbursable meal and knowing the procedures to follow when the student *has not* selected a reimbursable meal.
- Using correct procedures to issue tickets, tokens, IDs, pin numbers, etc.
- Interpreting and using the information on tickets, tokens, IDs, pin numbers to accurately count, collect correct payments and record the meals by category.
- Using the up-to-date master roster to resolve meal eligibility questions.
- Dealing with lost, stolen, or misplaced tickets, IDs or pin numbers.
- Handling charged meals (non-revenue).
- Counting meals for visiting students.
- Completing reports of daily meal counts and daily cash collections.
- Correctly completing cash reconciliation.
- Maintaining security of cash, tickets, tokens, IDs, pin numbers, etc.
Replacing Lost and Stolen Tickets

Federal Guidelines
1. A minimum of three ticket replacements or special meal arrangements resulting from three lost or stolen tickets must be allowed each student within each school year.
2. The school must maintain a list of students who have reported missing meal tickets in the current school year and the number of occurrences for each student.
3. A written warning including an explanation that the student has repeatedly requested replacement tickets should be given (to) the parents and student prior to the refusal to allow ticket replacements for the fourth ticket.
4. The student may then be charged for a fifth and each subsequent meal ticket not to exceed the cost to the school district for a ticket.
5. Meals must always be provided to preprimary and young primary students or for any handicapped student who may be unable to take full responsibility for a meal ticket. *(FNS Instruction 765-7, Rev. 2, Handling Lost, Stolen, and Misused Tickets)*
6. Avoid overt identification of eligible students.

Local Policy for Lost and Stolen Tickets
1. A local policy should be developed which contains the above federal guidelines and communicates to students and parents how missing meal tickets will be handled.
2. A notice of this policy should be distributed to households at the same time applications are distributed.
3. Each system’s unique procedures must be clearly spelled out as to when replacement tickets or reissue of tickets will take place in order not to disrupt smooth operation of the program.

Charged Meals

- Cafeterias should not charge adult meals or a la carte items for students or adults.
- It is not recommended policy to charge meals of any type.
- Some principals may wish to set up a cash fund from sources other than Child Nutrition Program such as PTA, clubs, etc. The cash funds can be used to pay for students who have lost or forgotten their money. This money, or purchased ticket, must be “in hand” when the student goes through the service line.
- Elementary-age students who have lost or forgotten meal money may charge a meal with written authorization from the principal, or his designee. No child in grades K-3 may be denied a lunch meal.
- Records of all charges and repayments must be maintained. Charges must be collected by the end of the school year or made up from funds other than the Child Nutrition Program. Documentation of efforts to collect this money should be maintained.
Uncollected Charged Meals

Uncollected charged meals constitutes a bad debt and is unallowable. The school system must have a policy in place, which ensures the accountability for charged meals. Funds from some other source must be deposited into the CNP fund to cover uncollected charged meals. Nonpublic Local School Funds may be used. The school system may advocate a policy of providing an optional meal such as cheese sandwich, milk and fruit, etc. Alabama policy states that no child in grades K-3 may be denied a lunch meal.

Policy should include:
Topic: Charged Meals
Procedure: (the following questions should be addressed in the procedure)
1. Can meals be charged or will alternate meals be provided?
2. Can adults charge?
3. Can a la carte items be charged?
4. If alternate meals are provided, what will be included in the meal?
5. How many meals can be charged before alternate meals are provided?
6. How will the procedure for K-3 differ from grades 4-12? Or will they?
7. What methods will CNP use to recover these charges?
8. How will the charges be covered if they cannot be recovered?

Cash Reconciliation

- In order to reconcile cash you must be able to accurately count the number of free, reduced-price, and paid student meals, adult meals, and all extra sales. This must be done at the time and place the meals were served.
- Schools with extra sales may develop a method of keeping track of these sales which is suitable to their particular need.
- The actual amount of cash received each day may not necessarily be the same as the number of paid and reduced-priced meals would indicate. Potential income may be different from actual cash received. This should not be adjusted but should be recorded as an overage or shortage. Meals should be recorded when they are served and money should be recorded when it is received.
- Cash should be counted twice by separate persons before it is deposited. Cash should be deposited daily.

Security of Cash, Tickets, Tokens, IDs, Pin Numbers

- A system must be in place to safeguard cash, tickets, tokens, IDs, pin numbers, from loss, theft, and misuse.
- Avoid the use of theater type tickets or other tickets which fail to identify the owner. There must be some control which will prevent the re-use of a ticket during a meal service period. Cashiers must be provided with a list of withdrawn and/or lost tickets.
Provisions must be made for a safe, locked, secure location for cash, tokens and tickets. A responsible person or persons should be designated to verify the accuracy of monies received.

The cashier should count monies at the close of serving time, with a second designated person counting as a security measure. Monies from each line should be counted separately and then combined.

Monies should be taken to the bank immediately after count. The school employee making a deposit is responsible for making sure bank tellers are observed during money count. The school employee should initial any change to the deposit slip.

School districts have a blanket bond for money handlers.

Internal Controls for Accountability

How does the CNP director know when there are problems with meal counting systems? Internal controls are procedures an organization uses to make sure that their processes give the desired results. This means that there is some way to check each process and determine if it is working correctly or improvements are needed. This does not mean that the person responsible for the initial action is at fault, untrustworthy, or incapable of performing his assigned job.

Good internal procedures are a part of every business operation. It is important that each member of the Child Nutrition Program team understands the purposes of internal controls. It is also important that when problems are identified they are addressed and steps are taken to correct and prevent them in the future. Some of the internal controls listed below are requirements and some are a part of good management. Each CNP director may identify other internal controls that are needed.

Internal Control: Second party reviews of Free and Reduced-Price Meal applications and rosters at time of approval and periodically during the year (requirement)

This internal control is a requirement. The person responsible for second party reviews is listed in the approved Application/Agreement.

Internal Control: Ongoing observations and periodic monitoring of the meal count system including cashiering procedures and review of meal count records.

The CNP director can often spot potential problems during routine visits to schools by watching cashiers. Cashiers may initially be uncomfortable with someone observing, but it is the best way to determine if there are problems. If the director makes a habit of observing the meal count procedures when visiting a school, the cashier will become more comfortable. This will help the director identify where training or technical assistance is needed. When problems are noted, technical assistance, coaching, or additional training should be implemented to correct the problem. The problem should be addressed with the persons responsible for the supervision of the program, for
Certification Qualifications for CNP Directors

290-080-030-.05 Supervision and Administration. A school district approved to sponsor food service programs under the National School Lunch Act, Regulation 7 CFR Part 210, shall be eligible provided all the following conditions are met:

1. A Child Nutrition Program certified director is employed.
2. A Child Nutrition Program director shall hold as a minimum, a bachelor’s degree. The director shall meet the qualifications for Child Nutrition Program director certification as prescribed by 290-080-030-.06. In the event an acceptable candidate meeting the educational requirements is not available, the school board may employ a director with a bachelor’s degree in another field on the condition that the educational requirements for a Child Nutrition Program director be met within three (3) years from date of employment. A director so employed who fails to meet the education requirements within the prescribed time limits shall not be continued in employment as the Child Nutrition Program director. A Child Nutrition Program director employed prior to July 1, 1994, shall be exempt from the requirement contained herein.
3. Each manager of a food service operation at the site level shall have at least a high school equivalency diploma and three (3) years school food service or related work; provided that in the event an acceptable candidate meeting the educational requirement is not available, the school board may employ a manager on the condition that the educational requirement be met within one (1) year from date of employment. A manager so employed who fails to meet the educational requirement within the prescribed time limits shall not be continued in employment as a Child Nutrition Program manager. Managers employed by a district prior to July 1, 1994, shall be exempt from the requirements contained herein.

Author: Janice S. Wood
History: New 6-9-94

290-080-030-.06 Qualifications for Child Nutrition Program Director Certification. In order to meet the certification requirements for a Child Nutrition Program Director the following must be met:

1. Hold, as a minimum, an earned bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited senior institution of higher education in Foods and Nutrition, Food Service Management, or Home Economics (with a minimum of four (4) courses in foods and nutrition).
2. Verify a minimum of 1400 clock hours of compensated food service management, or an acceptable alternative to be approved by the State Superintendent of Education, to include, but not limited to, supervisor and/or administrative experience attained within five (5) years immediately preceding the date of application.
3. Provisional Requirement. Hold an earned bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited senior institution of higher education in any subject area other than the ones identified and complete the following educational requirements for certification within three (3) years from the date of employment:
   a. A minimum of nine (9) semester hours or twelve (12) quarter hours in foods and nutrition;
   b. A minimum of three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours in Quantity Food Production and three (3) semester or four (4) quarter hours in Quantity Purchasing; and
   c. A minimum of three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours in personnel management and three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours in accounting.
4. Professional Development. A minimum of fifteen (15) clock hours or approved professional development per year is required for certificate validity. The Alabama State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs will make the final decision on the approval of professional development activities.

Author: Janice S. Wood
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. (1975), §16-3-11 through 12, 16-3-19.
History: New 6-9-94
example, the manager or the principal/director. It is important that CNP directors use good coaching techniques when they observe a problem.

**Internal Control: Second party review of all consolidations of meal counts.**

Errors in consolidations of meal counts may be due to errors in addition or a transposed number. Always train each person to make calculations twice to check themselves to avoid making an error. This should be done by the person completing and by the person reviewing.

**Internal Control: Complete edit checks for potential over claims (requirement).**

School districts are required to complete edit checks daily and monthly prior to the submission of a monthly claim for reimbursement. **Edit checks are mathematical processes that compare the monthly and daily lunch counts against data to assist in the identification of lunch counts in excess of the number of free and reduced-price lunches served each day to children eligible.** These calculations help identify “potential over claims.” SFAs are required to have a system for following up on lunch counts when it appears that there is a likelihood of lunch counting problems or potential over claims. The edit check is completed for each school in the district. [http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/Forms/EditCheckforMonthlyClaim.xls](http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/Forms/EditCheckforMonthlyClaim.xls)

**Internal Control: Local review at a minimum of one time per year (requirement under federal regulations).**

Federal regulations require that school food authorities with more than one school must perform an on-site review of the lunch counting and claiming system at each school at least one time per year. This review must take place before February 1 of each school year. If problems are found, the SFA is required to ensure the school implements corrective action. A follow-up review must be made within 45 days to determine if corrective action resolved the problem. The on-site review “shall ensure that the school’s claim is based on the counting system authorized by the state agency” and “that the counting system, as implemented, yields the actual number of reimbursable free, reduced-price and paid lunches, respectively, served for each day of operation.” A copy of these forms are found on the School Nutrition Web page under forms.
Be Prepared for the CRE Review

CRE is the acronym for Coordinated Review Effort. The best way to be prepared for a CRE is to make sure that your system has good accountability procedures in place every day of operation.

- A three-year cycle is used to review school systems. Each year the SDE will provide detailed information and training for those systems scheduled for a review.
- The resource shown below contains useful information on CRE reviews. [http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/FinMgmt/FinMgmtForms/PreparationForACRE2008.pdf](http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/FinMgmt/FinMgmtForms/PreparationForACRE2008.pdf)
- All schools are not reviewed. The number of schools selected for review within the system is based on specific data.
- A standard review form is used to ensure that all critical areas are reviewed using the same process and criteria for each selected school.
- Records and procedures are reviewed for specific time periods including the “review month” and the “day of review.”
- The process is divided into the following areas:
  1. Critical Areas: Eligibility certification, counting and claiming and food items
  2. General Areas: Free and reduced-price meal policy, meal patterns, civil rights, monitoring and reporting, and record keeping.

**Critical Areas:**

**Performance Standard No. 1:** All free, reduced-price, and paid lunches claimed for reimbursement are served only to children who are eligible for free, reduced-price, and paid lunches, respectively, and are counted, recorded, consolidated, and reported through a system that consistently yields correct claims.

**Performance Standard No. 2:** Lunches claimed for reimbursement within the school food authority contain food items/components as required by program regulations.

CRE

Check Your Procedures

**Do you:**
- Approve each child’s eligibility for free or reduced price-meals correctly?
- Have a system to issue benefits and to update the eligibility of children approved for free and reduced-price lunches?
- Serve lunches that contain the required food items?
- Base claims for reimbursement on accurate meal counts taken, by category, at the point of service?
- Correctly record, consolidate, and report meal counts on the claim for reimbursement?

If you answered “yes” to these questions, you should not have any critical violations.

Do you:
- Follow the procedures identified in your Free and Reduced-Price Meal Policy?
- Verify the correct number of applications by November 15th, adjust benefits if required, and keep verification records?
- Serve lunches that meet USDA nutritional and quantity requirements?
- Make sure that no child is denied benefits or discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability?
- Make sure on-site reviews of each school’s meal counting system are conducted by February 1?
- Check each school’s meal counts before submitting the claim for reimbursement?
- Submit reports and keep records as required?
- Price adult meals properly?
- Incur only allowable expenditures for CNP?
- Follow all federal and state procurement procedures?
- Adhere to the requirements for the School Breakfast Program?
- Adhere to regulations governing the use of USDA commodities and keep accurate inventory records?

If you answered “yes” to these questions, you should not have any general area violations.
CNP Director’s Responsibilities in Alabama School System

The major responsibilities of the CNP director in a school system are listed below. These responsibilities should be viewed as minimum requirements necessary for the operation of a system Child Nutrition Program to meet federal and state requirements. Competencies of directors have been delineated by the National Food Service Management Institute and provide more detail in all areas, including those areas necessary for meeting quality standards.

- Direct the Child Nutrition Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, local and state health ordinances, and school system policies.

- Plan and approve menus for school breakfast and school lunch to assure the nutritional integrity of the program and meet U.S. Department of Agriculture regulatory requirements.

- Approve free and reduced-price meal applications and verify their accuracy.

- Manage the free and reduced-price meal process including applications, verifications, rosters, benefit issuance, and updates.

- Purchase food and supplies in accordance with federal and state bid laws.

