

Overview of School Nutrition Programs

Section 1, Overview of School Nutrition Programs

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Updated *Section 1, Overview of School Nutrition Programs* to update the section titles in *Information Box 1*.

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Contact Information for the

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), Food and Nutrition

When contacting TDA by phone, Contracting Entities (CEs) need to have their CE Identification Number (CE ID) (and site ID, if applicable). CEs should include their name and CE ID (and site name and ID if applicable) in all communication or documentation.

General Contact Information	
<i>Physical Address:</i>	1700 N. Congress, 11th Floor, Austin, TX 78701
<i>Mailing Address:</i>	PO Box 12847, Austin, TX 78711-2847
<i>Phone:</i>	877-TEXMEAL, (877) 839-6985
<i>Fax:</i>	(888) 203-6593
<i>Email Contact:</i>	squaremeals@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Website:</i>	www.squaremeals.org
Email Contact for Issues Related to Applications	
<i>Child & Adult Care Food Program:</i>	CACFP.BOps@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, & Special Milk Program:</i>	NSLP-SBP.BOps@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Seamless Summer Option:</i>	SSO.BOps@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Summer Food Service Program:</i>	SFSP.BOps@TexasAgriculture.gov
Email Contact for Issues Related to Program Operation	
<i>Commodity Operations:</i>	CommodityOperations@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Community Operations (Child & Adult Care Food Program & Summer Food Service Program):</i>	Commuinty.Ops@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Local Products:</i>	LocalProducts.SquareMeals@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Procurement, Including Sole Source:</i>	CE.ProcurementReviews.BOps@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>School Operations (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, & Special Milk Program):</i>	School.Operations@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>TX-UNPS Direct Certification Direct Verification System:</i>	DirectCertification@TexasAgriculture.gov
Email Contact for CE Flexibility Options	
<i>Breakfast Waiver:</i>	SNPWaivers@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Excessive Balance Plan:</i>	School.Operations@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Gender Exception:</i>	SNPWaivers@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Grains Exemption:</i>	Nutrition@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Milk Exemption:</i>	Nutrition@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Milk Substitute Notification:</i>	Nutrition@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Exemption:</i>	SNPWaivers@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>RCCI Age/Grade Group Meal Pattern Flexibility:</i>	School.Operations@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Seamless Summer Operation (SSO) Age/Grade Flexibility:</i>	SNPWaivers@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Child Nutrition Program Requirement Waiver:</i>	SNPwaivers@TexasAgriculture.gov
<i>Summer Mandate:</i>	SNPWaivers@TexasAgriculture.gov

Overview of School Nutrition Programs

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers the following United States Department of Education (USDA) nutrition programs:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
- Food Distribution Program (FDP)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
 - Afterschool Care Program (ASCP)
 - Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), also known as the Texas Commodity Assistance Program (TEXCAP)

The Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) addressed in this manual are the Afterschool Care Program (ASCP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP),¹ National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), and the Special Milk Program (SMP). Funds allocated for these programs must be used only for those programs and cannot be used for any other nutrition programs.²

For information about the any of these programs, contact TDA at P.O. Box 12847, Austin, TX 78711 or by calling (877)-TEX-MEAL.

¹ See USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/FFVP/default.htm for additional information on this program as well as the *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Handbook* located at www.squaremeals.org.

² More information on these programs is available at www.squaremeals.org.

These programs are also referred to as the School Nutrition Programs (SNP). The purpose of the SNP is to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the nation’s children by providing nutritional meals and snacks as well as milk each school day. This ensures that participating children gain a full understanding of the relationship between proper eating and good health as well as participating in learning experiences that will improve their eating habits. Each program has its own criteria for program participation.

There are multiple definitions for *child* in the nutrition programs. CEs should look at the regulations and guidance for the program(s) they administer to ensure that they are adhering to the definition for *child* for those programs.

For information on program participation, detailed explanation of program components, and regulatory guidance, see the appropriate section listed in *Information Box 1, Administrator’s Reference Manual (ARM)*.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP)³ is a federal entitlement program operating in public and private nonprofit schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs). It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. In 1998, Congress expanded the NSLP to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in after school educational and enrichment programs to include children through 18 years of age.

³ More information on these programs is available at www.squaremeals.org.

Information Box 1

Administrator’s Reference Manual (ARM)

For detailed information and requirements on the topics presented in the overview, see the following sections of the *Administrator’s Reference Manual (ARM)*.

Program Management

- Section 1, Overview of School Nutrition Programs
- Section 2, Application and Agreement
- Section 2C, Certification for Performance-Based Reimbursement
- Section 3, Records Retention
- Section 4, Determining Eligibility
- Section 5, Special Provision Options
- Section 6, Verification
- Section 7, Counting and Claiming

Program Requirements

- Section 8, Breakfast
- Section 9, Lunch
- Section 10, Afterschool Meal Programs
- Section 11, Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) Meal Pattern for School Nutrition Program (SNP) Operators
- Section 12, Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
- Section 13, Accommodating Students with Medical Disabilities and Special Dietary Needs

Program Finances

- Section 14, Financial Information Concerning School Nutrition Funds
- Section 15, Meal Pricing
- Section 16, Confidentiality and Program Integrity
- Section 17, Procurement

Program Operation

- Section 18, Food Safety
- Section 19, Other Operational Issues
- Section 20, Competitive Food Nutrition Standards
- Section 21, USDA Foods
- Section 22, Food Service Contracts
- Section 23, Administrative Review (AR)
- Section 24, Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling and Product Documentation
- Section 25, Professional Standards
- Section 26, Residential Child Care Institutions
- Section 27, Special Milk Program

All sections are available at www.squaremeals.org.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), administers the program at the federal level. At the state level, the NSLP is administered in public schools, private schools, and RCCIs by TDA, which operates the program through agreements with contracting entities (CEs).

