

A blue-tinted background image showing a group of children in a school cafeteria. They are standing at a food service counter, looking at various food items. The text is overlaid on this image.

MAINE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION  
Child Nutrition Programs

# Counting and Claiming Reimbursable Meals

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# Point of Service

## Purpose:

- Identify a student's eligibility status (free, reduced, or paid) when they receive a reimbursable meal.
- Identify the student has selected a reimbursable meal that can be counted and claimed for reimbursement.

## Definition:

- Defined by regulation as a meal count taken at "that point in the food service line where it can be accurately determined that a reimbursable free, reduced or paid lunch and/or breakfast has been served to an eligible child." The **end of the serving line** is considered the point of service.

## Why it matters:

- Prevents over- and under-claiming.
- Prevents claiming of incomplete and non-reimbursable meals.
- Overt Identification – Any action that openly identifies children as eligible for free or reduced-price benefits in any child nutrition program.
- A casual observation of your point of service should never be able to tell who is free, reduced , or paid.

**Confidentially maintaining a student's meal status is of the highest importance.**

## In Short...

AT POS

The Student must have a complete meal

That meal is counted at the time the student receives it

That meal is counted based on the student's Status (Fr/Rd/Pd) unless CEP/Prov2

The Sponsor then files a claim for the meals served based on how many F/R/P meals are served

Then Sponsor receives reimbursement

# Point of Service Methods

## An Electronic POS System

An electronic system requires a POS software program. Including:

- scanning a barcode on a student ID card,
- students entering an identification number on a keypad,
- a food service employee checking the students into the computer system at the POS.

There are several POS software systems available for purchase on the market.

Select a program that is appropriate to meet the needs of their site(s).



# Manual Point of Service System in combination with an Electronic system

- When a food service employee uses a daily **student roster** in combination with **electronic system**.

Example: The employee uses a roster to check students off at the POS as they receive a reimbursable meal.

Once the meal service is complete, the employee enters the students into a POS electronic software program for counting purposes.



## 100 % Manual Point of Service Method:

- A manual system is when a student Roster is used to check students off at the POS as they receive a reimbursable meal. Checklist Includes:
  - List of students names (roster)
  - Check marked by the student's name when they collected a reimbursable meal.
  - Student rosters should be used when the school has traditional claiming, and or needs to prevent duplicative meals

19-2020

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By Classroom

10/30

\_\_\_ Breakfast \_\_\_ Lunch

Student ID	Grade	Name	Elig			
1	1		7	X		
1	1		7	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		5	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		5	X		
1	1		7	X		
1	1		6	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		5	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		3	X		
1	1		7	A		
1	1		5	X		
1	1		7	X		
1	1		7	X		



This appears as though the teacher counted meals for all students except the absent one. Meal counts are not to be aligned with attendance.

10-30-19

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By Classroom

\_\_\_ Breakfast \_\_\_ Lunch

Student ID	Grade	Name	Elig			
	K		3	✓		
	K		3	✓		
	K		7	✓		
	K		7	✓		
	K		7	✓		
	K		3	✓		
	K		7	✓		
	K		5	✓		
	K		3	✓		
	K		3	-		
	K		7	✓		
	K		3	✓		
	K		7	✓		
	K		7	-		
	K		7	-		
	K		7	-		
	K		7	-		
	K		3	✓		
	K		3	✓		
	K		7	✓		



The teacher has clearly indicated which students did and did not receive a meal. No extra markings or attendance. This is preferred.

Total Students: 20

## Tick Sheets (CEP / Provision II only)

- Can use of tic sheets
- Tic sheets should be used only for services where there is **one point of service** for a define set of students (classroom or cafeteria with 1POS)
- Tic sheets for hallway breakfast service could be problematic especially where there is more than 1 location in the school that a student could obtain a breakfast /lunch

# Question?

With manual accountability (rosters/tic sheets) how many points of service can there be during a meal service?

What might be an exception?

# Question?

Could you use a tic sheets with second chance breakfast?  
Why/how - or why not?

