



Frequently Asked Questions

How is the Child Nutrition Program funded?

Child Nutrition (CN) Program, operating on a non-profit basis, receives federal funds from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as reimbursement for the service of meals meeting specific meal patterns. In addition, local CN programs must generate revenue to pay for food, supplies, equipment, indirect costs and salaries.

What is CEP?

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a USDA program that allows school districts to free breakfast and lunch to ALL students regardless of their economic status at schools that qualify for the program.

How does a campus qualify for CEP?

The USDA guidelines for CEP are based on the number of students at each who are living near or below the poverty line which includes those students who receive benefits from another assistance program. The USDA will reimburse for meals served at qualifying schools.

Where do schools get food?

Schools get food from two primary sources: purchase from commercial food distributors and donated food from the USDA Commodity Foods Program.

What is the USDA Foods Program?

The Food Distribution Division of USDA's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) coordinates the distribution of commodities to more than 94,000 public and private nonprofit schools that provide meals to students. These programs support American agricultural producers by providing cash reimbursement for meals served in schools and other child nutrition institutions.

What are reimbursable meals?

USDA reimburses schools for meals that meet specific meal patterns and nutrition guidelines. USDA nutrition guidelines are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. School systems have different options for developing menus with reimbursable meals.

What constitutes a reimbursable meal?

A reimbursable meal is when a student chooses three components offered at breakfast or lunch. The five daily components are milk, fruit, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates. For a tray to be reimbursable, 1 of the three components chosen **must be** a fruit or vegetable. A student may take all

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the components offered. Primary and Secondary School students are limited to 1 serving of fruit at lunch; High School students may take two servings of fruit at lunch.

Are students allowed more than one meal?

Students are allowed one free complete breakfast and one lunch daily. Additional meals may be purchased.

What if my student only wants the entrée or just one item for breakfast or lunch?

Students must take a complete meal to receive it at no cost. If a student chooses to take only one or items, they must pay a la carte pricing for those items.

If a student brings lunch from home, is milk provided at no cost?

Only complete meals are offered at no cost. The meal must include a fruit or vegetable and two other items. If a student only wants milk, they will need to pay a la carte pricing.

Who determines what food choices will be available on the daily menu?

Menus are planned by a Registered Dietitian, Assistant FNS Director and FNS Director with the student in mind. We attend various food shows and conducted several taste tests throughout the year to ensure we are serving items that are not only healthy, but that the students will actually enjoy. Nutritional analysis are conducted on all reimbursable menus to ensure that all Federal nutritional guidelines are met.

What is the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program?

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a federally assisted program offering free fresh fruits and vegetables to students in participating elementary schools during the school day. The FFVP is a USDA invitation-only program. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) decides who may participate/receive funds for the FFVP yearly. TDA bases their decision on the percentage of free and reduced meals per school and successful implementation of prior year's FFVP. Currently there are no applications for the FFVP available as TDA makes the decision.

What should I do if my child requires special diet modifications?

Weslaco ISD Food & Nutrition Services Department has a registered and licensed dietitian on staff to work on special dietary needs. The department has special diet prescription form available on the website <https://wisdnutrition.us/index.php?sid=1611102131548594&page=menus> or accessible with the school nurse. The special diet prescription form must be signed by a licensed physician and/or recognized medical authority. The signed special prescription form must be provided to the school nurse, who will forward it to the school's cafeteria manager, who will send it to the Food & Nutrition Services Registered Dietitian or faxed directly to 956-969-6596.

How safe are school meals?

Very safe. School nutrition professionals have rigorous training in food safety. School kitchens are subject to two health inspections each year conducted by the local health department. All foodservice staff maintain a Texas Food Handlers card. Hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) procedures are followed to verify that food is cooked or held at safe temperatures. Temperatures are monitored during receiving, storage, preparation, cooking, cooling, reheating, holding, assembling, packaging, transporting and serving.

What are Smart Snack Guidelines?

Starting in school year 2014-15, all food sold at school during the school day need to meet the new national nutrition standards. The Smart Snack in School regulations applies to foods sold a la carte, in the school store, cafeteria and vending machines. This is nationwide for all public schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. The online Smart Snack calculator can be used to determine if a food item meets the nutritional guidelines to be sold in school as a Smart Snack.

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>

What is considered the School Day?

The school day begins at midnight and continues until 30 minutes after the last instructional period of the day or the last bell for the school day.