- Train and supervise CNP managers in areas of program management and meeting nutritional requirements.

- Assist administrative personnel in determining staffing requirements for each school cafeteria and be involved in hiring of CNP personnel for the school system.

- Plan and direct training for all CNP personnel in the school system.

- Plan nutritious, appealing menus in cooperation with CNP managers that meet the requirements of the selected USDA menu planning option.

- Ensure production records and work schedules are planned and completed properly.

- Establish a centralized equipment replacement and maintenance program for all schools. Include routine inspections, preparation of bids, scheduling of maintenance, and routine disposition of old equipment.

- Conduct a formal review of each school and complete the USDA review form which covers all aspects of the Child Nutrition Program (must be completed by February 1 of each year).

- Check, approve, and compile records from each cafeteria concerning meal counts, inventory, purchases, and food production.
• Develop and up-date yearly a district level Policy and Procedures Manual.

• Ensure a board approved Wellness Policy and HACCP Plan are in place for each site.


**Suggested Monthly Tasks**

1. Visit each school to complete the following tasks.
   • Begin the school visit in the principal’s office to alert school administration that you are in the school. If possible, spend a short time with the principal discussing the current status of the CNP.
   • With the CNP manager, go over production records for several days since your last visit. Look for completeness of the records, use of the records as a planning and forecasting document, and correct entries to document amounts served.
   • Walk through the kitchen during production to observe how CNP assistants are working. Notice the extent to which individuals are working according to the posted production schedule and work schedule.
   • Observe how cooks are using standardized recipes and directions for finishing convenience foods.
   • When the manager and employees taste test foods before the service line opens, participate in the taste testing. Emphasize the necessity of meeting quality standards.
   • Go into the storeroom, refrigerator, and freezer to review appearance, sanitation, and maintenance of the temperature log.
   • Check the appearance and sanitation of the kitchen and cafeteria.
   • During meal service, observe how students move through the service line, how meal counts and collection procedures are handled.
   • Observe service on the line including portion control, temperature maintenance, and customer interaction.
   • Circulate among students and faculty during meal time to observe and obtain feedback on food quality and customer service.
   • Observe how the dish room operates during and after meal service.
   • Observe plate waste and waste of paper supplies, condiments, etc.
   • Meet with the CNP manager privately to provide feedback on your observations. Make notes about positive and corrective feedback so follow-up can be provided on your next visit.
   • Provide coaching to help the manager make corrections and changes. If there are significant problems in an observed area, document the observations in a follow-up memo to the CNP manager and arrange a time to come back to the school to observe and discuss changes that have been made.
2. Hold monthly CNP manager’s meetings on a set day and time.
   • Announce the topics to be discussed in a brief memo to managers sent about one week before the meeting.
   • Involve the managers in sharing successes they had in the previous month.
   • Involve the managers in making decisions regarding identified problems.
   • Provide a short training program specifically for CNP managers. The training may be 15 minutes on how to answer the telephone or an hour session on completing a required form. Keep the training focused on one subject with an opportunity for the managers to practice using the new information.
   • If the managers are notified of changes, new responsibilities, or required actions during the meeting, send a follow-up memo to document the discussion and the expectations.

3. If cycle menus are not being used, plan menus by the 5th day of the month before they will be served.

4. Place grocery orders as needed.

5. Submit the Claim for Reimbursement within 30 days after the end of the month.
Eligibility Determination
For Free and Reduced-Price Meals

School systems (School Food Authorities — SFAs) participating in the SBP, NSLP, or Commodity Program are required to make meals available to all students in attendance who wish to participate in the program(s). In addition, they must make free and reduced-price meals available to students who are eligible.


In the process of implementing the programs, SFAs must ensure the following.
- Students are treated fairly
- Students receiving benefits are not segregated or overtly identified
- They are not discriminated against
- Households are given rights to appeal and have fair hearings
- Food is not withheld as punishment.

Because there are many responsibilities in managing eligibility determination for free and reduced-price meals, a CNP director has a variety of roles. Directors may have a direct role, such as Determining Official, Verifying Official (Second Party Reviewer), or Hearing Official or may be a technical advisor responsible for the training of personnel, providing technical assistance to other staff, or overseeing the processes. Regardless of the role, the CNP director must be familiar with the correct way to handle all the written records and tasks associated with managing the eligibility determination for free and reduced-price meal benefits. To be successful, the CNP director must become familiar with the guidance material and learn to use the resources to find the information needed.

Making the Public Announcement(s) About Benefits

The SFA is required to make the public aware of all Child Nutrition Programs operating in their school system. This is done through media releases (such as local newspaper) and letters that are sent home with the Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. Each SFA’s Free and Reduced-Price Meal Policy Statement includes two attachments that are used for the public announcements. Send Letter to Households, along with the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application to parents/guardians as early as possible in the school year, but not before July 1st. The Letter to Households must include the following.

- An Income Chart only for the reduced-price meal eligibility.
- Information identified for school systems that implement direct certification.

2. Send the Public Release to local news media, the employment office, and any major employers contemplating layoffs in the attendance area of the school before the beginning of the school year. The public release must contain the following.

- Both Free and Reduced-Price Meal Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG).
3. Document sending Public Release to newspaper, but not required to pay a publishing fee for the service.

**Processing Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications**

Each student who receives a free or reduced-price meal that is claimed for reimbursement must have a valid application on file with the SFA. This means that the application or direct certification must be complete and correctly approved.

**Exception:** Students who are approved by direct certification do not need to submit an application. A list of these students should be printed and filed with the applications.

1. **Determine benefits prior to processing applications**

At the beginning of the current school year, for a period of thirty operating days, meals may be claimed for reimbursement based on prior year applications. There must be a procedure in place to identify who is eligible under these provisions and to update files and rosters accordingly. It is recommended that this be done prior to the beginning of the school year.

Applications are also available in a variety of languages on the USDA Web site [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/FRP/frp.process.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/FRP/frp.process.htm)

- Notify households that prior-year status will be used for the first 30 days (or less if decided locally) and that they will have to reapply to continue benefits after that period of time.
- Obtain current year enrollment information from each school.
- Identify which students are eligible.
  - Students who have an approved application on file from the previous school year.
  - New students who are siblings of a student who has an application on file from the previous year. **Exception:** “a child’s categorical eligibility may not be extended to a sibling.” EGSMM/FNS-274. [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/eligibility_guidance.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/eligibility_guidance.pdf)
  - Previously approved students who transfer from one school to another school under the jurisdiction of the same SFA may also be claimed (they cannot be approved from other SFA’s). If the applications are not maintained in the central office, both the receiving school and the sending school must maintain a copy of the transfer student’s application.
• Update all rosters at each school prior to the first day of service to reflect the correct eligibility of the students enrolled in that school for the current year.
• Update processes (issuance of tickets, IDs, codes in computer programs) prior to the first day of meal service to reflect changes.
• At the end of the 30-day operating period, update all rosters and processes.

After the 30-day operating period, the student must have a new, approved application on file or appear on a direct certification roster to continue receiving free or reduced-price meals.

2. **Process the application within timeframes** (EGSMM/FNS-274)
   - Determine eligibility within 10 working days of receipt of an application.
   - Give priority to processing new students’ applications to provide free and reduced-price meals as quickly as possible.

3. **Determine if the application is complete** (EGMMS/FNS-274).
   - Review each incoming application to determine if it will be categorical or income eligible and to make sure it is complete according to the guidelines in EGMMS/FNS-274. **Incomplete applications cannot be approved.** Guidelines are specific for each type of application. The SFA determining official must not delay the approval of the application if the household fails to supply any information that is not required.
   - Return all incomplete applications that do not contain the signature of an adult household member.
   - Resolve other inconsistencies or questions concerning eligibility on incomplete applications before approving. Reasonable efforts should be made to obtain the information before denying the application. Information must only be obtained from the household or from a sibling who has a complete application on file.

   **Exception:** Family Assistance or Food Stamp information cannot be used from a sibling’s application because categorical eligibility is determined on an individual basis. Do not use other records available in the school. The SFA may return the application or contact the household by phone or in writing to obtain the needed information. Document the details of the contact and initial and date directly on the application. When using information from a sibling’s application, follow the guidelines in EGSMM/FNS-24.

   • Process applications according to type of information given: income or categorical.

4. **Use Income Eligibility to approve complete applications** (EGSMM/FNS-274)
Household members must provide information on income received during the month before applying, including monthly amount, where it came from (wages, welfare, etc.), and the name of the individual who received it.

- Compute the total current household income based on the information given on the application. The prototype application for free and reduced-price meals requests information on gross monthly wages (before deductions). The SFA determining official may assume that the amount entered on the face of the application is for that frequency unless the household has indicated otherwise on the application. However, if the income appears to be inconsistent with the frequency, the school official should follow-up.

- Convert incomes to a monthly amount if the frequency is cited as being other than a monthly figure. Use the information at the bottom of the Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals or in EGSMM/FNS-274. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/eligibility_guidance.pdf

- Use the information from EGSMM/FNS-274. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/eligibility_guidance.pdf as guidance in determining household size. Review the information under special situations to determine who is counted as a member of the household. For example, foster children are considered a “household of one.”

- Use the information from EGSMM/FNS-274. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/eligibility_guidance.pdf as guidance in determining household income. This includes information on what income must be reported, how income is to be reported in special situations such as seasonal work and self-employment, and what income is excluded.

- Compare the total amount of income and the household size to the current year Income Eligibility Guidelines to determine eligibility. If the income is at or below the income limits for free or reduced-price benefits, the application must be approved for free or reduced benefits, as appropriate.


- Complete the information at the bottom of the form.

  - Applications approved for benefits must include date approved, level of benefit for which the student is approved, and be signed or initialed by the determining official.

  - Applications denied for benefits must identify the reasons for denial. In addition, the record should also include the date of denial, the date the denial notice was sent, and the name of the determining official. These may be noted on the application or on a copy of the notification letter to parents.

  - If the SFA uses automated approval by computers to make eligibility determination, in lieu of signing every application, the determining official and verifying official (second party reviewer) can sign and date the computer print-out which shows the determinations made. The signature
on the print-out should indicate that the official has examined the results and concurs with the decisions made. Computer generated lists should have approval dates.

- Obtain verification (second party review) by the official named in the Policy Statement. This official must check the accuracy of each free and reduced-price application determination, sign and date the application or computer print-out indicating this has been completed.


Students from households that currently receive Food Stamps or Family Assistance are categorically eligible for free benefits. Approval of benefits for students who are categorically eligible may be determined from a complete application or by direct certification. If a complete application is submitted based on requirements for Family Assistance/Food Stamp, no further application information is required.

By 2007, school systems in Alabama must use Direct Certification information to determine categorical eligibility. Currently, the SDE e-mails the school system the information provided by DHR that can be accessed and cross referenced with local student databases. LEA’s should request this by zip code. There are additional requirements as shown in EFSMM/FNS-274, regarding approval by direct certification, documentation, notification of households, and distribution of applications to prevent overt identification.


Processing complete applications based on categorical eligibility:

A. Determine if there is an appropriate Food Stamp or Family Assistance number.

B. Resolve inconsistencies. Numbers may have been written incorrectly.

   Reasonable efforts should be made to obtain the appropriate Food Stamp or case number before denying the application. Family Assistance or Food Stamp information cannot be used from a sibling’s application because categorical eligibility is on an individual basis. The SFA may return the application or contact the household by phone or in writing to obtain the needed information. Document the details of the contact and initial and date directly on the application.

   - Approve the completed application if the number is appropriate.
   - Complete the information at the bottom of the form.
     - Applications approved for benefits must include date approved, level of benefit for which the student is approved, and be signed or initialed by the determining official.
     - Applications denied benefits must identify on the application the reasons for denial. In addition the record should also include the date of denial, the date the denial notice was sent, and the name of the determining official. This information can be documented on the “Notification Letter to Parent.”
If the SFA uses automated approval by computers to make eligibility determination, the determining official and verifying official (second party reviewer) can sign and date the computer print-out which shows the determinations made. The signatures on the print-out should indicate that the officials have examined the results and concur with the decisions made.

- Obtain verification (second party review) by the official named in the Policy Statement. This official must check the accuracy of each free and reduced-price meal application determination and sign and date the application or computer print-out indicating this has been completed.

6. Know what to do in special circumstances for households which fail to apply (EGSMM/FNS-274)  
A local school official can complete an application for a student known to be eligible if the household fails to apply. If this option is exercised, the school official must complete an application on behalf of the student based on the best household size and income information available. The source of the information must be noted on the application, initialed, and dated by the person completing. Names of household members, Social Security Numbers and signature of the adult household member are not required. The information is then used to make an eligibility determination. The household must be notified that the student has been certified and is receiving free or reduced-price benefits. This option should be used with care. It is intended for limited use in individual circumstances. It must not be used to make eligibility determinations for groups or categories of students.

7. Notify parents of application approval or denial (EGSMM/FNS-274)  
All households that complete an application must be notified of their eligibility status. The Notification Letter to Parents approved as a part of the SFAs Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price Meals is used for this purpose. Written notification for denied applications must give the reason for the denial of benefits. The notification must also advise the household of its right to appeal, give instructions on how to appeal, and include a statement that the household may reapply for free and reduced-price benefits at any time during the school year.

8. Follow approved procedures when an appeal is requested (EGSMM/FNS-274)  
Households can appeal the denial of benefits or the level of benefits for which they have been approved. The SFAs approved Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price Meals outlines the hearing procedures to be followed when an appeal is requested. These procedures must be followed.  
9. Review applications with temporary approvals at appropriate time intervals
(EGSMM/FNS-274)
Applications that report zero income, temporary Food Stamps or Family Assistance benefits, or temporary reduction in income due to such circumstances as layoffs, strikes, and short-term disability are approved on a temporary basis based on the information reported.
- Identify temporary income by source (such as unemployment compensation) or by notations on the application.
- Approve for 45 calendar days or a lesser appropriate time period depending on the household’s circumstances (example - if the application states the primary wage earner plans to return to work in two weeks, the application could be approved as temporary for two weeks).
- Keep these applications in a separate file to make it easier to review them.
- Contact the household at the end of the time period approved to see if the household’s circumstances have changed.
- Take appropriate action based on the information obtained in the contact. If there has been no change, the temporary approval can be extended for an additional 45 days or a lesser time period, if appropriate, due to the circumstances. If there has been a change, the SFA should send a new application so the household can reapply for benefits.

