

Updates from School Support

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MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

June 2025



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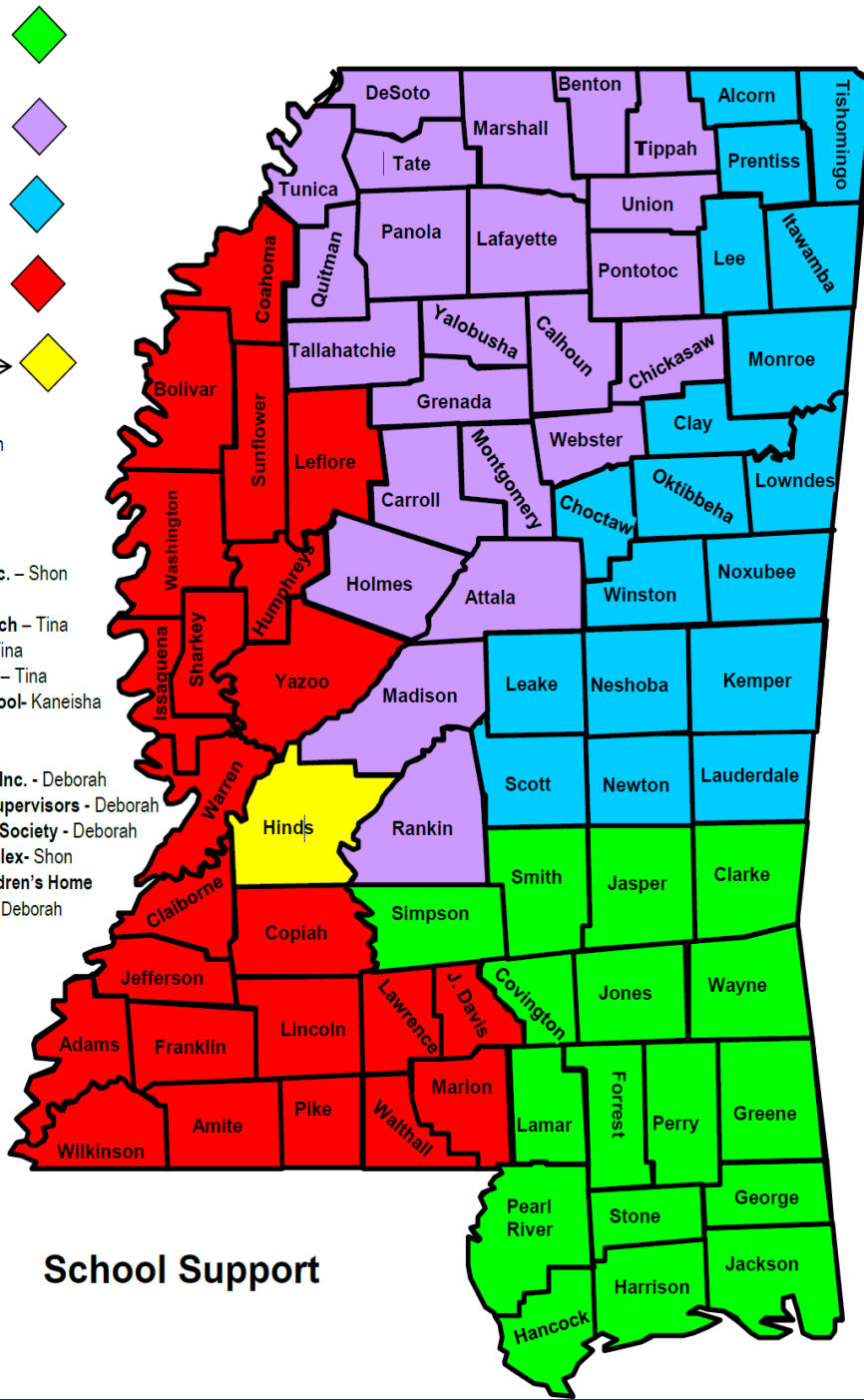
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School Support



Policy

Updates from USDA

Phased-in approach

- Finalizes Buy American proposal but adopts a phased-in approach to implementation of the non-domestic food purchases limit. While the overall implementation date for the Buy American changes is July 1, 2024, the non-domestic food purchases limit will be phased in as follows:
- 10% beginning in SY 2025-26.
- 8% beginning in SY 2028-29.
- 5% beginning in SY 2031-32.