# Question?

Breakfast meals delivered to a classroom (pre-packaged)

- Meals were pre-ordered by the students that morning.
- Food service staff goes around and collects breakfast meals leftover uses the leftover meal count minus the meals ordered to obtain the meal count

Why isn't this acceptable?

# Unique Situations

## Visiting Student Meals

- Students who are enrolled in one school but are visiting a school in another school district (and whose benefit status is undocumented) can be claimed as paid. If there is an agreement among school districts and benefit
- If status is documented, the visiting student may be charged and claimed in accordance with his or her benefit status.
- Students and/or siblings who are not enrolled in any school must be charged the adult meal price.

# Unique Situations

## Field Trips

- Meals should be available to all students, regardless of free, reduced-price, or paid eligibility status.
- lunches must be served within the USDA approved times of 10am and 2pm in order to claim the meals for reimbursement.
- OVS is not required as part of field trip meal service.
- The SFA must have a local process for an accurate point of Service.

*For example, a teacher can check off names on a list as each student receives a meal. The student list must be returned to food service for meals to be recorded properly for claiming. Students can also select a bag lunch at the cafeteria and enter their PIN before leaving on the field trip.*

Counts of bag lunches sent or returned or field trip attendance counts may not be used as a meal count.

Production records must document field trip meals separately

# Unallowable Meal Counts and Methods

- Counting meals prepared / left over meals (tray counting)
- Counts based on pre-orders
- Counting by attendance instead of actual meals served
- Counting incomplete meals
- Tallying meals after service has ended
- Counts taken anywhere other than at the point of service
- Counts taken at the beginning of the serving line
- Second Meals
- Incomplete meals
- Including Adult meals in meal count
- A La Carte meals
- “I know all of my students” then after meals have been served, person walks through the cafeteria marking the students who received meals

## Point of Service Best Practice

Electronic POS systems are preferred and should:

- Identify reimbursable meals and or a la carte items
- Separate student eligibility categories (F/R/P)(unless CEP or Provision II)
- Can produce daily and monthly reports quickly and accurately.
- Provides edit checks within the system

If a manual system is used:

- It must be consistent, controlled and traceable
- Edit checks must be in place with daily and monthly monitoring
- Attendance factors applied as an edit check
- Meal counts should be consolidated monthly before the claim is filed
- Be consistent with production records

## Best Practice Cont.

- Regardless of POS method Staff must verify that all required components are taken before the meal is counted.
- Staff must understand the importance of checking the students who receive a meal be able to distinguish a reimbursable meal.
- Eliminate and automate as much as possible- use spread sheets and consolidated forms

### **Backup Counting System:**

- Must have a method to collect meals in case the electronic system fails.
- Written internal procedures for their meal counting system, including the back-up system.

## Sample Consolidated form

POS= any location meal counts are taken!

This is an example of a CEP school

ABC SCHOOL			Total for ABC
January	POS1	POS2	school
1	40	22	62
2	41	23	64
3			0
4			0
5	32	25	57
6	33	22	55
7	22	26	48
8	45	21	66
9	33	15	48
10			0
11			0
12	35	28	63
13	55	27	82
14	35	22	57
15	32	22	54
16	44	25	69
17			0
18			0
19	33	25	58
20	34	23	57
21	2	22	24
22	30	21	51
23	22	26	48
24			0
25			0
26	44	22	66
27	53	27	80
28	44	27	71
29	45	27	72
30	46	26	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>1324</b>
<b>Operating days</b>			
<b>20</b>			

# Sample Consolidated form for regular claiming

January	ABC school								
	POS1			POS2			Total		
	Free	Reduced	Paid	Free	Reduced	Paid	Free	Reduced	Paid
1									
2	43	22	130	49	14	108	92	36	238
3	57	15	128	46	13	104	103	28	232
4	53	12	111	48	16	98	101	28	209
5	52	7	126	39	12	108	91	19	234

# Question?

What happens if you lose a tic-sheet but you have a number indicated on your consolidated form?

# Question?

You just lost power, what's your meal counting backup method??