10. Review information on new applications submitted due to changes in household circumstances (EGSMM/FNS-274)
A household approved for benefits based on Family Assistance or Food Stamps must report when it no longer receives benefits for the child.
- Send new applications to households that no longer receive Family Assistance or Food Stamp benefits. A new application must be completed to provide information needed to determine eligibility based on income.
- Review the information, determine the eligibility based on income, and notify the household.

Maintaining Files and Rosters for Students Approved for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

Current applications must be on file and must be readily retrievable by school.
(Reference - EGSMM/FNS-274)
- Maintain applications in a filing system that makes them easy to locate when needed. A suggested filing system is shown below.
  1. Active Free Applications
  2. Active Reduced-Price Applications
  3. Denied Applications
  4. Withdrawn or Transfer Applications
  5. Inactive Applications
6. Applications approved for Temporary Period

7. Verification

- Organize applications within each group in the same way. (Example: If applications are arranged in alphabetical order in one folder, arrange applications in all folders in alphabetical order.)
- Maintain a separate master list for students approved for free and a separate master list for students approved for reduced-price meals. These master lists are called rosters. The listing on the roster should correspond directly to the order in which applications are filed.
- Update rosters as changes occur (withdrawals, additions, changes in category). All changes should be dated to reflect when they occurred. An updated copy of the roster should be on hand at the point-of-service (in the cafeteria service line).
- Have the verifying official (second party reviewer) check the accuracy of the maintenance of the master rosters.
- Keep all applications, including those denied and inactive, on file for a minimum of four years after the end of the fiscal year to which they pertain. *It is a state requirement that records be maintained for the current school year and the four previous years, a total of five years.*
- Maintain applications required by an audit until all audit findings and issues raised by the audit have been resolved.
- Note changes in status and date of the change on the application and on the rosters used.
- Move the file to the withdrawn/transfer folder when a student withdraws and make a notation on the roster. Have records to support the transfers of students out of the school system. If the student returns, the application is placed back in the appropriate active folder and a notation is made on the roster. A new application is not required provided the information remains current and accurate.
- Move applications of students who drop out to the Inactive folder indicating date student became “inactive.”
Verification

Verification is a confirmation of eligibility for free and reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program. Verification must include either confirmation of income eligibility or confirmation that the child is included in a currently certified food stamp household or a TANF unit.

Section 105 of the Reauthorization Act amends the verification provisions in section 9(b)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. Effective July 1, 2005, new procedures are added to the requirement that LEA’s verify the eligibility of children in a sample of approved free and reduced-price school meal applications. Complete USDA guidance concerning verification can be found at http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/Manuals/CNPDirectorsManual/VerificationDocument.pdf

Definitions

Preliminary Review is a process where the initial determining official decides the status of the application.

Confirmation Review is a review designed to check the accuracy of the initial eligibility determination made in the preliminary review. This can not be the same individual that conducted the preliminary review. The conformation review must be conducted before applications are selected for verification.

Formal Follow-up is a requirement by USDA of households that fail to respond to the verification request. This contact can be made through the mail, by phone, by email, or through personal contact. Documentation should be made of any follow-up.

Non-Response Rate is a percentage of approved household applications selected for verification for which verification information has not been obtained by the LEA.

Direct Certification is the process by which LEAs certify households for free and reduced-priced meal by using data maintained by the local Food Stamp Program/TANF office without contacting the households. This will be required by all LEAs beginning with the July 2006 SY for LEAs of 25,000; July 2007 for LEAs of 10,000, and July 2008 for all LEAs. All LEA’s will be required to conduct direct certification by July 2008. The State Agency has contracted with Food Stamp Program/TANF to provide eligibility information. LEA’s should submit a list of zip codes to the State Agency. The State Agency will then provide them with a list of eligible students.

Direct Verification is the process under which LEAs verifying household applications approved for free and reduced-priced meals use data maintained by the local Food Stamp Program/TANF office, without contacting the household. A form is provided for this in the appendix of verification guidance from USDA (page 30). http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Reauthorization_Policy_04/Reauthorization_04/2005-09-21.pdf
**Error-Prone Applications** are defined by the act as those with income within $1200 of the annual limit or $100 of the monthly limit for free or reduced price meals. The equivalent thresholds for weekly, biweekly, and twice monthly incomes are determined by dividing the annual limit by the number of times per year the income is received. Therefore, the thresholds would be $23.08 for weekly income ($1200/52), $43.16 for bi-weekly income ($1200/26) and $50 for twice monthly income ($1200/24). For administrative simplicity, an SFA may use rounded thresholds of $24 for weekly income and $44 for bi-weekly income when selecting error-prone applications. SFAs may not round the calculated thresholds down because that would exclude application which the statute defines as error-prone.

**Verification Deadlines**

- Applications should be in by October 1 so that a count of applications can be conducted to determine sample size for verification
  - Districts are encouraged to begin as early as possible, especially if it has been difficult to meet the deadline in the past.
  - Districts may request households to provide verification at the time of the application. If this procedure is used, processing of the application must not be delayed if the household does not provide the requested verification information.
  - When a district requests that the household provide documentation of income at the time of application, the district must then carry to completion verification of 100% of the applications on file.
  - Do not include in this count direct certification, Head Start, Even Start, designated homeless (evacuees), migrant and runaway students.
  - Households must provide written documentation describing the household’s circumstances when no income is indicated on the application.
- The count of free and reduced-priced meal eligible students will still be reported as of the last operating day in October.
- Verification should be completed by November 15.
- Verification report should be submitted to the State Agency in February.

**Verification Procedure**

1. **Determine sample size** The basic sample size is the lesser of 3% of all approved applications or 3,000 applications. Applications must be error-prone applications. If enough error-prone applications are not on file, additional applications should be randomly selected to meet the sample size requirements.
a. In lieu of the basic sample size, LEAs may elect to use one of two alternative sample sizes if the following conditions are met and agreed upon by the State Agency.
   i. The non-response rate for the preceding school year is at least 10% below the verification non-response rate for the second preceding school year
   or
   ii. For LEAs with more than 20,000 children approved by application (excluding direct certification) for free or reduced-price school meals as of October 1, their non-response rate for the preceding school year is at least 10% below the verification non-response rate for the school preceding school year.

b. The alternate sample sizes set forth in the law for LEAs meeting the above criteria are the same options established in current regulations:
   i. The lesser of 3% of all approved applications or 3,000 approved applications selected at random
   or
   ii. The lesser of 1% of all applications selected from error-prone applications or 1,000 error-prone applications, plus the lesser of ½ of 1% of or 500 approved applications that provided a case number (in lieu of income information) showing participation in food stamps, a state TANF program, or FDPIR

2. Notify household of selection. Notification must include the following.
   http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/2007FreeandReducedPriceSchoolMealsApplication.doc
   a. Household must provide social security number for each adult member or indicate none.
   b. Types of acceptable information to confirm income
   c. Documentation to calculate a full month’s income
   d. Information must be submitted by a specified date
   e. The Privacy Act must be included
   f. A toll free telephone # of a knowledgeable school official must be provided

3. Documentation can be from one of three sources.
   a. Written evidence received directly from the household. Documentation must show current income, meaning income received by the household anytime during the full month before the application was received up until the verification deadline. Gross income (all money earned before any deductions such as income taxes, insurance premiums, bonds, or charitable contributions) should be used for those employed by someone else. Overtime is included in income only if overtime is received on a regular basis. Net income (actual cash income, not including assets, minus operating expenses) should be used for self-employed business persons or farmers
i. Written evidence required for a foster child’s application should include one of the following. (a) School officials should contact the foster parents and ask for the name, agency, and phone number of the social worker assigned to the foster child. A phone call to the social worker confirming the child’s status as a foster child and the amount of money designated by the agency for the child’s personal use is sufficient verification. Document the phone conversation by identifying the social worker, agency, phone number, status of the child and child’s personal use income or (b) Ask the foster family for a copy of the written communication between the foster family and the placement agency in which the status of the child and the financial arrangement is stated. If the family is unable to provide such information, a documented phone call to the placement agency to confirm the child’s status and income should be made.

ii. Documentation of earning or wages
   b. Agency record such a food stamp/TANF office. LEAs should request the most recent month available. LEAs should submit a list of names and food stamp/TANF case numbers to the local food stamp or welfare office. The local office will then confirm whether the households are currently receiving food stamps or TANF benefits. Allow 30 days for the local agency to respond.
   c. Collateral contacts such as person outside the household who can confirm income or food stamp/TANF status. This should only be used when adequate written evidence is not provided.

4. A formal follow-up is required for all households that fail to respond to the verification request. All contacts must be documented.

5. Verification is complete when income documentation or proof of food stamp/TANF participation confirms the household’s eligibility or when the termination/reduction notice is sent to the household if documentation is not received or eligibility is not confirmed.

6. The verification summary report is completed and electronically submitted to the State Agency in February.
   http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/VerificationDownLoad.html

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All SFAs which select at least one application for verification based on error-prone criteria should report the type of verification used as “focused.” Any SFA what selects its entire verification sample at random, either because it has no error-prone applications or because it qualifies for the alternative sample size and chooses the 3000/3% option should report the type of verification used as random. SFAs may still choose to verify all applications and indicate this choice in Item 6 on the summary report.

Changes in Eligibility Status

When verification results in a change in eligibility status for a household, a reduction of benefits notice must be sent to parents within 10 calendar days of the verification. An increase of benefits must be implemented within 3 days and the household notified. Changes in the status must be documented and records kept in a retrievable form.

Households no longer need to complete an application or inform the LEA if the income increases or decreases $50/month or $600/year. Once approved, an application qualifies for benefits all year unless the status changes due to verification efforts.

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When a household appeals, meal benefits originally provided to the child must continue until a final determination is made. If the household does not appeal benefits are changed at the end of the 10 days notification period.

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http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/VerificationDownload.html

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If a hearing is required, the district’s policy statement and hearing procedure must be followed.
Menu Planning Systems

Menu planning systems for healthy school meals include four options. These optional systems and their review through nutrient analysis are referred to as the USDA School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI). The goal of SMI is to provide healthy school meals that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

1. Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning: The Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning approach requires specific food group components in specific amounts for specific age/grade groups. It is the approach that schools have used since the National School Lunch Program was established in 1946 and the School Breakfast Program in 1966.

   *(A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals, Chapter 2)*

2. Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning: Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning is similar to the Traditional approach, it requires specific food group components in specific amounts. However, there are different established age/grade groups. And, there are increased servings of Vegetables/Fruits and Grains/Breads. This approach uses meal patterns designed to help ensure consistency with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

   *(A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals, Chapter 2)*

3. Nutrient Standard Menu Planning NSMP takes a Nutrient-Based approach to menu planning. Instead of working with specific food components in specific amounts, the menu planner works with menu items. This approach requires a nutritional analysis of foods used in school meals prior to the menus being served. To do this, schools must use USDA-approved computer software. When averaged over a school week, the menu nutrient analysis must meet specified targets for nutrients, calories, and Dietary Guidelines recommendations.

   *(A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals, Chapter 3)*

4. Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning Assisted NSMP is exactly like NSMP except an outside consultant or other agency performs all of the functions of menu planning and nutrient analysis. If you do not have computer technology that will allow you to use NSMP, you may wish to choose Assisted NSMP.

   *(A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals, Chapter 3)*
**Nutrition Goals of Menu Planning Systems**

Regardless of the chosen menu planning system, healthy school meals should meet the following nutrition goals.


- Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA).
  - RDA for breakfast
  - RDA for lunch

- Age appropriate calorie goals.

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- Nutrient standards for calories, calcium, iron, protein, vitamin A, and vitamin C.

- No more than 30-percent of calories from fat with less than 10-percent from saturated fat over the course of a week.

- Reduce cholesterol and sodium and increase dietary fiber (a goal without specific target amounts).

**Additional Healthy School Meals Goals**

1. Incorporate culinary principles of taste and presentation.

2. Focus on customers served, incorporating regional, cultural, ethnic, and other preferences.

3. Provide safe meals for students.

4. Make meals accessible to all children.

5. Provide a learning laboratory for healthy food choices.

6. Assist in increasing appreciation for food origins, cultural food history, variety of foods, and relationship to environment and agriculture.

7. Support and teach the principles of the “social meal.”

8. Provide training in the preparation and service of healthy, economical meals.

9. Serve meals in an encouraging environment with adequate time for students to eat.

10. Promote healthy food choices throughout the school as part of the school nutrition policy.
Dietary Guidelines Applied to School Meals for Children

Dietary Guidelines for Americans are designed to help Americans choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives, and reduce chronic disease risks.  [http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/)

Food Guide Pyramid -- A Teaching Tool

The Food Guide Pyramid is a visual teaching tool designed to help individuals make healthy food choices. By selecting a variety of foods from the five food groups displayed on the Food Guide Pyramid, anyone can achieve a healthful diet. The SMI menu planning options have been designed to be consistent with the Food Guide Pyramid with increased emphasis on serving grains and breads and vegetables and fruits in school meals.  [http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/kids-pyramid.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/kids-pyramid.html)

Competitive Foods and Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value


Detailed information on these two topics that address the nutritional integrity of the Child Nutrition Program can be found in the Appendix of A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals. The information below provides a summary of some important points. Since this is a regulatory area, the CNP director should be familiar with the details of the regulations and be prepared to explain them to school board members, the system superintendent, and school principals. Noncompliance with these regulatory requirements can result in sanctions.


7 CFR Sec. 210.11 Competitive food services states, “. . . State agencies and school food authorities shall establish such rules or regulations as are necessary to control the sale of foods in competition with lunches served under the Program.” Sale of foods of minimal nutritional value is prohibited. Sale of competitive foods may be allowed only if all income from the sale of such foods accrues to the benefit of the nonprofit school food service or the school or student organizations approved by the school.

