





NUTS & BOLTS

OF SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS




Counting And Claiming Meals Tips and Tricks for Ensuring Accuracy

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

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Objectives For Meal Counting And Claiming Tips & Tricks



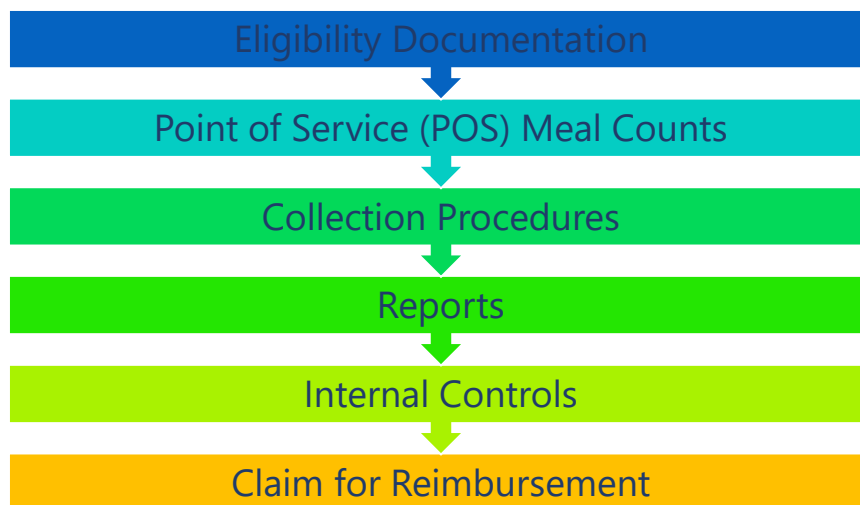
- To identify an accurate meal counting and claiming system
- Ensure no overt identification in any part of the meal counting and claiming process
- To ensure the validity of the School Food Authority's (SFAs) monthly claim for reimbursement

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Components of a Successful Meal Counting and Claiming System



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Eligibility Documentation / Tips & Tricks



Must include:

- Documentation for each student receiving a free or reduced price meal, i.e.,
 - D/C matches
 - application
 - source eligibility
- The number of eligible students in each category (free, reduced and full price)
 - Meal benefit issuance roster
- Eligibility information within the medium of exchange is accurate

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Point of Service (POS) Meal Counts / Tips & Tricks



- The point at which staff determines that a reimbursable meal has been served to an eligible child or student.
 - Common POS locations are school cafeterias
 - Alternate POS include classrooms and hallways
- POS meal counts must be done for every meal claimed for reimbursement.
 - Breakfast
 - Lunch
 - After School Snack
 - At Risk Snack & Supper

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Count and Claim / Tips & Tricks



- Accurate meal count:
 - Reimbursable meals
 - meal pattern
 - one meal per child per day
 - By category
 - Recorded each day
 - Prevent Overt Identification

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Collection Procedures



Overt identification is when a child is openly or physically identified as receiving a free or reduced price meal

- Separate meal service lines for students who are eligible for free, reduced-price and paid meals
 - Color-coded tickets for free/reduced eligible students
 - Serving different meals
 - Simple roster coding methods, such as F,R,P; or 1,2,3
 - Asking a student their eligibility
 - No prepayment system or an underutilized prepayment system
- A casual observation of your point of service should never be able to tell who is free, reduced price, or paid

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Medium of Exchange



- Cash or any type of ticket, token, I.D. , name or number which eligible students trade for obtaining a meal
- Must allow for daily updates
- The meal count/collection system must prevent overt identification throughout the entire process

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Acceptable Mediums of Exchange Systems:



1. Coded Roster
2. Coded ticket/token
3. Coded I.D. cards/bar code/pin pad



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Collection Procedures Coded Rosters



- Acceptable Coding Examples: Coding by series: (1000 sequence for free, 2000 sequence for reduced and 3000 sequence for paid)
- Coding by student ID number: Using the last digit in a student's ID number to indicate the appropriate eligibility category (0 for free, odd number for reduced and even number for paid)

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Coded Roster



- Examples include: name checklist, class list, number list

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be stolen, lost or destroyed • Documentation of meal count is produced during meal service as names/numbers are checked off on a roster or number sheet. If used with a number sheet, may be a fast method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used by another student or twice by the same student if more than one serving line. • Coded roster sheet is time consuming for cashiers using manual system.

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Coded Ticket/Token



Advantages

- When collected at point-of-service, provides a means of physically counting meals by category.
- When used in small to medium schools, counts by category can be completed quickly after the meal service

Disadvantages

- Can be destroyed, transferred, lost, stolen or sold.
- In large schools, too cumbersome to collect and count all tickets or tokens by category after the meal service.
- If not coded properly, may result in overt identification.