Applications

Updates & Reminders

NOW OPEN! Annual Contract in MARS

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- Please complete your NSLP / SBP / ASCP in MARS
- Especially important to complete quickly if you operate in July
- Please be patient with and responsive to your PS
- SA Staff Who is going to work your contract?



Taquasia- Director of Monitoring

Shawn-Director of Technical Assistance

Program Specialist:

Chris, Dawn, Debra, Kaneisha, Natalie,
Quatrice, Shaniya, Shakvia, Shonula, Tina

What to upload with annual application

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Checklist for Success!



- Update your Permanent Agreement if there have been any recent changes in personnel.
- Confirm all Designated Administrative Titles are current.
- Ensure Public Notifications are up-to-date.
- Submit two Health Inspections from the previous year.
- Conduct a Single Audit for organizations receiving more than \$750K in federal funds.
- Complete a 2-page Agreement to Furnish Foods to CACFP Org if applicable.
- Process FSMC annual renewals if required.
- For RCCIs only – ensure a valid license to operate from the cognizant agency is in place.
- Confirm your website includes a current non-discrimination statement and attach a screenshot to the application.

Affects Site Names



- **NES** (No Enrolled Students): These sites do not have permanently enrolled students. Instead, students visit these sites temporarily during the day, and their MSIS number remains assigned to their primary school. Examples include magnet schools for gifted students or students enrolled in community college dual enrollment programs.
- **ALT** (Alternative School): This designation is used for students who are enrolled at their regular school but spend a portion of their time at an alternative school.
- **MAS** (Multiple Academic Sites): A single cafeteria serves two or more academic sites, catering to students from multiple institutions. For example, a cafeteria where both middle school and high school students dine, though they are registered separately with MDE and MSIS for academic tracking.
- Purpose of MARS Listing: The categorization in MARS (cafeteria sites) may not always match the academic site listings in MSIS, as MARS focuses on operational aspects like cafeteria services rather than academic enrollment. This helps in managing and coordinating cafeteria services across different educational settings more effectively.

Must have permission to operate from Health Department



- - Contact Serena Johnson from MSDH Food Protection for guidance related to food transportation and service.
- - Phone: 601-576-7689
- - Email: serena.johnson@msdh.ms.gov
- - Ensure that all operational plans are clearly detailed and submitted for approval.
- - It is crucial to adhere strictly to the approved plans. Any deviations from the approved plans will result in the loss of Health Department approval.

Lower or Eliminate the Reduced Meal Charge

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SP 17-2014

Request to Lower or Eliminate Reduced Price Student Meal Charges (as defined in SP 17-2014)

Organization / SFA Name: _____

1. The Organization/SFA seeks approval from the State Agency (SA) to: (select one)

☐ Lower the reduced price student meal charge to \$_____ (Lunch) and \$_____ (Breakfast)
7 CFR 245.2 (2) specifies that the reduced price shall not exceed 40 cents for lunch and 30 cents for breakfast.

☐ Eliminate the reduced price student meal charge

2. The plan to lower or eliminate the reduced price student meal charge will apply to: (select one)

☐ All sites within the organization/SFA

☐ Select sites within the organization/SFA (attach list)

CERTIFICATIONS (select all below to certify)

☐ The plan to lower or eliminate the reduced price student meal charge has received Board Approval on the following date: _____

☐ The Organization/SFA understands that the federal reimbursement for meals served to students determined eligible for reduced meals will remain the same.

☐ The Organization/SFA understands that expenditures associated with covering the reduced price student payments may be funded from the non-profit school food service account.

☐ The Organization/SFA has conducted an analysis of current and projected operating costs to ensure that they are able to maintain operations and meal quality without the revenue generated from charging students for reduced price meals.

Name of Superintendent

Signature of Superintendent

Date

Name of Child Nutrition Director

Signature of Child Nutrition Director


Date

STATE AGENCY USE ONLY

Signature of Approving Official: _____

Date Approved: _____

Once approved, this request will remain in effect in perpetuity without the need for annual renewal.
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Rev. 6/2023

- You are not required to collect payments from children eligible for reduced-price meals.
- Your operations must be financially viable without additional reimbursement when not collecting these payments.
- The State Agency (SA) provides a form that you can fill out if you wish to eliminate or reduce payment collection for these meals.
- Any changes made using this form must be approved by your board.