CEs that choose to take part in the NSLP receive cash subsidies and USDA-donated foods (USDA Foods) for each lunch they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced-price lunches to eligible participants.

CEs receive different amounts of reimbursement based on the number of lunches served in each of the benefit categories: free, reduced-price, and paid.

Extended School Year Operation

Schools currently operating the NSLP during the school term may continue operation during the summer for students in academic summer school programs.

Nutritional Requirements for the NSLP

Decisions about the specific foods to serve and how food items are prepared are made by the CE. However, lunches must meet federal nutrition standards for calories, sodium, and saturated and trans fat established by USDA. These standards are based on the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

The School Breakfast Program (SBP)⁴ is a federal entitlement program operating in public and private nonprofit schools and RCCIs. Beginning as a pilot project in 1966, the SBP was made permanent in 1975 and is administered at the federal level by the FNS. TDA administers the program at the state level and local CEs administer the program at the local level in public schools, private schools, and RCCIs. Participating schools receive cash assistance from USDA for each breakfast served that meets program requirements. Like NSLP, CEs receive different amounts of reimbursement based on the number of breakfasts served in each of the benefit categories: free, reduced-price, and paid.

Nutritional Requirements for School Breakfast

Decisions about the specific foods to serve and how food items are prepared are made by the CE. However, breakfasts must meet federal nutrition standards for calories, sodium, and saturated and trans fat established by USDA. These standards are based on the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

⁴ More information on these programs is available at <http://www.squaremeals.org>.

Severe Need Breakfast Reimbursement

USDA established *severe need funding* for schools to serve nutritious breakfasts in locations where there is a large percentage of needy children. Severe need funding is approved on a school-by-school basis. Each school applying for severe need funding must meet the following criteria:

- Forty percent or more of the lunches served to children during the second preceding year were served free or at reduced-priced.
- The school or district is participating in or desires to initiate a breakfast program.

Application for severe need rates for schools can be made through the Texas Unified Nutrition Programs System (TX-UNPS) at any time during the school year. Contact TDA at (877) TEX-MEAL for assistance.

Afterschool Care Program (ASCP)

To qualify for Afterschool Care Program (ASCP),⁵ a CE must (1) be approved to operate the NSLP and (2) provide participants education or enrichment activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that is *open to all*.

Nutritional Requirements for Snacks

Snacks provided by ASCP must offer two required food components. Portion sizes for different age groups vary.

Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

TDA administers the Seamless Summer Option (SSO)⁶ for CEs that participate in the NSLP and SBP. The purpose of operating a SSO is to feed children in low-income areas during the summer months with reduced paperwork and to limit the administrative burden that is normally associated with operating different programs.

Feeding sites for this program may include one or more open site(s) within the attendance zone of a qualifying school as determined by the school officials. Qualifying sites must be located in an attendance area with 50 percent or higher free and reduced-price eligible children.

Summer Feeding State Mandate

Public school districts in which 50 percent of the total enrolled students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals must operate or arrange for the provision of a summer feeding program. Public school districts may operate

⁵ More information on these programs is available at www.squaremeals.org.

⁶ More information on these programs is available at www.squaremeals.org.

either the SSO or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) administered by the TDA.

Nutritional Requirements for the SSO

Nutritional standards for meals or snacks served and claimed must meet the NSLP, SBP, and ASCP requirements.

Special Milk Program (SMP)

TDA administers the Special Milk Program (SMP)⁷ in nonprofit child care institutions, summer camps, or nonprofit schools that do not participate in the NSLP, SBP, SFSP, or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Exception

A nonprofit child care institution or nonprofit school in which children do not have access to meal service through the NSLP, such as split-session kindergarten, is eligible to apply to participate in the SMP.

The SMP provides cash assistance to contracting entities to

- encourage the consumption of fluid milk by children and
- help defray the cost of providing milk to children.

Cash assistance includes general cash payments for milk served to children enrolled in the site.

To ensure the nutritional adequacy of milk served, the milk must meet the guidelines set by the USDA FNS.

Contracting Entities (CEs)

Contracting Entities (CEs) are agencies or organizations that provide the services through the programs that TDA administers.

NSLP, SBP, ASCP, and SSO

Any public school, public charter school, private nonprofit school or RCCI of high school grade or under, is eligible to participate in the NSLP, SBP, ASCP, and the SSO. Although charter schools are exempt from many state laws and regulations, they are not exempt from federal regulations regarding these SNPs. If the charter school decides to participate in the NSLP, SBP, ASCP, and SSO, all program regulations pertaining to the respective programs must be followed.

⁷ More information on these programs is available at www.squaremeals.org.

SMP

Any public school, public charter school, private nonprofit school or RCCI of high school grade or under and any child care institution or summer camp that is not participating in the NSLP, SBP, SFSP, and CACFP is eligible to participate in the SMP.