

What Program can I use for Serving Meals in the Summer?

Serving options for the Summer include the Summer Food Service Program, the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option, and the National School Lunch Program.^{1, 2, 3}

1. **Summer Food Service Program**

The [Summer Food Service Program](#) was established to ensure children in eligible areas continue to receive nutritious meals during the summer months when school is not in session.

Complementary meals that meet the federal nutritional guidelines are provided to all children 18 years old and younger at approved, area eligible SFSP sites.

a. Site Eligibility

- i. The school in the service area is at or above 50% free and reduced eligible based on the ED534 report.
- ii. If the school is below 50% free and reduced eligible based on the ED534 report, but the site is located in a “pink” census tract area according to the USDA map, then the service area qualifies. USDA map found here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/area-eligibility>.
- iii. CEP: Individual school data is obtained by multiplying the most current school-level identified student percentage by a factor of 1.6.
- iv. Enrolled Sites: 50% or more of enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, determined by approved application, or operate in an eligible area (academic summer school must be an open site if eligible).
- v. Camps: Offer a regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children.
- vi. Migrant sites: Certification by a migrant organization that the sites serve children of migrant farm workers.

b. Reimbursement

- i. All meals served to children 18 and under in eligible areas or at approved sites can be claimed. At camps, free and reduced eligible children’s meals can be claimed.
- ii. SFSP rates: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/programs/sfsp>
- iii. SFSP rates are effective January – December

c. Meal Pattern

- i. [SFSP Meal Pattern](#)

d. Accountability

- i. Tick sheet method.
- ii. Camps claim by eligible camper.

e. Meals Served

- i. Can be offered 7 days per week.
- ii. Up to two meals per day, except for lunch and dinner. Camps and migrant sites can claim up to three meals per day.

2. **National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO)**

School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program are eligible to apply for the Seamless Summer Option. SSO has less paperwork. Under this option, SFAs serve meals free of charge to children 18 years and younger from eligible areas. Sites can be open to all or closed enrolled (this excludes academic summer school which must be an open site). Meals are reimbursed at the free rates for school lunches, school breakfasts, and afterschool snacks, which are slightly lower than the Summer Food Service Program.

- a. Site Eligibility
 - i. This is for School Food Authorities only.
 - ii. Same as SFSP.
- b. Reimbursement
 - i. NSLP free rates for breakfast, lunch, and snack.
 - ii. NSLP Free Rates for all meals served to children 18 and younger.
 - iii. NSLP rates <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/financial/guidelines>
 - iv. NSLP rates are effective July – June
- c. Meal Pattern
 - i. [SBP/NSLP/Afterschool Snack](#)
- d. Accountability
 - i. Tick sheet method.
- e. Meals Served
 - i. Can be offered 7 days per week.
 - ii. Up to two meals per day, except for lunch and dinner.

3. National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are available for any school that is hosting an academic summer school. Academic summer schools that intend to serve meals only to enrolled students follow the same rules and claiming procedures for free, reduced-price, and paid meals that they follow during the regular school year.

- a. Site Eligibility
 - i. This is for School Food Authorities only.
 - ii. This is for enrolled academic summer school students.
 - iii. This is an option for sites that do not meet area eligibility requirements for SFSP or SSO.
 - iv. For public schools, meals served through NSLP are served to children at no charge through the universal meals law.
- b. Reimbursement
 - i. Meals are claimed by individual status.
 - ii. NSLP rates <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/financial/guidelines>
 - iii. NSLP rates are effective July – June
- c. Meal Pattern
 - i. [SBP/NSLP/Afterschool Snack](#)
- d. Accountability
 - i. Current operational year meal benefit application used. For instance, if academic summer school is in July, this would mean the upcoming school year application is used.
 - ii. Point of Service accountability.
 - iii. Meals claimed by status.
 - iv. Save eligibility and Point of Service documentation.
- e. Meals Served
 - i. Breakfast, Lunch, and Afterschool Snack can be served.

4. Questions/Barriers

- a. *What if I am an SFA who is eligible for SFSP? Do I need to operate SFSP, or can I choose to operate NSLP?* Under federal requirements, academic summer school sites that qualify for SFSP must operate SFSP as an open site. Under Maine law, SFAs must offer SFSP if the school has summer educational or recreational programming and has 50% free/reduced eligible enrollment.^{4,5}
- b. *Does the Universal Meals Law apply to NSLP during the summer months?* Yes, for public schools operating NSLP for academic summer school starting after July 1, 2022.⁶
- c. *If I operate NSLP, do I need to offer meal benefit applications?* Yes, the current operational school year meal benefit application must be offered. So, if academic summer school is in July, this would mean the upcoming school year application is used.
- d. *When is the NSLP annual participation packet available in CNPweb? Can this application be used for the entire year if it is used for academic summer school?* The annual participation packet for NSLP will be available after June 1 of each year. The application can be used for the entire school year, starting with academic summer school in July. Work with DOE Child Nutrition to plan for any changes to the application.

Resources:

1. USDA Summer Food Service Program <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program>
2. USDA Comparison of Programs SFSP/NSLP/Seamless Option https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/SFSP_SeamlessComparisonChart.pdf
3. USDA Seamless Summer and Other Options for Schools <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/seamless-summer-and-other-options-schools>
4. Federal SFSP Regulations, 7 CFR Part 225 – Summer Food Service Program <https://www.fns.usda.gov/part-225%E2%80%94summer-food-service-program>
5. Maine Legislature – 6602 School Food Service Programs <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-a/title20-Asec6602.html>
6. Summary of LD 1679 “An Act to Address Student Hunger through Expanding Access to Free School Meals” http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?id=1679&PID=1456&snum=130