You have a substitute teacher with breakfast in the classroom service where the teacher is expected to take meal counts—what is your procedure to ensure meal counts/ meals are properly counted/claimed?

## Best Practice Cont.

**Consolidation Forms** - Sites using manual accountability (rosters/tic sheets)

Consolidated forms are required for each POS, these counts are then combined for your monthly claim for that site.

School should be able to confirm counts by day/meal type for each location meals are counted.

### **Student Meal Benefit Applications-**

**REMEMBER** those that are processing Student Meal Benefit Application:

- Keep application on file for each student claimed free or reduced
- Free and Reduced meal count must match student count

## ? Acceptable or Unacceptable Meal Count Systems ?

Are these acceptable point –of-service meal counting procedures?

- Counts taken in the classroom before meal or after meal service
- Head counts/ attendance
- Tray or entrée counts before and after the meal service
- Counts of lunches prepared / ordered
- Including adults in reimbursable meal counts

# Monitoring and Edit Checks

# Monitoring

Monitoring ensures that:

- The school's meal count reports are **based on the approved counting system**
- The counting system, as implemented, yields the **actual number of reimbursable meals**
- Meals are accurately claimed by category:
  - Free
  - Reduced-price
  - Paid
  - Monitoring verifies that:
- Counting occurs at the **Point of Service (POS)**
- Only reimbursable meals are counted
- Daily documentation supports the monthly claim

## Attendance Factor (AF) / Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

The **Attendance Factor** is used during Daily Edit Checks to ensure meal counts do not exceed reasonable participation levels.

### Purpose

To prevent:

- Over-claiming
- Data entry errors
- Participation exceeding realistic attendance

# How to Find an Attendance Factor

## Preferred Method – Local Factor

- Obtain enrollment and attendance data from:
  - School Office
  - Business Office
  - District data system
- Calculate:

$$\text{Attendance Factor} = \frac{\text{Average Daily Attendance}}{\text{Enrollment}}$$

Developing a **local Attendance Factor** is strongly preferred.

## How to Find an Attendance Factor Cont.

### Maine DOE Default (Last Resort)

- If no local factor is available, DOE data may be used:
- ~95% for Elementary Schools
- ~93% for High Schools
- This should only be temporary until a local factor is established.

Sample Edit check workbook for school with attendance factor of 95% and 500 enrollment

School:	Arizona Elementary School				Enrollment (Membership):				500				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National School Lunch Program			
Month:	October				Attendance Factor (AF):				95.00%				<input type="checkbox"/> School Breakfast Program			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D				
Day of Month:	Free Eligible	AF	Free Eligible X AF:	Free Meals Served:	Reduced Eligible	AF	Reduced Eligible X AF:	Reduced Meals Served:	Paid Eligible:	AF	Paid Eligible X AF:	Paid Meals Served:	TOTAL COUNTS:			
1	250	95.00%	238	220	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	140	450			
2	250	95.00%	238	230	100	95.00%	95	94	150	95.00%	143	138	462			
3	250	95.00%	238	240	100	95.00%	95	87	150	95.00%	143	141	468			
4	250	95.00%	238	235	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	135	460			
5	250	95.00%	238	220	100	95.00%	95	75	150	95.00%	143	130	425			
6		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
7		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
8	250	95.00%	238	222	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	137	449			
9	250	95.00%	238	231	100	95.00%	95	92	150	95.00%	143	140	463			
10	250	95.00%	238	235	100	95.00%	95	89	150	95.00%	143	131	455			
11	250	95.00%	238	251	100	95.00%	95	102	150	95.00%	143	151	504			
12	250	95.00%	238	228	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	130	448			
13		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
14		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
15	250	95.00%	238	223	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	142	455			
16	250	95.00%	238	230	100	95.00%	95	95	150	95.00%	143	139	464			
17	250	95.00%	238	227	100	95.00%	95	94	150	95.00%	143	140	461			
18	250	95.00%	238	235	100	95.00%	95	96	150	95.00%	143	138	469			
19	250	95.00%	238	220	100	95.00%	95	85	150	95.00%	143	130	435			
20		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
21		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
22	250	95.00%	238	220	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	140	450			
23	250	95.00%	238	232	100	95.00%	95	94	150	95.00%	143	138	464			
24	250	95.00%	238	237	100	95.00%	95	87	150	95.00%	143	141	465			
25	250	95.00%	238	239	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	144	473			
26	250	95.00%	238	218	100	95.00%	95	75	150	95.00%	143	130	423			
27		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
28		95.00%	0			95.00%	0			95.00%	0		0			
29	250	95.00%	238	235	100	95.00%	95	89	150	95.00%	143	140	464			
30	250	95.00%	238	230	100	95.00%	95	88	150	95.00%	143	138	456			
31	250	95.00%	238	226	100	95.00%	95	90	150	95.00%	143	130	446			
Totals:				5284				2062				3163	10509			