Competitive foods means any foods sold in competition with the Program to children in food service areas during the lunch periods. 7CFR 210.11

Foodservice areas are “areas” on school premises where program meals are either “served” or “eaten.”

Sales of foods with minimal nutritional value such as carbonated beverages, hard candy, or chewing gum, is prohibited.

Nutrient Analysis for Menu Planning Systems

Nutrient analysis is used to evaluate the extent to which a school is meeting the USDA nutrient goals for the selected menu planning option. Nutrient analysis is done using USDA-approved nutrient analysis software programs.

NuMenus: For school systems using NuMenus, the school system must be able to complete the nutrient analysis internally. The nutrient analysis is done before the menu is served. During the review process, the State Agency checks procedures and data entry to assure that the nutrient analysis is done correctly.

Assisted NuMenus: Those systems using Assisted NuMenus will work with an outside consultant who analyzes the menus before they are served using approved software. The analysis process will be checked by the State Agency during the review process.

Food-Based Menus: School systems that use Food-Based Menus (Traditional or Enhanced) will have menus analyzed by the State Agency (Child Nutrition Programs, Alabama State Department of Education) during the review process. The school system should have adequate information for at least an estimate of how well the menus will meet the nutrition goals.

Nutrient analysis of menus requires that the menu planner have specific information available and certain requirements in place.

- Menus for the week being reviewed.
- Complete production records for the week being reviewed. The required food production records must be completed daily and must reflect all foods used and leftover for the meal.
- All standardized recipes used, including USDA as well as local recipes. Every menu item that contains more than one ingredient must have a written recipe. Any substitutions in recipes must be recorded.
- Manufacturer’s nutrition information of commercially processed foods used during the week being reviewed.
- Food product descriptions.
- Estimates of a la carte sales and adult meals which are part of the production record.
• Printout provided by the USDA-approved software for the week being reviewed when a school/system is conducting the analysis.
Offer versus Serve Provision (OVS)

Offer versus Serve is a provision of the federal regulations designed to reduce food waste by allowing students to choose only those foods which they intend to eat. Senior high schools are required to implement OVS for lunch. The system can choose whether to have OVS for junior high, middle, and elementary schools; however, this requires approval by the local board of education.

The Appendix in *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals* provides a detailed summary of the OVS requirements. In all menu planning systems, the lunch or breakfast must be priced as a unit. [http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Recipes/menuplan/09APPEN.pdf](http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Recipes/menuplan/09APPEN.pdf)

It is important that every school train students on how to select a reimbursable lunch/breakfast under OVS. Emphasize to CNP managers that it is always desirable for students to select and eat the complete, planned meal in order to obtain the benefit of nutrients planned for that meal.

**Offer versus Serve for Food-Based Lunches** (Traditional and Enhanced)
Students must choose at least three of the five required menu items offered.

**Offer versus Serve for School Breakfast**
Students must choose at least three of the four menu items offered.

**Offer versus Serve for NuMenus and Assisted NuMenus**
Students must be offered the complete, planned meal and must take a minimum number of food items. If the planned menu includes the entree, milk, and three additional menu items, the student may not decline more than two items. The student must take the entree and at least two other menu items.

Good Menu Planning Practices

Menu planning is one of the most important skills for a CNP director. *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals* (1998) provides detailed information on menu planning for each menu planning system. There are many excellent references in foodservice literature on basic menu planning principles.

Ten Steps to Success with the Menu Planning Process

1. Schedule a time to plan menus. Collect menu resources.
2. Think about where the school system is now and where you want it to go.
3. Determine a time period for the menu. Menus must be planned for a week. The *Menu Planner* provides a good summary of the advantages of a cycle menu. Cycle menus have been used traditionally in institutional cafeterias and are becoming widely used for schools.
4. Focus on the age or grade group(s) to be served.
5. Decide on the number of choices to be offered in each meal component.
6. Select the main dish (entree) for each day’s breakfast and lunch.
7. Select the other menu items to complement the main dish and meet the menu requirements.
8. Provide fluid milk choices.
9. Make sure the menu will meet nutrition goals.
10. Evaluate the planned menu using the checklist on the following page.

Source: *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*

**Evaluating Planned Menus**

The checklist below should be used to evaluate menus planned using any menu planning system. More detailed checklists for each menu planning system are provided in *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*,

**Checklist for Evaluating Planned Menus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foods Selected</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do the food choices have appealing colors and textures?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do the menus have foods with different shapes, sizes, and colors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do the breakfast and lunch menus complement each other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have you considered special events and promotions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have you incorporated seasonal foods and USDA commodities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Have you introduced any new food items?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staffing and Equipment in the School(s)</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Can some preparation be done ahead?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is the workload balanced among employees?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Can meals be prepared and served with available equipment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Are oven and surface-cooking areas adequate for items planned?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Have food and labor costs been considered?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Do high and low cost foods balance in the menus for a week?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipes and Production Records</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Have you specified the standardized recipes, preparation techniques, and processed foods to be used?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Have you listed the projected servings for each item?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Are portion sizes stated in correct amounts?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Have you listed on the menu production record the condiments to be served?

Special Considerations
17. Is a vitamin C food included three to four times a week?
18. Are vitamin A foods included two to three times per week?
19. Are iron-rich foods included each day?
20. Are whole-grain products offered at least once a week?
21. Are low fat entrees and lower in fat milk choices (such as low fat and nonfat) offered daily?
22. Are fresh fruits and vegetables offered on several different days?

Meal Requirements
23. Do menus meet the minimum requirements of the particular menu planning system being used?

Snacks for After School Care Programs

http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Afterschool/factsheet.htm
SFAs with After School Care Programs can receive reimbursement for one snack per child, per day for children up to 18 years of age and children with disabilities. If the child’s eighteenth birthday occurs during the school year, reimbursement can be claimed for that child’s snack through the end of the school year. The programs must meet certain requirements to be eligible. Under the NSLP, a SFA must operate the lunch component and the school system must sponsor or operate an after school care program which meet the following guidelines.

a) Provides children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment
b) Includes educational or enrichment activities

Note: Under no circumstances can organized athletic programs engaged in interscholastic sports be approved as after school care programs.

The school must
- operate the program, but does not have to use the school’s personnel or regular school facilities
- retain final administrative and management responsibility for the program and site
- assume full responsibility for meeting all program requirements, however, the school can arrange with another organization to perform the day-to-day functions
- meet state and local health and safety standards
- maintain a roster or sign-in sheet as means of determining which children were present on any given day
A school food authority who is already participating in the NSLP or the CACFP must amend its Application/Agreement after the SDE approves the SFA’s application to participate in the After School Snack Program.

All school systems have been provided with a packet of information on the After School Snack Program. For copies of this packet or more detailed information on the After School Snack Program, contact the School Section of Child Nutrition Programs at (334) 242-8228.

**Snack Content Pattern**

Snacks must contain two of the following components. **Note milk and juice may not be served together to meet the two components.**

- Fluid milk 1% or less - ½ pint / 8 ounces
- Meat or meat alternate - 1 ounce
- Juice, fruit, or vegetable - ¾ cup
- Bread and/or cereal - enriched or whole grain bread - 1 slice or credited weight or cereal: cold dry ¾ cup or hot cooked ½ cup.

**Meal Substitutions for Students with Special Dietary Needs**

This section provides a summary of federal regulations for providing meals at school for children with special dietary needs. All school systems in Alabama have been given a manual and video tape on how to manage this requirement for the Child Nutrition Programs.

*CARE: Special Nutrition for Kids*

(1993, Revised 1995)

Alabama State Department of Education,
Child Nutrition Programs

**Civil Rights:**

7 CFR part 15b.25 (d)(1) “. . . (school which received federal reimbursement for meals) shall serve special meals, at no extra charge, to students whose handicap restricts their diet.”

**National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:**

7 CFR 210.10(i) and 7 CFR 220.8(f) “Schools shall make substitutions in foods listed in this section for students who are considered handicapped . . . and whose handicap restricts their diet. Schools may also make substitutions for non-handicapped students who are unable to consume the regular lunch (and breakfast) because of medical or other special dietary needs.”

Diet Prescription

7 CFR 210.10(l) and 7 CFR 220.8(f) “Substitutions will be provided for a child with a handicap or disability only when supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician.” This statement is required yearly, but should be updated when changes occur.

The statement should include:
A. The child’s disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the diet;
B. The major life activity affected by the disability; and
C. The food or foods to be omitted from the child’s diet and the food or choice of foods that may be substituted (i.e. texture changes and food substitutions).

For a child without a disability, but with a chronic medical condition that requires a special diet, a statement signed by a recognized medical authority must be provided.

This statement must include:
A. Identification of the medical or other special need which restricts the child’s diet; and
B. The food or foods to be omitted from the child’s diet and the food or choice of foods that may be substituted (i.e. texture changes and food substitutions).
Diet Prescription For Meals At School

Name of student for whom special meals at school are requested:

Disability or medical condition that requires the student to have a special diet. Include a brief description of the major life activity affected by the student's disability.

Diet Prescription  (Check all that apply.)

☐ DIABETIC ☐ REDUCED CALORIE

☐ INCREASED CALORIE ☐ MODIFIED TEXTURE

☐ OTHER (DESCRIBE) ____________________________

FOODS OMITTED AND SUBSTITUTIONS  (Please check food groups to be omitted. List specific foods to be omitted and suggest substitutions using the back of this form or attach information.)

☐ MEAT AND MEAT ALTERNATES ☐ MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

☐ BREAD AND CEREAL PRODUCTS ☐ FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Textures Allowed  (Check the allowed texture.)

☐ REGULAR ☐ CHOPPED ☐ GROUND ☐ PUREED

Other Information Regarding Diet or Feeding  (Please provide additional information on the back of this form or attach to this form.)

I certify that the above named student needs special school meals prepared as described above because of the student's disability or chronic medical condition.

Physician/Recognized Medical Authority Signature Office Phone Number Date
Managing Food Production

CN Labeled Products

Detailed information on the USDA Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program can be found in the Appendix of *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*. The information below provides a summary of some important points.


The CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs. It is run by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of USDA in cooperation with the following agencies:

- Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Agricultural Marketing Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service

FNS operates the program directly with commercial food processing firms.

Food manufacturers may submit their product’s formulations for evaluation by FNS to determine the product’s contribution toward meal pattern requirements according to the USDA *Food Buying Guide*. The program provides a warranty against audit claims but does not provide a guarantee of product quality.

Products Eligible for CN Labels

- Main dish products that contribute to the meat/meat alternate component. Examples: beef patties, pizzas, burritos, egg rolls.
- Juice and juice drink which contain 50 percent full-strength juice by volume. Examples: grape drink, fruit punch, frozen juice drink bars.

CN Label

A CN label is easy to identify since it will always have the following information. CNP managers and CNP assistants who are responsible for receiving should be trained in how to identify a CN label.

- The CN logo, which is a distinct border
- The meal pattern contribution statement
- A 6-digit product identification number
- USDA/FNS authorization
- The month and year of approval (by FNS)
Standardized Recipes

Standardized recipes are necessary to produce quality food products in any foodservice operation. Use of standardized recipes is a requirement for the School Meals Initiative for NuMenus, Assisted NuMenus, and Food-Based Menus in order to have data for an accurate and valid nutrient analysis of menus. All foods prepared from scratch or finished in a kitchen must have a standardized recipe on file.

It is the CNP director’s responsibility to make sure:
- All schools have standardized recipes for all menu items,
- CNP assistants are trained to use them, and
- CNP managers hold cooks accountable for using the standardized recipes.

A standardized recipe is one that has been tested, adapted for use by a specific foodservice operation, and found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients.

Advantages of Using Standardized Recipes

- Control quality by using recipes that have been tested and evaluated for schools.
- Control portion and yield, thus reducing leftovers and menu substitutions.
- Control costs by allowing for accurate purchasing and storage.
- Provide accurate nutrient analysis.
- Foster creativity by encouraging CNP assistants to improve standardized recipes through controlled modification and testing.

A reference on standardizing recipes is Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes from The national Food Service Management Institute. http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html

Sources for Tested Recipes

- USDA Quantity Recipes for School Meals may be ordered through TN.Orders@fns.usda.gov Recipes will be sent to only State Agencies or School Districts not to individual schools.
- School Foodservice and Nutrition (monthly journal of the American School Food Service Association)
Steps to Standardize a Tested Recipe

1. **Begin with a tested recipe.**
   Review the ingredients and the directions.

2. **Make sure that the recipe can be prepared with the equipment and staff in the school kitchen.**
   Make sure that the recipe can be prepared with the equipment and staff in the school kitchen.

3. **Prepare the recipe in a 25-portion amount.**
   Make sure that ingredients are weighed or measured exactly and that the directions are followed exactly. Have the cook make a note of any problems with preparation.

4. **Taste the product and judge it for quality.**
   Use the Quality Score Cards from *Culinary Techniques*.

5. **Taste-test the product with a small number of students.**
   Obtain student feedback regarding taste and appearance.

6. **Make the needed changes to the recipe and record them.**
   The changes needed to standardize the recipe for a specific school kitchen may involve ingredients, equipment, preparation or cooking timing, pan sizes, portion size.

7. **Review the recipe with the cook who usually prepares it.**
   Include the new recipe on the school menu. The manager should be aware of student acceptance, student comments, plate waste, and leftovers.
Most tested recipes for school kitchens give a yield of either 50 servings or 100 servings. This is always shown on the recipe. You will use this information and a formula to adjust the yield of recipes for the amount you need to prepare. To adjust the recipe yield, you have to adjust the amount of each ingredient in the recipe.

Use your calculator:

When you see this sign in the formula, X, you should multiply.

Always put the decimal point in your calculator.

If you end up with more than three numbers after the decimal on your calculator, round to the third number.

If your calculator does not have a tape, record the answers at each step.

Enter numbers in your calculator in this order:

To multiply—enter numbers from left to right.