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Coded I.D. cards/bar code/pin pad



Advantages

- Provides accurate count and saves time; compiles meal count by category at the same time the students are counted
- Students do not have to be in the line by classroom; lines moves at the same pace whether the cashier knows all of the students names or not
- Prevents overt identification on the line
- Provides automated reports

Disadvantages

- Students may forget their numbers, thus slowing the line
- I.D. cards can be lost, destroyed or transferred.
- Start-up and operating costs may be high
- If more than one service line, there may be two meals claimed if the electronic machines are not linked

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Unacceptable Meal Count Systems / Tips & Tricks



- Attendance counts
- Tray, plate or entree counts
- Classroom counting
- Prepaid/charged meals counted on day paid
- Second meals claimed for reimbursement
- Ineligible persons claimed for reimbursement
- Cash converted to meals
- A la carte items claimed for reimbursement
- Category/cash back-out system
- Delivery counts of meals produced off-site
- Visual identification without backup

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Meal Count Consolidation Reports



- Daily Potential Income Sheet
- FP-9 form

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FP-9 Meal Count Sheet



- FP-9 for every school site
- Record meals by eligibility
- Edit checks- A,B,C and D
- Signature of site/facility representative
- Monthly submission to person consolidating claim



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Name of School:		Month / Year																																	
<p>The United States Department of Agriculture's ACCUCLAIM regulations require School Food Authorities to compare daily meal counts. This form has been designed to assist the School Food Authority in a daily comparison of meals served in columns 2 and 3 to the numbers of Free and Reduced Price Applications on file, the average number daily free, reduced price and paid lunches served in the preceding month and to the Attendance Factor. Accurate attendance and enrollment information for the previous month must be obtained from the School Department's Business Office.</p>																																			
A	Enrollment:			Average Daily Attendance:				Attendance Factor:		%																									
	Paid	Free	Reduced	Number of Days Lunches were Served				Number of Applications on File		Average Daily Participation Previous Month																									
B	LUNCHES SERVED TO CHILDREN											BREAKFASTS SERVED TO CHILDREN																							
	Day of Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
C		Full Price	Free	Reduced Price	Student Worker Non-Needy	Total Col 1,2,3,4	Non-Reimb Lunches	Full Price	Free	Reduced Price	Total of Columns 7,8,9	Non-Reimb Break																							
D	TOTAL APP for Month													Signature											Title										
	This form must be filled out daily and maintained on file.													Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education: Nutrition, Health and Safety											Form FP-9 Revised 10/08										

Average Daily Attendance Enrollment

Total meals by category Serving days

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Reference: ESE Document and Reference Library – NSLP National School Lunch Program - FP-9

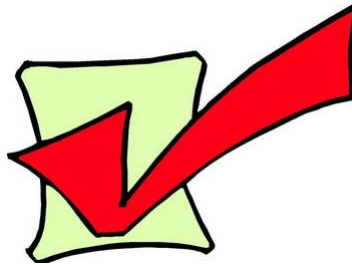


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Internal Controls / Tips & Tricks



- The SFA must establish internal controls to ensure that an accurate claim for reimbursement has been made by:
 - Completing daily edit checks
 - Monitoring



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Edit Checks / Tips & Tricks



USDA'S REQUIRED EDIT CHECK PROCEDURES FOR EACH SCHOOL

1. Obtain and record the highest number of students in each category
2. Compute the attendance factor
3. Multiply the number of enrolled children approved in each meal category (free, reduced-price and paid) by the **monthly** attendance factor
4. Compare the attendance adjusted eligible figures to the daily counts of free, reduced-price and paid meals
5. Provide written justification next to any day where the count exceeds the attendance-adjusted number. (Sample justification could be meal participation increased due to a pizza day or special promotion.)

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Other Edit Checks / Tips & Tricks



- Patterns or repetition of numbers
- Counts which equal the number of eligibles
- Counts equal to the number of meals delivered
- Identical counts on certain days (like every Monday or at breakfast and lunch)
- All of these are **red flags which may tell you that you need to investigate further**



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Common Counting And Claiming Issues In Breakfast In The Classroom



- No daily coded rosters or rosters not checked off as meal is served in the classroom at the point of service
- Inadequate training of staff counting and claiming breakfast in the classroom
- Meals counted that are not reimbursable with all the required components offered and taken in order to claim
- Meals counted in the cafeteria prior to being served at the point of service in the classroom
- Counts equal to the number of meals delivered to the classroom
- Counts based on attendance
- Inadequate monitoring of the breakfast in the classroom procedures



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Site Monitoring *Accuclaim*: (Accurate Claim)



- SFAs must monitor the lunch service at all sites to evaluate meal counting procedures by **February 1** each year. Monitoring of breakfast is also required at 50% of school breakfast sites .
- SFAs participating in the After School Snack Program must monitor snacks twice per year (once during the first 4 weeks of school and one other during the year).
- SFAs should record monitoring activities on required forms located in the document library.
- Report results to ESE by February 11, 2020.

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Site Monitoring / Tips & Tricks



Monitors should ensure that sites do not claim the following meals/food:

- Adult Meals
- Second meals eaten by eligible students
- Suppers or dinners (third meal of the day) unless the SFA participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool Program
- Snacks served on ineligible days
- Meals not meeting the meal pattern
- Meals served outside the required meal periods, unless otherwise approved
- A la carte items
- Meals being claimed through another program.

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Take A Final Look Before Hitting Submit / Tips & Tricks



- Make sure edit checks have been conducted on each school's counts
- Consolidate daily meal counts to monthly site totals by meal
- Once you've completed the edit, conducted your comparisons, found no problems, you can submit your claim



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Remember: Meal Counts Records Retention Tips



- SFAs must retain original meal count records for the current day and month by site
- SFAs must retain all meal counts records, including rosters and site monitoring reports for three (3) years after the submission of the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year, *plus the current fiscal year's records.*

If there is an open audit for any fiscal year, all records must be retained until closure notification of the audit.

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Questions



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Thank You
"Bunches"
For Our
Lunches!

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