Match these counts to your daily meal count forms.

Yellow cells: This should prompt the SFA to check that meal counts are accurate, but should not deter the SFA from entering the true meals served if it is found to be correct.





Red cells: If any meals served exceeded the number of approved eligibles, this is considered an error and the SFA needs to investigate further and make the correction.

These totals go directly into the monthly claim!



# Daily Edit Check Requirements

Daily Edit Checks are:

-  Required at each participating site
-  An internal control for accurate reimbursement
-  Completed daily (not monthly)
-  Used to validate monthly claims
- Monthly claims must reflect **edit-checked daily counts**.

# What Daily Edit Checks Ensure

Meal counts do not exceed:

- Eligible students by category
- Attendance-adjusted participation level

Reimbursement claims are defensible during:

- Administrative Reviews
- On-site Monitoring
- Audits




## Common Identifiable Errors

Monitoring should look for:

- ✘ More meals claimed than eligible students (by category)
- ✘ Counts exceeding attendance-adjusted eligibility
- ✘ Claims not supported by daily documentation
- ✘ Attendance factor not updated annually in POS system
- ✘ Identical meal counts every day (patterned reporting)
- ✘ Failure to reconcile POS totals with edit check worksheet

# On-Site Monitoring Requirements

Must be conducted:

-  Annually
-  Completed by February 1
-  By an SFA employee

Review must verify:

- Menus served are reimbursable
- Accurate POS meal counts daily
- Daily meal counts match edit check documentation
- Counting procedures follow approved application

## Sponsor-Level Monitoring Responsibilities

At the sponsor/SFA level, staff must:

- Review meal counts for irregularities
- Review and validate Daily Edit Checks
- Ensure claim status is “Approved”
- Confirm reimbursement is received and deposited timely
- Reconcile claim totals to edit-checked site totals
- Investigate unusual participation trends

# Internal Controls - Maintain Daily Source Documentation

## Best Practice

Daily records must document:

- Number of reimbursable meals served
- Eligibility count
  - Program type (Breakfast, Lunch, Snack)
  - Date of service

## Reconcile daily:

- POS meal counts
- Production records (prepared vs. leftovers)

## Red Flags

- Meals served exceed meals prepared
- Repeated identical counts
- Counts consistently match attendance exactly

# Monthly Claim For Reimbursement

- Meal counts from each school are entered in CNPWeb in the "Claims" tab.

Sponsor Summary

Checklist	Applications	Forms	Activities	Claims	Payments	Users
Date of Last One Time Exception: None				Kennebec County		
Claim Month	Form / Site Name	Revision	Status	Claim Amount	Action	
Reimbursement Claims						
July 2025	Claim can only be submitted as a One-Time Exception after 60 days.				+ ↓	
YTD Claim Totals - Excludes State Reimbursement				\$0.00		

- Must be approved by the claim filer and approver

**Certification**

22.  Check here to **Certify this claim.**  
*"I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief information, or the omission of any material fact Sections 2, 1001, 1343 and Title 31, Sections 3*

23.  Check here to **Approve this claim.**  
*"I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief information, or the omission of any material fact Sections 2, 1001, 1343 and Title 31, Sections 3*

- If you want to be reimbursed in the current month, you must submit your claim no earlier than the 1st and no later than the 8th of that same month.



# Questions

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