To divide—enter the top number first, press the divide sign, and enter the bottom number.

Round numbers after you have finished the formula.

Step 1: Decide the number of servings of the recipe needed (the yield) and the serving size needed.

\[
\text{# of svg needed} \times \text{svg size needed}
\]

Step 2: Use the Formula to determine the quantity of each ingredient that will be needed for the new yield. Write down your calculations for each step of the Formula for each ingredient in the recipe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight or Measure From Recipe</th>
<th>The Formula</th>
<th>Quantity Needed in Adjusted Recipe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>(C)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Ingredient

Weight or measure of the ingredient from the recipe = ____________

Change to a decimal number. ______________________

B. # of svg needed = ____________ 

# of svg listed = ____________

C. svg size needed = ____________ 

svg size listed = ____________

D. Complete the Formula to find the quantity needed:

\[
(A) \times (B) \times (C) = (D)
\]

Step 3: Always round up to the nearest practical measure. (See page 84 for Common Measures.)

Quantity needed = ____________ Nearest Practical Measure

* The formula was developed with the guidance of Dr. Eldon L. Miller, Professor of Mathematics, University of Mississippi.
Training in Food Production

Foodservice personnel need training as new hires and as experienced employees in order to prepare foods that are consistent with the nutrition and quality standards of the Child Nutrition Program. This section provides some important points for the CNP director to consider. There are many excellent resources that provide detailed information on managing food production.

1. Consider the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in food production.
2. Control portion sizes to control food cost and meet meal requirements.
3. Encourage CNP managers and CNP assistants to routinely evaluate menu items before placing them on the service line. Use the Quality Score Cards in Culinary Techniques http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html

Consider the Dietary Guidelines in Food Production

Planning healthy school meals is just the beginning; producing healthy school meals is the real challenge for a CNP director and CNP manager. A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals provides excellent guidance for “Putting the Dietary Guidelines to Work for You.”

Control Portion Sizes to Control Food Cost and Meet Meal Requirements

1. Control food cost - Controlling portions when serving is a critical factor in management of the costs of the CNP. All employees should be trained to scale pans according to the recipe and use the correct portion control utensil for each menu item. The CNP manager should specify the portion control utensil to be used for each menu item on the production schedule. Serving size and portioning information should be on every standardized recipe.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The USDA Lasagna Recipe No. D-25</th>
<th>Cost per Pan</th>
<th>Cost Per Serving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut 5 X 5 per recipe</td>
<td>$13.22</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 5 X 4</td>
<td>$13.22</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panned into 3 instead of 4 pans, cut 5 X 5</td>
<td>$17.66</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Increasing the amount of meat or cheese in this recipe would also increase cost.
- Decreasing the amount of meat or cheese would change the way the recipe could be credited for the meat/meat alternate requirement for Food-Based Menus.
2. Meet meal pattern requirements - The Food-Based Menu system requires specific portion sizes for each food component for various age groups. The meal is not reimbursable when the required, minimum portion sizes have not been served. It is very important that CNP managers and CNP assistants use the correct portion control utensils to serve required minimum servings.

**Planning, Controlling, and Documenting Food Production**

**Planning Food Production**

Food production plans have traditionally been used in all foodservice operations to provide information to employees on the food items and amounts to be prepared. School kitchens should have a form that is used by the CNP manager to plan amounts to prepare for each menu item. The standard Production Record has been designed so parts are completed by the manager before the meal, thus, it becomes a production plan.

**Controlling Food Production**

The food production plan is a management control tool for the CNP manager. Both the manager and staff should check the plan throughout the production period to be sure the amounts planned are being prepared. The production plan also specifies the serving size for each menu item.

**Documenting Food Production**

USDA requires menu records and food production records. The records must include specific information depending on the menu system being used by the school/school system. Detailed requirements for food production records can be found in *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*, [http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html)

**Production Record for Enhanced Food-Based Menus.**

The SDE has developed a standard Production Record form for use in school systems using either of the Food-Based Menus Alternatives (Traditional or Enhanced Food-Based). The Production Record meets the USDA requirements for information required on a production record for Food-Based Menu Planning. [http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/ProductionRecord.pdf](http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/ProductionRecord.pdf) If the school system has its own form, the form must include the required information and must be approved by SDE.

For planning or production purposes it is strongly recommended that columns 1-9 for the standard Production Record be completed before the meal is served.
Required Information on a Production Records for Food-Based Menus

- Food components (meat/meat alternate, etc.) and other items, including condiments.
- Recipe or food product used (note if a USDA recipe).
- Planned/projected number of portions and serving sizes for each age/grade group.
- Planned/projected number of portions and serving sizes for adults.
- Total amount of food prepared (for example, number of servings, pounds, cans).
- Actual number of reimbursable meals served (indicate this information for each age/grade group).
- Actual number of nonreimbursable meals served (such as to adults or as a la carte sales).
- Leftovers and substitutions.

Production Record for NuMenus: If the school/school system uses NuMenus or Enhanced NuMenus, the production record needed is somewhat different than the standard form. See A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals [http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html) for sample forms. If the system develops its own form different from the prototype, the form must be approved by the SDE.

Maintaining Records

Completed production records for each school must be maintained for the current school year plus four additional years for a total of five years. Keep Production Records for Five Years. The CNP director should establish a procedure for each CNP manager to turn in or file in the school the production records for the year. Destruction of records must be done according to state policy.

Accountability for Production Records

Completing production records is one of the challenging tasks for many CNP managers. Reasons for not completing the forms vary from a perceived lack of time, to lack of training on how to complete and use a production record. It is the CNP director’s responsibility to train CNP managers to complete the records correctly.

Sources of training materials on production records:

_A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals_[http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html)

CNP managers cannot be held accountable for completing food production records if they have not been trained to complete them correctly. Some training tips for use with CNP managers are listed below.
• Begin training with a review of basic math skills needed when using the *Food Buying Guide* to plan amounts to prepare (multiplication, conversion of fractions to decimals, using a calculator).
• Teach how to complete the production record as a step-by-step process using the directions for the form.
• Demonstrate how to complete a production record.
• Allow time for the CNP manager to practice completing a production record. Review each step and give specific feedback on parts done correctly and parts that are incorrect. Re teach as needed.
• Provide follow-up and coaching for the CNP manager.
• Work with the manager to establish a routine procedure to use the production record as a plan (complete parts before the meal) and to complete the required parts after the meal on the day the meal is served. *Be aware that production records should not be completed long after the meal is served since required data must often be “invented” after a period of time.*

**Hold CNP Managers Accountable for Maintaining Production Records**

The CNP director must hold managers accountable for maintaining production records because of the following.

• Use of production records for planning and controlling food production is a basic management tool in any foodservice operation,
• Production records are required to document that reimbursable meals served meet requirements for components and serving sizes. Lack of production records for documentation can mean a reclaim of reimbursement.

How to hold CNP managers accountable.
1. Be sure that each CNP manager knows how to correctly complete a production record.
2. The requirement to maintain complete production records should be understood as a basic job requirement for every CNP manager.
3. Review with each CNP manager instructions for completing the production record each day and keeping completed records on file for the school year (and four more years).
4. Periodically check production records for completion and accuracy. Do not wait until the end of the school year or a SDE review or audit to find out that production records are not complete.
5. If a CNP manager is not completing production records, coach. If the person still does not complete this important task, consider the standard school system discipline procedure.
Work Schedules for Increased Productivity

Scheduling is a challenge in any type of foodservice operation. Developing a production schedule can be difficult because meals come at designated times of the day, so food production has peaks and valleys. Scheduling for school foodservice production, more than some other kinds of foodservice, is a challenge because of the large number of meals served in short time periods.

Teaching CNP managers how to prepare work schedules for production, line service, and cleaning is a challenge to every CNP director. This section provides some tools that the CNP director may choose to use or adapt in order to promote high productivity in each school kitchen.

Some foodservice experts suggest that up to one-third of all labor time may be either wasted or severely limited by poor scheduling alone (Keiser, 1989). Studies have not been done in school foodservice operations, but we know that scheduling in school kitchens has a big effect on productivity.

Parkinson’s Law: “Work takes up the time available.”

Since people generally work at the speed needed to accomplish an assigned task in the time available, it is the CNP manager’s responsibility to determine how long a task should take.

There are several kinds of schedules that a manager can use to encourage employees to work more efficiently. Some managers use the term, “work schedule” to describe a list of general duties for each employee. In some kitchens, a work schedule is posted once or twice a year, with assignments such as baking, preparing main dishes, serving, and other general categories of tasks. This type of schedule allows the employees to determine their own rate of work, since they have not been given a time standard. A time standard is a specific amount of time in which an assigned task should be completed.

To work most efficiently, CNP managers need three different types of schedules to manage employees’ time efficiently. It is the responsibility of the CNP director to see that manager’s use these kinds of schedules to maximize productivity.

- Daily Production Schedule
- Service Line Schedule
- Cleaning Schedule

How to Determine a Time Standard for a Food Production Task

1. Describe the task.
2. Estimate the time in minutes for each activity involved in the task.
Below is information that will help you in estimating time for each activity in the task of preparing one batch recipe.

- **Pre-preparation** - assembling equipment and ingredients
- **Preparation** - combining ingredients, mixing, panning convenience foods (check recipe for estimate)
- **Cooking** - (check recipe for time estimate)
- **Set-up** - pre-portioning, placement on service line, garnishing pans
- **Cleaning** - cleaning food preparation area and equipment used
- **Other** - describe any other special work necessary
- **Total** time in minutes for one batch

3. **Estimate the time for the total task by adding the minutes for each activity.**
   Considering the number of batches to be prepared, how many minutes are needed for the total amount. Keep in mind that some recipes must be prepared in batches in order to maintain quality or because of equipment capacity. For example, scratch-prepared cakes should be made only in amounts specified in the recipe in order to maintain volume.

   Equipment can limit amount of a food to prepare at one time. The main dish cook may be able to prepare only 20 gallons of chili because of the size of the steam-jacketed kettle. If 30 gallons is needed, preparation would be needed for two batches.

4. **Estimate the time needed for the task by the CNP assistant who typically does the task in the most efficient way.**

5. **Note any special skills or equipment needed to complete the task most efficiently.**

6. **Determine ways the CNP manager can coach the assistant.**
   Describe the training, help, and support the manager can give the employee.

### Daily Production Schedule

A Daily Production Schedule puts the manager in charge of the entire operation so each CNP assistant’s work is balanced against the workload of everyone else in the kitchen. When one cook has less to do because of a simple recipe or convenience food, that person can be assigned other food production tasks for the menu of that day or later in the week. This kind of schedule allows the manager to use her knowledge of the whole operation to be sure that every person is using time for the greatest productivity.

### Steps to Develop a Daily Production Schedule

1. **Plan the Daily Production Schedule for at least five days at a time.** This allows the CNP manager to do a better job of planning pre-preparation. For schools using cycle menus, the Daily Production Schedules can be re-cycled along with the menus.

2. **Determine which menu items should be prepared just-in-time for service (batch cooked).** Schedule the times for these tasks first by subtracting the time standard from the beginning of the service time. Then assign all other tasks.

3. **Determine which menu items can be prepared, cooked, and held for service.**
4. Plan for the best use of the equipment.
5. Assign a beginning and ending time for each task, including routine tasks like setting up a salad bar, potato bar, sandwich line, or preparing boxed lunches.
6. Stagger breaks and lunch times for employees.

How to Plan for Just-In-Time Food Preparation

There are many menu items, particularly convenience foods that have their best quality when they are prepared just-in-time for service (batch-cooked).

Just-In-Time Food Preparation Worksheet

1. Determine the number of portions for each service period.
   What is the estimated number of portions to be served for the whole meal? A. _____
   How many 20 to 30 minute service periods during the meal period? B. _____
   (Determine whether the product should be in batches for the amount served in a 20 to 30 minute service period. Some foods will need to be cooked in batches served in a 15-minute time period.)
   Number of portions needed for each service period (A ÷ B = C). C. _____

2. What is the total amount of time needed to finish pre-preparation for one batch?
   Consider the time needed for each of the following.
   • Loading and unloading the equipment,
   • Cooking,
   • Finishing the product with seasoning, sauces, or garnish,
   • Taking the finished product to the service line.

3. Determine the Start Time and the Service Time for each batch of the product. Set up a production schedule for the convenience product.

EXAMPLE

Individual Cheese Pizza
   (Estimate the 500 servings will be needed for the whole meal)
   Panning = 5 minutes, plus Baking = 10 to 13 minutes, plus Line Placement = 2 minutes = 20 minutes to finish

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td>12:50 PM</td>
<td>6 pans</td>
</tr>
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</table>

4. The manager will assign food production and service line responsibilities.
Person responsible for pre-preparation
Person responsible for final preparation
Person responsible for line service
CN Labeled Products

Detailed information on the USDA Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program can be found in the Appendix of A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals. The information below provides a summary of some important points.


The CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs. It is run by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of USDA in cooperation with the following agencies:

- Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Agricultural Marketing Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service

FNS operates the program directly with commercial food processing firms.

Food manufacturers may submit their product’s formulations for evaluation by FNS to determine the product’s contribution toward meal pattern requirements according to the USDA Food Buying Guide. The program provides a warranty against audit claims but does not provide a guarantee of product quality.

Products Eligible for CN Labels

- Main dish products that contribute to the meat/meat alternate component. Examples: beef patties, pizzas, burritos, egg rolls.
- Juice and juice drink which contain 50 percent full-strength juice by volume. Examples: grape drink, fruit punch, frozen juice drink bars.

CN Label

A CN label is easy to identify since it will always have the following information. CNP managers and CNP assistants who are responsible for receiving should be trained in how to identify a CN label.

- The CN logo, which is a distinct border
- The meal pattern contribution statement
- A 6-digit product identification number
- USDA/FNS authorization
- The month and year of approval (by FNS)

Standardized Recipes

Standardized recipes are necessary to produce quality food products in any foodservice operation. Use of standardized recipes is a requirement for the School Meals Initiative for
NuMenus, Assisted NuMenus, and Food-Based Menus in order to have data for an accurate and valid nutrient analysis of menus. All foods prepared from scratch or finished in a kitchen must have a standardized recipe on file.

