

South Carolina
School Food Service Program Reference Manual
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Chapter 2 – Organization & Administration

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The Office of Nutrition Programs, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) administers the following Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) in South Carolina public school districts, as well as select charter schools, residential child care institutions (RCCIs), and private and parochial schools:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Food Distribution Program (USDA Foods) (FDP)
- Team Nutrition (TN)

Federal Level Responsibilities

At the federal level, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the CNPs. USDA is authorized to issue regulations for the operation of these programs. Federal funds are apportioned among the states to reimburse participating schools. SCDE has an agreement with FNS for the administration of these programs in South Carolina. FNS periodically issues regulations, reviews the programs to determine compliance with the federal-state agreement, provides technical assistance, assists with the Administrative Review (AR) process, performs audits of SCDE records, and conducts Management Evaluations of SCDE activities.

The USDA Southeast Regional Office is located in Atlanta, Georgia. Refer to [Chapter 1 - Contacts](#) provides information on how to contact the USDA Regional Office.

State Level Responsibilities

SCDE is the liaison between USDA and local School Food Authorities (SFAs) in South Carolina. Through this partnership, program services and benefits are delivered to school children. Employees of the Office of Nutrition Programs are directly accountable to SCDE.

SCDE receives federal rules and regulations governing the CNPs from USDA. SCDE passes this information on to each SFA through its designated Authorized Representative.

Our Mission

The mission of the Office of Nutrition Programs, the largest food service program in the Palmetto State, is to support districts and schools in the adoption, implementation, and compliance with effective policies, practices, and programs that support student health and nutrition for optimum academic achievement and wellbeing.

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The primary function of SCDE’s Office of Nutrition Programs team is to assist local CNP SFAs in operating their programs. SCDE provides SFAs with:

- Reimbursement for qualifying meals, snacks, and milk.
- Supervisory oversight through the program review process.
- Guidance through handbooks, publications and websites.
- Consultative services and technical assistance on program management and administration.
- Training for CNP personnel on everything from food production to kitchen design, nutrition and nutrition education to personnel management.
- Commodities through the Food Distribution Program.

Local Level Responsibilities

The local governing body (i.e. board of education, etc.) is referred to as the Local Education Agency (LEA) or SFA and is responsible for administering the CNPs.

The SFA appoints an “Authorized Representative” who has responsibility for the program. The Authorized Representative must assure that the SFA is in compliance with the Program Agreement between the SFA and SCDE.

The requirements for operating the CNPs are outlined in the Program Agreement which is in [Chapter 3 – Program Agreements](#) of this *Program Reference Manual*.

The SFA’s responsibilities include:

- Implementing the free and reduced-price meal policy.
- Preparing and submitting the reimbursement claim.
- Hiring employees to plan, prepare, and serve meals.
- Supervising operation of the programs.

The success of CNPs is attributed to the dedicated efforts of local personnel.

Overview of the Child Nutrition Programs

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

SFAs that choose to participate in the NSLP receive reimbursement from USDA for each meal served to eligible students. In return, they must serve lunches that meet federal requirements, and offer free and reduced-price lunches to eligible students.

Regulations establish meal patterns and nutrition standards for the National School Lunch to align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The meal pattern for the School Lunch Program increases the availability of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as fat-free and low-fat fluid milk in school meals; reduce the levels of sodium, saturated fat and trans fat in meals; and meet the nutrition needs of school children with appropriate calorie requirements for grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. These improvements to the school meal programs, largely based on recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, are expected to enhance the diet and health of school children, and help mitigate the childhood obesity trend.

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For more information about menus and the menu planning systems available, refer to [Chapter 19 – Menu Planning Basics](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

Any student enrolled in a participating school and in the building at the time of lunch service, may purchase a meal through the NSLP. Students from households with incomes at or below the 130 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for free lunches. Those between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price lunches, for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents. Students from households with incomes over 185 percent of the poverty level pay full price, though their lunches are still subsidized with federal and state funds. SFAs set their own prices for full price lunches, subject to minimum rates prescribed by USDA.

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

Over 150,000 students in South Carolina start each day with a nutritious school breakfast. Eighty-five percent of these meals are served free or at a reduced price. All public schools in South Carolina participate in the SBP because of a joint resolution passed by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1992 requiring schools to implement the SBP by the 1993-1994 school year.

The SBP is a federal program that provides states with cash assistance for non-profit breakfast programs in schools and RCCIs. Participating schools and institutions must serve breakfasts that meet federal nutrition standards and must provide free and reduced-price breakfasts to eligible children. The same Income Eligibility Guidelines apply for the SBP as were described in the previous section for the NSLP. Schools that serve a high percentage of lunches to students eligible for free or reduced-price meals may be eligible for higher reimbursement through the Severe Need Breakfast reimbursement option.

Teachers have reported students are more alert and perform better in class if they eat breakfast. Studies support that conclusion. Recognizing the importance of a nutritious breakfast, USDA has actively promoted the SBP, and at the same time has made a commitment to improve the nutritional quality of all school meals. School breakfasts must meet the meal pattern and nutrition standards based on the latest *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The meal pattern for the School Breakfast Program provides more whole grains, offered zero grams of trans fat per portion and appropriate calories for grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. More fruit will be offered to students beginning in SY 2014-15.

