

Frequently Asked Questions for Administering the Summer Food Service Program

1. When must sponsors request changes for meal service times, field trips, or Average Daily Participation (ADP) and how do they make these requests?

Sponsors must request approval for all site changes within the Claim System **before** the effective date of the change. Sponsors must request the following site changes at least one day before the change is to take effect in order for the change to be reimbursable:

- Meals offered
- Meal service start dates
- Meal service end dates
- Meal service start and end times
- Dates and locations of field trips
- ADP increases, if needed

The Office of School Nutrition (OSN) cannot retroactively approve any of the requests listed above.

For example: If you are approved to serve meals from July 1 through August 5, and on August 20 you request to extend your end date to August 15, the OSN must deny this request.

2: When are Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) applications due?

Sponsor applications are due by the first Friday in May and applications are processed on a first come, first serve basis. OSN will notify the sponsor of application approval or disapproval within 30 days of receiving a complete and correct application. Sponsors have the option to submit additional site applications through June 30; ideally at least three weeks before beginning meal service. For example, if a sponsor waits until June 10 to submit a site application with a start date of June 15, they may not receive approval by the start date.

3: How does a sponsor know the status of its sponsor application or site application?

The Claim System tracks the status of a sponsor's application in the Application Packet screen. When the application is approved, green checkmarks will populate next to each section in the packet. An email from the Department of Education will also be sent notifying the sponsor that the application was approved. It is important to check the site applications, as not all sites may have been approved. If OSN returns the application, comments will be typed into the sponsor application to let the sponsor know what needs correction.

4: How big (or small) does a designated eating area need to be?

While sponsors must designate eating areas for each SFSP site, the square footage of that area is not specified in Title 7, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 225. The designated eating areas can include space beyond the immediate food service area as long as adequate supervision is provided by trained site staff to ensure compliance with the SFSP regulations.

5: Does a site have to serve meals at the same time each day?

Serving meals at the same time every day is vital to ensuring all children have equal access to meals as well as encouraging children to return to the site day after day. Therefore, sponsors must designate specific start and end times for meal service at each site. Staff can serve meals at any point within those approved start and end times. For example, if a sponsor designates 12:00 p.m. as the meal start time and 2:00 p.m. as the meal end time, it is allowable to serve meals from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. or any other time between 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. as long as the site:

- Posts the meal start and end times
- Serves meals within the posted start and end times

It is best to serve meals the same time each day; however, if there are unanticipated changes, such as late meal delivery, this may not always be possible. Start and end times for meal service should allow for these potential unavoidable delays.

6: How long (or short) of a period of time can meal service be each day?

There is no requirement for length of meal service; however, sponsors must still designate a start and end time. It is important to remember sound food safety practices, however. Food should not be left in the danger zone (40 to 140 degrees) for more than two hours in order to prevent bacterial growth that can cause illness. It is also important to consider the amount of time necessary to distribute meals for each child and for children to have adequate time to consume the meal on-site.

7: Does breakfast have to be served early in the morning? Does lunch have to be served at noon?

Sponsors must designate specific start and end times for meal service, but meal service can begin or end at unusual times as long as the meal period corresponds with on-site programs and the community is aware of the meal times. For example, it is acceptable to designate 10:30 a.m. or 2 p.m. as the start time for lunch. Similarly, it is acceptable to designate 9:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. as the start time for breakfast.

8: If a site serves more than one type of meal each day, how far apart do those meal times have to be?

The USDA recently issued a policy memo that waives the requirement for meal spacing. There is no specific time span that must elapse between meals now. An agency could serve lunch from 12–1 p.m. and a snack from 2–2:30 if they would like. When setting meal/snack times, please consider whether the children will be hungry in order to avoid wasting food.

9: Does the requirement for meal service times restrict the use of a mobile SFSP site?

Flexibility around meal service times and meal service duration can support mobile SFSP sites. For example, a 25 minute meal service period may suffice for a mobile feeding unit to serve meals and monitor on-site consumption at community locations that do not host concurrent activities or recreation. However, there must be someone at the site to supervise consumption of the meals.

10: Can parents or other people over the age of 18 eat meals at SFSP sites?

Yes. People over the age of 18 can eat meals at SFSP sites; however, sponsors cannot claim meals served to adults.

People over the age of 18 with a mental or physical disability (as determined by a state or local educational agency) and who participate during the school year in a public or private non-profit school program (established for people with mental or physical disabilities) are eligible to receive reimbursable meals.

11: Do sponsors need to visit each of their SFSP sites during the first week of operation?

The USDA has waived the requirement that sponsors conduct a site visit during the first week of operation **if the site operated successfully the previous year**. If the OSN deems a sponsor seriously deficient, however, the sponsor must conduct first week site visits at all of their SFSP sites.

The USDA still requires sponsors to visit all new sites in the first week of operation, and to conduct site reviews for all sites in the fourth week of operations. For all sites, the USDA requires sponsors to maintain a reasonable level of site monitoring. If the sponsor or the OSN identifies a serious deficiency during a site visit or review, sponsors must conduct a follow up visit to ensure that the corrective action has been implemented at the site.

12: Are sponsors required to use the Daily Meal Count Form provided in the United States Department of Agriculture *Administrative Guidance for Sponsors* handbook?

No. Sponsors can request approval from the OSN to use a modified form. However, it is recommended to use the Daily Meal Count Form provided in the *Administrative Guidance for Sponsors* handbook, as all required components are included.

13: How do sponsors obtain a school's free and reduced-price meal data or census data to qualify Open or Closed-enrolled sites?

The sponsor should look on the OSN SFSP website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutrisummer>, under SFSP State Training. Instructions and links for obtaining the free and reduced-price meal data are provided.

14: Where do sponsors find a meal vendor?

Please review the [Registered Vendors list](#). Please note that when a vendor is used, sponsors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that reimbursable meals are prepared, delivered, and served. For more information on selecting a vendor, please read Chapter 3 in the *Administrative Guidance for Sponsors*.

16: Can sponsors use a vendor that is not on the Registered Vendor List?

At this time, sponsors may procure meals from only a school district or another SFSP sponsor without being on the Registered Vendors List.

17: Can sponsors combine claims for reimbursement?

A sponsor is able to combine claims as follows:

- 10 days or less in the initial month of operation combined with the claim for the subsequent month
- Up to three consecutive months may be combined, as long as the combined claim includes only 10 days or less from the first and last month of program operations (i.e., a total of 20 extra days)

When combining claim months, enter the number of meals served, and click continue. On the next screen, adjust the date of the claim covered to include the months being claimed, and submit for payment.