

Alternative Points of Service (POS) Meal Counts

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations require that “point of service” meal counts be used in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Point of Service refers to the location in the serving line where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or full paid meal, meeting all meal pattern requirements, has been served to an eligible student.

Examples of alternate points of service include counting meals in the classroom (such as breakfast in the classroom or Pre-K meals), hallways or other locations outside of the cafeteria.

Any alternate points of service location must meet the following criteria:

1. Train all employees responsible for meal counts on how to accurately count reimbursable meals. They must ensure that each meal counted for reimbursement meets meal pattern requirements. Ensure that annual USDA civil rights training is completed and documented.
2. All required meal components in the minimum quantities must be offered to students, including at least two types of milk.
3. If any meals are found to be non-reimbursable, they cannot be included on the meal count form.
4. Be sure all point of service locations is counting one meal per student. With Special Provisions (Community Eligibility Provision and non-base year SP 2), additional requirements will be needed to ensure duplicate meals are not counted.
5. Annually review the alternate points of service as part of the on-site monitoring form, which is due February 1st of each year.

If the counting procedure deviates from these requirements, please contact the Maine Child Nutrition office at child.nutrition@maine.gov to discuss implementing the alternate point of service.

Unallowable Meal Counting Procedures

The following are examples of unallowable meal counting procedures in alternate points of service and should not be used:

- Using attendance counts or morning sign ups
- Using the number of tickets sold/issued
- Taking head counts of students after meals have been served
- Using a tray count (the starting and ending number of trays during meal service)
- Serving meals to all students (or all students who have ordered a meal), such as placing meals on desks of students prior to their arrival
- Taking verbal meal counts and providing meals to teachers or other staff to serve to students at another location (such as special education, in-school suspensions, or testing situations)