For more information about the SBP, refer to [Chapter 24 - School Breakfast Program](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)

The ASP was first implemented in 1999 as a result of the 1998 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. This program 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. To qualify for the reimbursement, the snacks must meet nutritional standards and must be served to students enrolled in afterschool programs that include an education or enrichment component.

For more information about the ASP, refer to [Chapter 25 - Afterschool Snack Program](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

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Special Milk Program (SMP)

The SMP provides milk to children attending schools and RCCIs who do not have the opportunity to participate in other federal CNPs. The program reimburses schools for the milk they serve. The SMP is also available to children who attend “split session” classes (half day) and do not have breakfast or lunch offered to them.

For more information about the SMP, refer to [Chapter 29 - Food Service Related Programs](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The SFSP provides nutritious meals at no charge to low-income children during school vacations. Children between ages one and 18 and individuals over 18 who are mentally or physically disabled and who participate in a school program for the disabled, may receive meals through the SFSP.

SFSP sponsors are reimbursed for meals served at eligible sites such as schools, parks, playgrounds, churches, college campuses and/or community centers. SFSP food service sites may include the following:

- **Open** sites operate in geographical areas where school or U.S. Census data documents that at least half of the children are eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals. Meals are provided at no charge to any child in attendance at the open site.
- **Enrolled** sites provide meals only to children who are enrolled at the site in an activity program, such as a recreation program or the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP). In order to claim all meals served to children for reimbursement, at least 50 percent of the enrolled children must be eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Meals are provided at no charge to any enrolled child in attendance at the approved enrolled site.
- **Residential Camps and Nonresidential Day Camps** provide meals to children who are enrolled in the camp program. Only the meals served to camp participants who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals may be claimed for reimbursement. A nonresidential day camp must offer a continuous schedule of organized programming around meal service for enrolled children. Meals are provided at no charge to any eligible child in attendance at the site. Sponsors may charge non-eligible children a fee for meals. However, the eligibility status of any enrolled child cannot be overtly identifiable.
- **Migrant** sites operate for children of migrant workers, as certified by a migrant organization. If the site serves non-migrant children, the sponsor must certify that the site predominantly serves migrant children. Meals are provided at no charge to any child in attendance at the migrant site.

Participants at open or enrolled sites may receive either one or two of the following meal types: breakfast, lunch, supper or snack (either morning or afternoon). Lunch and supper may not be claimed for the same child on the same day. Residential and nonresidential day camps and migrant sites may claim up to three meals and/or snacks per day, including lunch and supper for the same child.

For more information about the SFSP, refer to [Chapter 26 - Summer Nutrition Programs](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

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Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

The SSO is similar in many ways to the SFSP. It provides nutritious meals at no charge to low-income children during school vacations. Children between ages one and 18 and individuals over 18 who are mentally or physically disabled and who participate in a school program for the disabled, may receive meals through the SSO. For a brief description of eligible sites, refer to the previous section on SFSP.

The main differences between the SFSP and the SSO is that the SSO allows SFAs to continue the operation of the SBP and the NSLP, which includes the ASP, into vacation months and meals are reimbursed at the free SBP and NSLP rates.

For more information about the SSO, refer to [Chapter 26 - Summer Nutrition Programs](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

The FFVP started as a pilot project in four states and an Indian Tribal Organization in 2002. In 2008 the National School Lunch Act was amended making it a permanent law and the FFVP now operates in elementary schools in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Participating elementary schools receive funding for the cost to make fresh fruits and vegetables available throughout the school day, at one or more locations within the school, outside of breakfast and lunch times. This allows students to sample fresh fruits and vegetables that they would not otherwise be exposed to or acquire a taste for. It also improves their current health and teaches them to make healthier lifelong eating habits. In order to be eligible for participation in the FFVP, at least 50 percent of the school's students must be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Interested schools must submit an application to SCDE.

For more information about the FFVP, refer to [Chapter 27 – Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

“USDA Foods” Food Distribution Program (FDP)

The FDP has traditionally been a method of disposing of surplus and price-supported agricultural commodities in order to prevent waste, while at the same time improving the diets of children, low-income persons, and others in need of food assistance. USDA is authorized to purchase domestic agricultural products, almost 60 percent of which must be determined to be in surplus at the time of the purchase, which they then provide to schools and other qualifying organizations with needy participants. All public schools, private schools and RCCIs in South Carolina are among the many recipients of USDA donated foods. Schools receive commodity foods at a specific value (.2475 cents for the 2014-15 school year) for each lunch served. At this time, commodity foods may be served in the SBP but USDA only provides entitlement funds for commodity foods served in the NSLP and SFSP. SFSP that prepare meals on site receive 1.5 cents per meal in commodity entitlement.

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Commodities purchased by USDA for use in the NSLP and in the SFSP may include meat, poultry, fish, fruits, vegetables, dairy, grain products, vegetable oil, shortening, and peanut products. Bonus commodities, a surplus of products in addition to entitlement commodities, are also occasionally available. These are offered to states on a fair-share basis and do not count against a state's entitlement dollars.