It is the CNP director’s responsibility to make sure:
- All schools have standardized recipes for all menu items,
- CNP assistants are trained to use them, and
- CNP managers hold cooks accountable for using the standardized recipes.

A standardized recipe is one that has been tested, adapted for use by a specific foodservice operation, and found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients.

**Advantages of Using Standardized Recipes**

- Control quality by using recipes that have been tested and evaluated for schools.
- Control portion and yield, thus reducing leftovers and menu substitutions.
- Control costs by allowing for accurate purchasing and storage.
- Provide accurate nutrient analysis.
- Foster creativity by encouraging CNP assistants to improve standardized recipes through controlled modification and testing.

A reference on standardizing recipes is *Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes* from The national Food Service Management Institute. [http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html)

**Sources for Tested Recipes**

- USDA Quantity Recipes for School Meals may be ordered through [TN.Orders@fns.usda.gov](mailto:TN.Orders@fns.usda.gov) Recipes will be sent to only State Agencies or School Districts not to individual schools.
- School Foodservice and Nutrition (monthly journal of the American School Food Service Association)
Steps to Standardize a Tested Recipe

1. **Begin with a tested recipe.**
   Review the ingredients and the directions.

2. **Make sure that the recipe can be prepared with the equipment and staff in the school kitchen.**
   Make sure that ingredients are weighed or measured exactly and that the directions are followed exactly. Have the cook make a note of any problems with preparation.

3. **Prepare the recipe in a 25-portion amount.**
   Make sure that ingredients are weighed or measured exactly and that the directions are followed exactly. Have the cook make a note of any problems with preparation.

4. **Taste the product and judge it for quality.**
   Use the Quality Score Cards from *Culinary Techniques.*

5. **Taste-test the product with a small number of students.**
   Obtain student feedback regarding taste and appearance.

6. **Make the needed changes to the recipe and record them.**
   The changes needed to standardize the recipe for a specific school kitchen may involve ingredients, equipment, preparation or cooking timing, pan sizes, portion size.

7. **Review the recipe with the cook who usually prepares it.**
   Include the new recipe on the school menu. The manager should be aware of student acceptance, student comments, plate waste, and leftovers.
Follow the Formula When Adjusting the Yield of a Tested Recipe

Most tested recipes for school kitchens give a yield of either 50 servings or 100 servings. This is always shown on the recipe. You will use this information and a formula to adjust the yield of recipes for the amount you need to prepare. To adjust the recipe yield, you have to adjust the amount of each ingredient in the recipe.

Use your calculator:
When you see this sign in the formula, \( X \), you should multiply.
Always put the decimal point in your calculator.
If you end up with more than three numbers after the decimal on your calculator, round to the third number.
If your calculator does not have a tape, record the answers at each step.
Enter numbers in your calculator in this order:
To multiply—enter numbers from left to right.
To divide—enter the top number first, press the divide sign, and enter the bottom number.
Round numbers after you have finished the Formula.

Step 1: Decide the number of servings of the recipe needed (the yield) and the serving size needed.

\[
\text{# of svg needed} \times \text{svg size needed} = \text{Quantity Needed in Adjusted Recipe}
\]

Step 2: Use the Formula to determine the quantity of each ingredient that will be needed for the new yield. Write down your calculations for each step of the Formula for each ingredient in the recipe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight or Measure From Recipe</th>
<th># of svg needed</th>
<th># of svg listed</th>
<th>The Formula (\times)</th>
<th>svg size needed</th>
<th>svg size listed</th>
<th>Quantity Needed in Adjusted Recipe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>(D)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Ingredient
Weight or measure of the ingredient from the recipe = ____________________________
Change to a decimal number. ____________________________

B. \(\# \text{ of svg needed} \times \# \text{ of svg listed} = \)__________________________

C. \(\text{svg size needed} \times \text{svg size listed} = \)__________________________

D. Complete the Formula to find the quantity needed:

\( (A) \times (B) \times (C) = (D) \)

Step 3: Always round up to the nearest practical measure. (See page 84 for Common Measures.)

Quantity needed = Nearest Practical Measure

* The formula was developed with the guidance of Dr. Eldon L. Miller, Professor of Mathematics, University of Mississippi.
Training in Food Production

Foodservice personnel need training as new hires and as experienced employees in order to prepare foods that are consistent with the nutrition and quality standards of the Child Nutrition Program. This section provides some important points for the CNP director to consider. There are many excellent resources that provide detailed information on managing food production.

1. Consider the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in food production.
2. Control portion sizes to control food cost and meet meal requirements.
3. Encourage CNP managers and CNP assistants to routinely evaluate menu items before placing them on the service line. Use the Quality Score Cards in Culinary Techniques [http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html)

Consider the Dietary Guidelines in Food Production

Planning healthy school meals is just the beginning; producing healthy school meals is the real challenge for a CNP director and CNP manager. *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals* provides excellent guidance for “Putting the Dietary Guidelines to Work for You.”

Control Portion Sizes to Control Food Cost and Meet Meal Requirements

1. Control food cost - Controlling portions when serving is a critical factor in management of the costs of the CNP. All employees should be trained to scale pans according to the recipe and use the correct portion control utensil for each menu item. The CNP manager should specify the portion control utensil to be used for each menu item on the production schedule. Serving size and portioning information should be on every standardized recipe.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The USDA Lasagna Recipe No. D-25</th>
<th>Cost per Pan</th>
<th>Cost Per Serving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut 5 X 5 per recipe</td>
<td>$13.22</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 5 X 4</td>
<td>$13.22</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panned into 3 instead of 4 pans,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cut 5 X 5</td>
<td>$17.66</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Increasing the amount of meat or cheese in this recipe would also increase cost.
- Decreasing the amount of meat or cheese would change the way the recipe could be credited for the meat/meat alternate requirement for Food-Based Menus.

2. Meet meal pattern requirements - The Food-Based Menu system requires specific portion sizes for each food component for various age groups. The meal is not
reimbursable when the required, minimum portion sizes have not been served. It is very important that CNP managers and CNP assistants use the correct portion control utensils to serve required minimum servings.

Planning, Controlling, and Documenting Food Production

Planning Food Production

Food production plans have traditionally been used in all foodservice operations to provide information to employees on the food items and amounts to be prepared. School kitchens should have a form that is used by the CNP manager to plan amounts to prepare for each menu item. The standard Production Record has been designed so parts are completed by the manager before the meal, thus, it becomes a production plan.

Controlling Food Production

The food production plan is a management control tool for the CNP manager. Both the manager and staff should check the plan throughout the production period to be sure the amounts planned are being prepared. The production plan also specifies the serving size for each menu item.

Documenting Food Production

USDA requires menu records and food production records. The records must include specific information depending on the menu system being used by the school/school system. Detailed requirements for food production records can be found in *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*, [http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html)

Production Record for Enhanced Food-Based Menus.

The SDE has developed a standard Production Record form for use in school systems using either of the Food-Based Menus Alternatives (Traditional or Enhanced Food-Based). The Production Record meets the USDA requirements for information required on a production record for Food-Based Menu Planning. [http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/ProductionRecord.pdf](http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/ProductionRecord.pdf) If the school system has its own form, the form must include the required information and must be approved by SDE.

For planning or production purposes it is strongly recommended that columns 1-9 for the standard Production Record be completed before the meal is served.

Required Information on a Production Records for Food-Based Menus
Food components (meat/meat alternate, etc.) and other items, including condiments.
- Recipe or food product used (note if a USDA recipe).
- Planned/projected number of portions and serving sizes for each age/grade group.
- Planned/projected number of portions and serving sizes for adults.
- Total amount of food prepared (for example, number of servings, pounds, cans).
- Actual number of reimbursable meals served (indicate this information for each age/grade group).
- Actual number of non-reimbursable meals served (such as to adults or as a la carte sales).
- Leftovers and substitutions.

**Production Record for NuMenus:** If the school/school system uses NuMenus or Enhanced NuMenus, the production record needed is somewhat different than the standard form. See *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals* [http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html) for sample forms. If the system develops its own form different from the prototype, the form must be approved by the SDE.

**Maintaining Records**

Completed production records for each school must be maintained for the current school year plus four additional years for a total of five years. **Keep Production Records for Five Years.** The CNP director should establish a procedure for each CNP manager to turn in or file in the school the production records for the year. Destruction of records must be done according to state policy.

**Accountability for Production Records**

Completing production records is one of the challenging tasks for many CNP managers. Reasons for not completing the forms vary from a perceived lack of time, to lack of training on how to complete and use a production record. It is the CNP director’s responsibility to train CNP managers to complete the records correctly.

Sources of training materials on production records:

*A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals* [http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html)

CNP managers cannot be held accountable for completing food production records if they have not been trained to complete them correctly. Some training tips for use with CNP managers are listed below.

- Begin training with a review of basic math skills needed when using the *Food Buying Guide* to plan amounts to prepare (multiplication, conversion of fractions to decimals, using a calculator).
- Teach how to complete the production record as a step-by-step process using the directions for the form.
- Demonstrate how to complete a production record.
• Allow time for the CNP manager to practice completing a production record. Review each step and give specific feedback on parts done correctly and parts that are incorrect. Re teach as needed.
• Provide follow-up and coaching for the CNP manager.
• Work with the manager to establish a routine procedure to use the production record as a plan (complete parts before the meal) and to complete the required parts after the meal on the day the meal is served. Be aware that production records should not be completed long after the meal is served since required data must often be “invented” after a period of time.

Hold CNP Managers Accountable for Maintaining Production Records

The CNP director must hold managers accountable for maintaining production records because of the following.

• Use of production records for planning and controlling food production is a basic management tool in any foodservice operation,
• Production records are required to document that reimbursable meals served meet requirements for components and serving sizes. Lack of production records for documentation can mean a reclaim of reimbursement.

How to hold CNP managers accountable.
1. Be sure that each CNP manager knows how to correctly complete a production record.
2. The requirement to maintain complete production records should be understood as a basic job requirement for every CNP manager.
3. Review with each CNP manager instructions for completing the production record each day and keeping completed records on file for the school year (and four more years).
4. Periodically check production records for completion and accuracy. Do not wait until the end of the school year or a SDE review or audit to find out that production records are not complete.
5. If a CNP manager is not completing production records, coach. If the person still does not complete this important task, consider the standard school system discipline procedure.

Work Schedules for Increased Productivity

Scheduling is a challenge in any type of foodservice operation. Developing a production schedule can be difficult because meals come at designated times of the day, so food production has peaks and valleys. Scheduling for school foodservice production, more than some other kinds of foodservice, is a challenge because of the large number of meals served in short time periods.
Teaching CNP managers how to prepare work schedules for production, line service, and cleaning is a challenge to every CNP director. This section provides some tools that the CNP director may choose to use or adapt in order to promote high productivity in each school kitchen.

Some foodservice experts suggest that up to one-third of all labor time may be either wasted or severely limited by poor scheduling alone (Keiser, 1989). Studies have not been done in school foodservice operations, but we know that scheduling in school kitchens has a big effect on productivity.

**Parkinson’s Law: “Work takes up the time available.”**

Since people generally work at the speed needed to accomplish an assigned task in the time available, it is the CNP manager’s responsibility to determine how long a task should take.

There are several kinds of schedules that a manager can use to encourage employees to work more efficiently. Some managers use the term, “work schedule” to describe a list of general duties for each employee. In some kitchens, a work schedule is posted once or twice a year, with assignments such as baking, preparing main dishes, serving, and other general categories of tasks. This type of schedule allows the employees to determine their own rate of work, since they have not been given a time standard. A time standard is a specific amount of time in which an assigned task should be completed.

To work most efficiently, CNP managers need three different types of schedules to manage employees’ time efficiently. It is the responsibility of the CNP director to see that manager’s use these kinds of schedules to maximize productivity.

- Daily Production Schedule
- Service Line Schedule
- Cleaning Schedule

**How to Determine a Time Standard for a Food Production Task**

1. Describe the task.
2. Estimate the time in minutes for each activity involved in the task.

Below is information that will help you in estimating time for each activity in the task of preparing one batch recipe.

- **Pre-preparation** - assembling equipment and ingredients
- **Preparation** - combining ingredients, mixing, panning convenience foods (check recipe for estimate)
- **Cooking** - (check recipe for time estimate)
- **Set-up** - pre-portioning, placement on service line, garnishing pans
- **Cleaning** - cleaning food preparation area and equipment used
- **Other** - describe any other special work necessary
- **Total** time in minutes for one batch
3. **Estimate the time for the total task by adding the minutes for each activity.** Considering the number of batches to be prepared, how many minutes are needed for the total amount. Keep in mind that some recipes must be prepared in batches in order to maintain quality or because of equipment capacity. For example, scratch-prepared cakes should be made only in amounts specified in the recipe in order to maintain volume.

Equipment can limit amount of a food to prepare at one time. The main dish cook may be able to prepare only 20 gallons of chili because of the size of the steam-jacketed kettle. If 30 gallons is needed, preparation would be needed for two batches.

4. **Estimate the time needed for the task by the CNP assistant who typically does the task in the most efficient way.**

5. **Note any special skills or equipment needed to complete the task most efficiently.**

6. **Determine ways the CNP manager can coach the assistant.** Describe the training, help, and support the manager can give the employee.

**Daily Production Schedule**

A Daily Production Schedule puts the manager in charge of the entire operation so each CNP assistant’s work is balanced against the workload of everyone else in the kitchen. When one cook has less to do because of a simple recipe or convenience food, that person can be assigned other food production tasks for the menu of that day or later in the week. This kind of schedule allows the manager to use her knowledge of the whole operation to be sure that every person is using time for the greatest productivity.

**Steps to Develop a Daily Production Schedule**

1. **Plan the Daily Production Schedule for at least five days at a time.** This allows the CNP manager to do a better job of planning pre-preparation. For schools using cycle menus, the Daily Production Schedules can be re-cycled along with the menus.

2. **Determine which menu items should be prepared just-in-time for service (batch cooked).** Schedule the times for these tasks first by subtracting the time standard from the beginning of the service time. Then assign all other tasks.

3. **Determine which menu items can be prepared, cooked, and held for service.**

4. **Plan for the best use of the equipment.**

5. **Assign a beginning and ending time for each task**, including routine tasks like setting up a salad bar, potato bar, sandwich line, or preparing boxed lunches.

6. **Stagger breaks** and lunch times for employees.

**How to Plan for Just-In-Time Food Preparation**

There are many menu items, particularly convenience foods that have their best quality when they are prepared just-in-time for service (batch-cooked).

**Just-In-Time Food Preparation Worksheet**

1. Determine the number of portions for each service period.
What is the estimated number of portions to be served for the whole meal?  A._____

How many 20 to 30 minute service periods during the meal period?  B._____

(Determine whether the product should be in batches for the amount served in a 20 to 30 minute service period. Some foods will need to be cooked in batches served in a 15-minute time period.)

Number of portions needed for each service period (A ÷ B = C).  C._____

2. What is the total amount of time needed to finish pre-preparation for one batch?

Consider the time needed for each of the following.

- Loading and unloading the equipment,
- Cooking,
- Finishing the product with seasoning, sauces, or garnish,
- Taking the finished product to the service line.

3. Determine the Start Time and the Service Time for each batch of the product. Set up a production schedule for the convenience product.

   EXAMPLE
   
   **Individual Cheese Pizza**
   
   (Estimate the 500 servings will be needed for the whole meal)
   
   Panning = 5 minutes, plus Baking = 10 to 13 minutes, plus Line Placement = 2 minutes = 20 minutes to finish

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</table>

4. The manager will assign food production and service line responsibilities.

   Person responsible for pre-preparation
   Person responsible for final preparation
   Person responsible for line service
Food Safety/HACCP

Rules of State Board of Health — Food Establishment Sanitation

The Application/Agreement for all CNP Programs includes a clause that states that the school system agrees to . . . “maintain in the storage, preparation, and service of food, proper sanitation and health standards in conformance with all applicable state and local laws and regulations.” State laws and regulations are provided in the document listed below.

Rules of State Board of Health, Bureau of Environmental Services
Division of Food, Milk, and Lodging, Chapter 420-3-22
Food Establishment Sanitation
Adopted by the State Board of Health November 20, 1996
Effective Date December 25, 1996

To obtain a copy of the “Rules of the State Board of Health — Food Establishment Sanitation” call the Alabama State Board of Health, Bureau of Environmental Services or your county health department or visit the following Web page.

http://www.restaurantedge.com/uploads/1038032050ALABAMA.pdf#search='Alabama board%20of%20health%20food%20code'

Listed below are some suggested areas of sanitation that the CNP director should follow-up when meeting with CNP managers and visiting school kitchens.

1. The majority of cases of foodborne illness result from lack of proper temperature control.
   - Alabama Rules state that “potentially hazardous food requiring refrigeration after preparation shall be rapidly cooled to an internal temperature of 45° F or below.” The U.S. Public Health Service Food Code requires cooked potentially hazardous foods to be cooled to 41° F or below within 4 hours. Foods should be refrigerated at 41° F or below. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service recommends that potentially hazardous foods be cooled to 40° F and kept refrigerated at or below that temperature.
   - USDA recommends that potentially hazardous foods, including all leftovers, should be heated to 165° F. Hot foods should be held at an internal temperature of 140° F or above.
   - Hot foods should be placed on the steam table hot and kept at an internal temperature of 140° F or above.
   - USDA defines danger zone as temperatures between 40° F and 140° F which favor growth of organisms. The length of time a food remains in the danger zone largely determines the rate and extent of growth of organisms (bacterial growth).

2. Temperature control in the school kitchen should be emphasized in training and in day-to-day supervision by the manager. Every CNP manager should have a metal stem-type thermometer and be trained to use it. Several metal stem-type
thermometers should be available in the kitchen and for use on the service line.

3. The school system should have a policy defining the clothing requirements of all employees to meet sanitation requirements. The minimum requirements are found in 420-3-14.10. Quality standards for this area can be found in a variety of references listed later in this chapter.

HACCP

Section 111 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265) amended section 9(h) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act by requiring school food authorities (SFA’s) to implement a food safety program for the preparation and service of school meals served to children in the school year beginning July 1, 2005. The program must be based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles and conform to guidance issued by the Department of Agriculture (USDA). All SFA’s must have a fully implemented food safety program that complies with HACCP principles or with this optional guidance no later than the end of the 2005-2006 School Year.


The food safety program must include the following elements.

1. **Documented SOPs** SOPs are a very important factor in developing an effective food safety program. Their role is to serve as a basic food safety foundation and to control hazards not outlined specifically in the HACCP plan.

2. **A written plan** at each school food preparation and service site for applying HACCP principles that includes methods for the following.
   a. Documenting menu items in the appropriate HACCP process category
   b. Documenting Critical Control Points of food production
   c. Monitoring
   d. Establishing and documenting corrective action
   e. Recordkeeping
   f. Receiving and revising the overall food safety program periodically

**Sanitation Inspections and Follow-up**

Sanitation inspections are made in all foodservice establishments in Alabama at least three times a year, but may be more depending upon the county. Section 420-3-14.39 of the “Rules of the State Board of Health — Food Establishment Sanitation” describe the frequency, access, report, and correction. A procedure should be in place for CNP managers to notify the CNP director when an inspection has occurred and provide the score. The CNP director should follow-up with the manager to insure that corrections have been made for all violations.
Personnel Safety Inspections and Follow-Up

There is no standard safety inspection process or form for school foodservice operations. It is desirable for a school system to develop or adopt a safety inspection program for school kitchens.

**Fire Safety:** Contact your local fire department and request inspection of placement and operation of fire extinguishers. The fire department will usually provide training on use of fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers should be inspected regularly to be sure they are charged. Heat and smoke alarms, automatic sprinkler systems, and fire suppression systems under hoods should also be inspected regularly.

**Chemical Safety:** The CNP director or other person responsible for purchasing cleaning chemicals used in school kitchens should provide each CNP manager the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each chemical used in the kitchen. It is an OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) requirement that MSDS be available on site so all employees can read the potential hazards before using a chemical and have access to the safety information at all times. Be sure that each school kitchen has a readily accessible place for MSDSs.

**Equipment Safety:** When new equipment is purchased, part of the training should include safety precautions for operating and cleaning the equipment. Any employee who must use a piece of equipment should be trained to use it correctly and safely.

**Sanitation Training**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided each school system with a training program in sanitation and safety. It includes a printed manual with instructor and teaching aids to be used as handouts or transparency masters. Included is a CD and computer diskettes for use with the computer instructional program “The Food Safety Zone.” The print materials can be presented in a nine-hour training program. A video for *Serving It Safe* is available to order from the School Food Service Foundation for $20.00.

The School Nutrition Association requires a ten-hour course in sanitation to meet basic SNA certification requirements. Many SNA members who want to become certified are interested in participating in a ten-hour course. The *Serving It Safe* course can be expanded to meet the ten-hour requirement with the addition of more activities, use of the video tape, and a review of the sanitation inspection criteria for Alabama.

The Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association also provides excellent training materials for the foodservice industry. Contact the Customer Service Line to obtain a brochure describing their *ServSafe* educational materials (Phone 800-765-2122).
ServSafe is a comprehensive sanitation training program that prepares learners to take the ServSafe certification exam. The training program is designed for a two-day, on-site immersion course and includes textbooks, trainer’s tool kit, leader’s guide, posters, video tapes, a Serving Safe Food CD-ROM, and lapel pin. Materials can be purchased as a complete training package or as individual parts.

References


National Food Service Management Institute
http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html
Wash Your Hands: Educating the School Community
Food Safety for Summer Food Service Programs
Food Safety Mini-Posters
Responding to a Food Recall
Temperature Mini-Poster l
Marketing Child Nutrition Programs

Student Involvement in the CNP

It is a truism that “the more people involved in a thing, the more committed they are to it.” Involving students in various aspects of the Child Nutrition Program is an important part of managing a successful Program. Student involvement helps the menu planner to create menus that are appealing to the customers, purchase foods that have been taste tested by students, and select recipes that are customer favorites.

Suggested Ways to Involve Students

1. Conduct assessments to find out what students think. Use simple questionnaire surveys or focus groups.

2. Organize a student group called a Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC).

3. Involve students by involving parents through parent focus groups, Parent Teacher Association meetings, cafeteria tours, and other activities.

Market School Lunches and Breakfasts

Detailed information on the marketing of the Child Nutrition Program can be found in Chapter 8, pages 203-218, of *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*. The information below provides some important points about marketing through menus.

*Marketing School Meals Through Menus*

- Market your menus -- be creative and imaginative.
- Begin menu words with capital letters.
- Begin each word with a capital letter, like Ham and Beans.
- Center each line in the menu box.
- List menu items in the following order:
  - Main Dish
  - Vegetables & Fruits
  - Salad
  - Bread
  - Dessert
  - Milk

- When using special names for menu items such as Dinosaur Bites, be sure to explain what the item really is.
• Speak the student’s language.
• Use descriptive adjectives, such as seasoned green beans, crispy vegetables, chilled fruit cup.
• Tell how the product was prepared by using words like baked chicken nuggets.

**Other Ideas to Promote the CNP Menu**

• Publish school menus in the local newspaper. Provide nutrient analysis of menus to tell parents that Child Nutrition Programs are committed to providing healthy choices at school.
• Post the menu of the day near the service line. Caution CNP managers not to use hand-lettered signs since they do not look professional. Use menu boards or computer-printed menus presented in a simple frame.
• Post basic nutrition information on the service line. Simpler is better.
Procurement

School System’s Responsibility for Procurement

The school system (or SFA) is responsible for the following.

1. Developing a procurement plan and procedures that are consistent with federal, state, and local laws and regulations,
2. Developing detailed specifications that allow for fair competition for all products including food, supplies, equipment, and services that are required to operate the Child Nutrition Program, and
3. Following the established procurement plan and procedures for all purchases.

Laws and Regulations for Procurement

Federal Regulations

**Federal procurement regulations** establish standards and guidelines for the procurement of foods, supplies, equipment, and services to ensure that these are obtained efficiently and economically. These regulations require free and open competition by requiring that products be purchased on the basis of comparability as outlined in an established procurement plan and code of ethics. All procurement practices must be adequately documented. A sample procurement plan and a sample code of ethics have been included as attachments for this chapter. The sample procurement plan must be individualized since each school system is different. A procurement plan should be on file in your school. It is important to obtain a copy of this plan for your files.

**Buy American** is a provision in the National School Lunch Act that requires SFAs participating in the NSLP and SBP in the contiguous United States to purchase for those programs, to the maximum extent practical, domestic commodities or products. *Domestic food commodity or product - agricultural commodities produced in the U.S. and food products processed in the U.S. substantially using agricultural commodities that are produced in the U.S.*

**Substantially** – over 51 percent of the processed food comes from American produced products.

**Debarment/Suspension** is an action or sanction as outlined in federal regulations placed on companies or individuals for cause that restricts their participation as a supplier or vendor. SFAs are required to obtain certification from potential vendors regarding debarment/suspension. A sample Certification Regarding Debarment/Suspension is shown at the end of the chapter.
State Regulations

SFAs must follow all state regulations for procurement. Oversight for procurement is the responsibility of the Department of Examiners, Public Accounts, and State of Alabama. These responsibilities are outlined in:

Article 3: Competitive Bidding on Contracts of Certain State and Local Agencies, Etc.

http://www.examiners.state.al.us/FormPub/Bid_Law.pdf#search='alabama%20department%20of%20examiners'

Summary of miscellaneous federal and state provisions of Article 3:

1. By federal regulation, competitive sealed bids must be used when the total expenditure for any item amounts to more than $10,000.00 within any given school year. State law requires that competitive sealed bids must be used when the total expenditure for any item amounts to more than $7,500.00 within any given school year. In cases where regulations do not agree, the more restrictive always supersedes.

2. At least three price quotes must be obtained if possible for any item purchased with federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

3. Emergency purchases can be made without three price quotes. When this option is implemented, documentation should be maintained on why the purchase was necessary and why it was classified as an emergency. A good procurement defines what is classified as an emergency and describes how to deal with the situation.

4. Small purchase procedures can be utilized for items that do not total more than $7,500 in a fiscal year. These procedures:
   - Are simple and informal methods for purchasing
   - Are appropriate for such items as produce, eggs, fresh meats, other perishable goods and items purchased on a one-time basis to determine student acceptance. Exception: Fresh produce may be purchased under the “small purchase” procedures, regardless of dollar amount
   - Must allow for free and open competition. This includes:
     - Adequate and consistent description of each prospective vendor that contains all requirements the vendor must fulfill and all factors to be used in evaluating the vendor responses.
     - Either written or verbal “requests for quotations” may be used.
     - The responses can be in either written or verbal form with a written confirmation.
     - All price quotations must be maintained by the SFA.
     - The SFA must contact an adequate number of qualified sources to provide quotes (Local market conditions determine what is an “adequate number.”)

5. Written permission from the SDE CNP Director is required for any purchase greater than $5,000.

http://www.cnp.alsde.edu/nslp/forms/EquipmentPurchaseRequest.xls
Options for Purchasing

SFAs may purchase products and services individually and/or through cooperatives. Regardless of the system chosen, the SFA is responsible for following all regulations.

1. The State Procurement System is a cooperative purchasing group administered by Child Nutrition Programs, Alabama State Department of Education and available to all SFAs. SFAs which choose to participate can purchase food and supply items. The purpose of this purchasing system is to assist SFAs in meeting procurement regulations, reduce the amount of time spent in the procurement process, and assist in obtaining the most competitive prices for quality items.