For more information about the FDP, refer to [Chapter 28 - Food Distribution Program](#) in this *Program Reference Manual*.

Team Nutrition (TN)

TN is USDA's school-based program that encourages children to make healthy food choices and to be physically active. Team Nutrition has four messages:

- Eat a variety of foods.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables and grains.
- Eat lower fat foods more often.
- Be physically active.

USDA established Team Nutrition with the mission of improving the health and education of children by creating innovative public and private partnerships that promote food choices for a healthy diet through the media, schools, families and the community. Team Nutrition's goal is to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits by using the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

Team Nutrition is implemented through three behavior-oriented strategies providing:

1. Training and technical assistance for Child Nutrition food service professionals to help them serve meals that look good, taste good and meet nutrition standards.
2. Multifaceted, integrated nutrition education for children and their parents to build skills and motivation to make healthful food and physical activity choices as part of healthy lifestyles.
3. Support for healthy eating and physical activity by involving school administrators and other school and community partners.

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Calendar of SFA Responsibilities

- May**
- Conduct pre-operational visit of all Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites (if applicable).
 - Complete SC Operations Assessment per HACCP procedures.
 - Appoint Authorized Representative, Hearing, Determining, and Verifying Officials for new school year.
 - Conduct review at all SSO sites at least once during operation (if applicable).
 - Complete Program Agreements in SCAPS for all feeding sites and district offices points of contact by June 10.
 - Establish prices for meals and milk.
 - Area Meetings conducted by SCDE staff.
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- Jun**
- Attend Summer Institute for Foodservice Training (SIFT).
 - Conduct review at all SFSP sites within first four weeks of operation (if applicable).
 - Conduct review at all Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sites at least once during operation (if applicable).
 - Complete Program Agreements in SCAPS by June 10.
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- Jul**
- Submit SLP Financial report to the SCDE.
 - Update HACCP/Food Safety Plan
 - Complete the Excessive Operating Balance form (if applicable).
 - Confirm prices for meals and milk as established according to USDA guidelines.
 - Print “Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application” and “Parent/Guardian Letter”. Get SCDE approval for any alternative, scanner, or internet application templates.
 - Submit Revenues and Expenses (for January 1 to June 30) to SCDE on SCAPS by July 31.
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- Aug**
- Distribute “Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application” and “Parent/Guardian Letter” to all enrolled students (no earlier than four calendar weeks before the start of school).
 - Determine eligibility of students for free/reduced-price benefits and notify households of eligibility status.
 - Input annual revenue and expenditures in SCAPS for prior fiscal year.
 - Provide Back-to-School staff development training.
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- Sep**
- Complete on-site review of Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) within first four weeks of operation (if applicable).
 - Prepare for Administrative Review (if applicable)
 - Submit monthly reimbursement claim to SCDE by the 10th of the month.
 - Complete on-site reviews of counting and claiming for each school
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- Oct**
- Begin verification of free/reduced-price eligibility applications.
 - Celebrate National School Lunch Week.
 - Submit monthly reimbursement claim to SCDE by the 10th of the month.
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- Nov**
- Complete all verification activities by November 15.
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- Dec**
- Begin on-site accountability reviews (if applicable).
 - Begin on-site Food Service Management Company (FSMC) reviews (if applicable).
 - Use SCAPS to update Annual Financial Status Summary for prior fiscal year to SCDE by December 31.
 - Submit monthly reimbursement claim to SCDE by the 10th of the month.
 - Submit SLP Financial report to the SCDE once external auditors has completed the financial review of SFA food service account.
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- Jan**
- If considering hiring a FSMC, start the process no later than January 1.
 - Submit monthly reimbursement claim to SCDE by the 10th of the month.
 - Submit Revenues and Expenses (for July 1 to December 31) to SCDE on SCAPS by January 31.
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- Feb**
- Complete on-site accountability reviews for all attendance centers by February 1 (if applicable).
 - Complete FSMC monitoring reviews and submit to SCDE by February 1 (if applicable).
 - Submit applications for USDA's Best Practice Award by February 15 to SCDE (optional).
 - Submit monthly reimbursement claim to SCDE by the 10th of the month.
 - Submit Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Applications to SCDE (if eligible).
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- Mar**
- Celebrate National School Breakfast Week.
 - Celebrate National Nutrition Month.
 - Receive SIFT training schedule from SCDE.
 - Submit monthly reimbursement claim to SCDE by the 10th of the month.
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- Apr**
- Submit monthly reimbursement claim to SCDE by the 10th of the month.
 - Attend mandatory Seamless Summer Option Training.
 - Update SCAPS accounts to reflect SSO sites, if applicable.
 - Update SCAPS accounts to reflect new upcoming SY.
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- Other**
- Submit reimbursement claims within 60 days of last day of month claimed.
 - Complete Afterschool Snack Program on-site review twice a year. Conduct first review within four weeks of beginning operation (if applicable).
 - Attend training offered by SCDE.
 - Continue providing updated information for SFA points of contact.
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