- The program is a two step process:
  - The high volume items, where most of the Child Nutrition money is spent, are bid directly with manufacturers with a delivery price directly to the participating distributors. Promotional allowances or refunds may be included on the bid. If refunds are part of a manufacturer’s bid, the state distributes the money quarterly to participating SFAs based on usage reports provided by the distributors.
  - The prices for these items are shown on the distributor’s bid. The distributors add a dredge or handling fee and possibly a freight charge to arrive at a total delivery cost for each item that was bid directly to the manufacturers.
- The distributors determine a total delivered cost for all other items that are not bid directly with manufacturers. The distributor provides the base bid price plus the dredge or handling fee and any possible freight charges.
- Order guides that show current information on products are provided to school systems.
- Each school system is responsible for doing its own ordering and is responsible for paying its own bills.
- School systems participating in the state procurement program are provided training.

2. Cooperatives - Some school systems have joined with others in their area to form cooperatives for purchasing. The success of these cooperatives is dependent on members working together.

3. Individual School Systems - All school systems must bid and purchase some items, including equipment, produce, and services (like pest control), regardless of their participation in the State Procurement System or a smaller cooperative. SFAs may choose to be responsible for procurement of all items.
Using Product Information for Specifications

SFAs are responsible for developing specifications for all products purchased, including food, supplies, equipment, and services that are required to operate the Child Nutrition Program. These specifications must be detailed and allow for fair competition. The CNP director must know how to review product information and labels for identification compliance.

**Food**
- Product specifications
- Product Ingredient Listing
- Manufacturer’s Product Nutrition Information
- Product Ingredients Listing
- Product Code Number
- Establishment Number
- Nutrition Facts Label
- CN (Child Nutrition) Label

**Equipment**
- Manufacturer’s information sheets
- Information on certification (UL, ASA, NSF, etc.)
- Energy requirements

**Services**
- Detailed description of services to be performed
- Additional services and changes
- Time period for delivery of services (example - pest control to be performed at the end of the school day, not during meal service)
- Frequency of services (example - monthly)

Examples of the sample labels will be shared by the instructor. Make notes as the instructor describes key points.

**Guidance and Resources on Procurement**

Further information on regulations and procedures for procurement can be found in the following resources.

1. **Alabama Department of Finance Division of Purchasing.**
   This office provides information on the procurement process, including overview of the process, timelines and schedules, pre-approvals, pre-bid conference, and post-bid procedures. [http://purchasing.alabama.gov/rulesreg.htm](http://purchasing.alabama.gov/rulesreg.htm)


### Ordering Food and Supplies

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* gives average yield information for over 600 food times. It is designed for use in calculating quantities of foods to purchase in order to meet the requirements of CNP meal patterns. This manual was developed by USDA and is a necessary tool to use for purchasing, food production, and completing the required food production record.

**To use the Food Buying Guide:**

1. Obtain a copy of the complete menu with all items offered.
2. Decide on the portion size to be served for each menu item based on meal requirements.
3. Forecast (estimate) the number of portions to be served.
   - It is best practice to base your estimate on information from production records from a previous day when the same menu was served.
4. Locate the item needed in the *Food Buying Guide* by referring to the Table of Contents and the Index.
5. Use the yield tables to locate the information on the product.
6. Use The Formula to determine the minimum amount to order.

The complete Food Buying Guide and directions for using the guide can be found at [http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/FBG/buyingguide.html](http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/FBG/buyingguide.html)
USDA Food Distribution Program

Permanent USDA Commodity Agreement
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/

Description of the Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Distribution Program (FDP) is designed to improve the nutritional quality of diets of individuals who participate in the program. It is also a price support and surplus removal program for U.S. agriculture. Regulations for the FDP are developed and issued by USDA to interpret the enabling legislation of the program. The National School Lunch Program in Alabama is the largest user of USDA commodity foods in the state.

Although the commodity program has been administered by USDA since the 1930’s, in recent years, efforts have been made to bring the program up-to-date with current knowledge of nutritional needs and food technology.
- Some USDA commodities now have reduced levels of fat, sugar, or sodium.
- New products are continuously being evaluated by USDA and many are offered as commodities.
- There is greater variety in some basic foodstuffs offered as commodities (processed cheese, sliced American processed cheese).
- Timely information is available on products, storage, and handling. One source is the Internet.

Agreement

School systems participating in the National School Lunch Program sign a Permanent USDA Commodity Agreement describing the terms and conditions required to receive commodities. The CNP director should review the Agreement carefully to be sure that management systems are in place to insure that the Agreement conditions are met. The Agreement continues until terminated for reasons described in the Agreement.

The information presented here provides some guidance for the management of commodities in the school system. It does not address all requirements of the Agreement.

Record keeping on receipt and use of commodities is an important requirement and the Agreement defines the records that must be kept. The books and records must be maintained on file for a total of five years (four years plus the current year).
Allocation of Commodities from SDE

Commodities are allocated to school systems by the SDE based on the total number of reimbursable lunches served to students during the previous school year. Although the number of reimbursable breakfast meals is not part of the allocation formula for commodities, commodities may be used for School Breakfast Programs.

Categories of Commodity Foods

The actual food items in each category will vary year to year.

**Group A:** Fruits, vegetables, meats, and poultry

**Group B:** Grains, oils, and dairy products

**Bonus:** Group A and Group B foods may be classified as “bonus”

SDE Commodity Allocation Process for the School Year

1. The SDE will provide each school system with the allocated dollar amount of commodities for Group A and Group B for the year.
2. Group A foods are allocated by the SDE to school systems on a pro rata basis.
3. Group B foods are requested once a year using the Group B Commodity Request Form which is usually sent to SFAs in early February.
4. Bonus foods may be handled like Group A or Group B foods, depending on the specific product.
5. Follow the SDE procedure for requesting delivery of commodities from contract distributors. The procedure is outlined in the next section and the update memorandum at the end of this chapter.

Ordering Commodities from Distributor’s Warehouse

The SDE annually provides a memorandum to superintendents and CNP directors describing the procedures necessary for participating in the Food Distribution Program. It describes how the school system orders and obtains delivery of commodities from contract distributors. The basic steps for ordering commodities are outlined below.

1. SDE contracts with distributors in various regions in the state for receiving, warehousing, and delivering USDA commodities.
2. The yearly update memorandum provides information on the state procedure for ordering commodities from distributor’s warehouse.
   - Contractual arrangements with distributors.
   - Procedures for ordering commodities from the distributor’s warehouse.
   - FDP Form 11 - Notice of Availability of Commodities.
     This is a list of commodities that the state has ordered from the USDA for each school system at the time the form is run. SDE will run this form four or five times per year. (This form can be sent to SDE using regular mail or e-mail.).
   - FDP Form 12 - Notice of Arrival - Donated Food at Distributor’s Warehouse.
This form will be printed in red ink. This form is generated each time a commodity delivery arrives at a Distributor’s warehouse. This form can be sent regular mail or e-mail.

- FDP Form 13 - Request for Delivery of Commodities to Schools and other Recipient Agencies (and Instructions).
- FDP Form 17 - Pick Up Notice for Commodities - Schools and Other Recipient Agencies (blank form and Instructions). This form is used to notify the warehouse of the commodities the school system will pick up and when the pick up will be made.
- Contractor Prices for School Year (by region and distributor).
- Appendix G-5 (c) Selection of Food Distribution Option.
- Alabama Commodity Distribution Regions.
- State Commodity Processing Contracts for Current School Year.
- State of Alabama Refund Application for Processed Commodities.

**Receiving Commodities**

The school system is responsible for using correct procedures for receiving commodity foods. Every school should have the CNP manager and another designated person trained in receiving procedures.

**Good Receiving Procedures for Commodities**

1. Check to be sure that the commodities ordered are the same as those specified on the delivery ticket.
2. Check the quantity ordered against the quantity being delivered. Note any discrepancies on the delivery ticket. Discrepancies should be initialed on the delivery ticket by the receiving clerk and the truck driver. If there is a shortage on a delivery of commodities, the manager should contact the CNP director to resolve the matter. If the CNP director is unable to coordinate the delivery of the shorted item with the warehouse, a Shortage from the Warehouse form is completed and sent to the Food Distribution Office with a copy going to the contact person at the appropriate warehouse.
3. Check condition. Do not accept spoiled produce, partially thawed frozen items, or any items that indicate rodent or insect contamination. If there is product damage, but some product can be salvaged and the salvaged portion is worth more than the cost of delivery, accept the product.
4. Commodity should be moved to the appropriate storage as soon as the receiving procedure has been completed.
5. A copy of the delivery ticket should be kept in the school and a copy sent to the system CNP director.

To train CNP personnel on receiving, order a copy of the following module.

**All-Star Receiving for Child Nutrition** from the National Food Service Management Institute.
Storing Commodities

Commodities must be properly stored to maintain quality. **Commodities are no longer required to be stored separately from other inventory.** Commodity Fact Sheets as well as the FDP Form 11 and FDP Form 12 all provide information on the best storage temperature for each food item and other important storage considerations. Commodity Fact Sheets can be found on the USDA web page. Following is a list of good storage practices and specific storage requirements for commodities.

**Best Practices for Storing Commodities**

1. Store “like” foods together.
2. Keep storerooms, freezers, and refrigerators clean and orderly.
3. Provide for air circulation according to sanitation standards as provided by your local Health Department environmentalist.
4. Date cases and cans. If cans are removed from cases, note pack date on each can. This is important in case of a Food Alert (recall). A log should be kept which contains the following: name of commodity, pack date, contract number, and arrival date.
5. Set up storage so that oldest pack dates are used first (First In, First Out — FIFO).
6. Store commodities at correct temperatures. Have a thermometer in each storage area.
7. Check the temperatures and record on a log every 24 hours. Prudent management suggests that, when school is in session, the temperature of freezers and refrigerators should be checked as part of the routine opening and closing of the school kitchen. Temperatures of cold storage and dry storage should be recorded on a Temperature Record. A copy of the record is included at the end of this chapter.

**Recommended Storage Temperatures**

- **Freezer** -10° to 0° F
- **Refrigerator/Cooler** 36° to 40° F
- **Dry Storage** 50° to 70° F
  (In Alabama, an air conditioner may be needed to maintain this temperature range for the dry storage area.)

8. Have a plan for checking temperatures on weekends, school holidays, and during summer months. Commodity usage should be planned so that minimal amounts of food must be stored over the summer.
9. Maintain storage areas in a secure manner to eliminate theft. Know who has keys to the kitchen and storeroom. Establish a routine of issuing food from the storeroom rather than leaving it open all the time. Encourage the CNP manager to make visual inspections of the storeroom every day.
10. Have routine pest control and inspect storage for pest infestation.
11. Store food away from cleaning supplies, pest control products, and paper supplies.
**Donated Food Inventory and Use**

**Perpetual inventories** must be maintained at every location where commodities are received and stored. This includes central warehouse locations in the school system as well as schools. The USDA Donated Commodity Perpetual Inventory form is included at the end of the section. This form can be used for commodities only or adapted for use with both commodities and purchased food.

**Physical inventories** should be taken annually. It is a good practice to take a monthly inventory. A separate physical inventory form for annual reporting of commodities is no longer required. Remember a complete physical inventory of purchased foods and commodities must be taken on the last working day of the fiscal year, which ends September 30.

The Agreement specifies that a “day-by-day record of USDA commodities used in the preparation of meals served to participants” will be kept. The regulations are being waived on this requirement, because those that choose to continue this practice may continue to do so.

**Handling Donated Food Losses**

Donated Food Loss Reports for losses of commodities of $100.00 or more will no longer be required. Losses of either commodities or purchased food will simply be documented on your inventory records. The date, reason, and amount of each item that is lost should be recorded. Since Donated Food Loss Reports are no longer required, the corresponding condemnation notices from the Health Department are also no longer required.

**Transfers of Commodities**

**Transfer of USDA Commodities to Another Agency** — If a school system does not want specific foods that have been allocated, the following steps should be completed.

1. Circle the item name on the FDP Form 11 and write in “please transfer to another agency.”
2. Sign and date your remarks.
3. Send FDP Form 11 to the Food Distribution Office, SDE. Please, do not wait until you get Form 12 to initiate this transfer process.

If for any reason the system fails to request the transfer prior to receiving the FDP Form 12, the system must forward a copy of the Form 12, signed and dated, requesting the transfer. The State Food Distribution Office will complete a Confirmation of Transfer form and send copies to the system giving up the food, the agency receiving the food and the warehouse that is storing the commodity item.
Transfer Within the School System — The CNP director may allow or direct the transfer of commodities from one school to another within the school system. Internal transfers may be justified because of varied usage or the availability of storage. The transfer between schools should be documented using an internal system form that includes all of the information on SDE form “Confirmation of Transfer of USDA Commodities Between Agencies.”

Donated Food Complaint

If a donated food does not meet quality standards for appearance, taste, texture, or packaging, it is important to provide feedback to SDE and USDA. At the end of this chapter is the USDA Donated Food Complaint Form & Instructions. Complete the form and send a copy to SDE.
Disaster and Emergency Feeding

1. The CNP director should be familiar with the school system procedures in case of a declared disaster or emergency in the community. It is important to be clear about the role and expectations of the Child Nutrition Program in case of emergency feeding. Procedures for CNP should be developed and CNP personnel should be trained for their roles.

2. Although the CNP director may get the first call requesting release of commodities, the school system superintendent has the responsibility to release USDA commodities for mass feeding in cases of community disaster such as tornado or hurricane damage. The commodities may be released to the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Civil Defense, or other designated agency. It is suggested that the commodities be released only to the lead agency for the particular disaster. The school system must maintain documentation of commodities used and send a report to SDE.

3. **Contact the SDE for permission before release of commodities in order that the system can be reimbursed for the value of the commodities or that the commodities can be replaced in kind.**

4. Documentation is necessary for all commodities used. Some information necessary for documentation includes:
   - Cause or type of emergency or disaster
   - Commodities used
   - Quantities used
   - Dates used
   - Location of shelter or feeding site
   - Number of people being sheltered and fed and the number of meals served.

5. For more information about disaster feeding, contact Food Distribution Programs at (334) 242-8237.