Can request to carry an excess balance from SA



- SA has the authority to allow an SFA to carry an excess balance (7 CFR 210.19(a))
- Complete the request form and submit to the SA

Operations

Updates & Reminders

Stay ahead with key dates for compliance and reporting.

- **NSLP Applications:** Due 30 days before operations begin.
- **MARS Financial Report:** Due by December 15, 2025.
- **MARS Verification Report:** Due by January 15.
 - Verification Collection Report (FNS 742)

Note: Failure to meet these deadlines means that the state cannot report to USDA. MDE OCN will reach out to relevant parties within a school district—be that a Superintendent, Business Manager, or CND Secretary—to ensure timely completion of the reports/applications

Sack Lunches on the Last Day of School

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Might be convenient; might not be allowable!



- Students may receive a sack lunch but are not allowed to leave campus.
- Congregate feeding rules apply for the National School Lunch Program, even on the last day of school.
- Non-congregate feeding, such as students taking food home, requires a USDA waiver.
- Field trips are considered congregate feeding because students eat together, whether on the bus, in a park, or at a museum. This aligns with NSLP's congregate meal requirements.

Staff who are paid out of CN funds are eligible for in-kind meals

Typically, the following personnel do not receive in-kind meals as part of school meal programs:

- Janitors
- School Resource Officers
- Superintendents
- Board Members
- Principals
- Teachers

If a district chooses to offer free meals to these individuals as a courtesy, it must reimburse the Child Nutrition (CN) program for the cost of these meals. All related invoices or payments will be subject to review during financial audits.



Not Allowed



- Meals cannot be withheld from students.
- While there is no requirement to provide meals to students who are suspended at home,
- Students in In-School Suspension (ISS) must have the same access to meals as other students.



- Non-Provision (Pricing) Districts MUST have a local meal charge policy
- Implementation and enforcement of policy is left to district
- When drafting the policy, the district should balance competing goals of:
 - Maintaining access to meals
 - Decreasing accrual of bad debt
- May Consider Eliminating the Reduced Price Meal Charge (apply through SA)
- May consider limiting the number of meals a student can charge
- May Consider serving alternate meals
 - If alt meal is served at no additional cost to student, the cost is allowable for the NPSFSA, but the meal served must be reimbursable. If not reimbursable, must find non-federal source of funds for “no-cost-to-student” provision.
 - Cost of provision of alt meals can be added to student debt to decrease strain on NPSFSA

Policy is left to Local Control



- Every fall, we receive numerous inquiries from Child Nutrition Directors (CNDs) and Local Education Agency (LEA) administrators regarding the regulation of outside food.
- It's important to note that there are no USDA regulations that specifically prohibit or restrict the inclusion of outside food.
- However, many districts opt to include rules against outside food in their Wellness Policies or Student Handbooks.
- The implementation and enforcement of these policies are determined at the local level, allowing each district to handle it according to their specific needs and preferences.

May Donate but only under specific conditions



- It is incumbent upon the SFSA to ensure that the entity is an established non-profit.
- Only perishable foods that cannot reasonably be expected to be used by the CN program before their expiration date can be donated
- The SFA may not buy additional foods to serve so that certain foods may be donated (*i.e. make sure you or managers aren't over-ordering*)
- Should the district decide to donate food, the following steps must be taken:
 - Notify the SA of the items and quantities to be donated
 - Provide a reason these foods cannot be used by the program
 - Verify the non-profit's status (Active 501(c)(3); Registration with the SOS)
 - Receive a receipt on letterhead detailing all items and quantities donated
 - Keep records of all purchase, dates, etc. in the event of a review

FSMC



- RFPs should be pre-approved by SA
- Contracts **MUST** be pre-approved by SA

Remind your districts, especially if you are seeking a "cost reimbursable contract", that there is a high degree of self-monitoring. We will check during AR/PR to make sure all reimbursed costs are allowable.

Don't forget to Convene Your Health Councils or Assess your LSWP!



- Federal Requirement: must assess LSWP triennially (SP 24-2017)
- State Requirement: must assess LSWP annually (MS Code 37-13-134)
- LSWP Template:
 - https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/documents/OCN/wellness-policy-guide_nov_2021_updated_sd_1.pdf
 - *SFAs that are not accredited by MDE should ask their PS for a simplified LSWP template that includes only federal (not state) requirements.*
- LSWP Assessment Template
 - [https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/documents/OHS/Home/Resources/mississippi-healthy-school-self-assessment_20151019093438_594915%20\(1\).doc](https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/documents/OHS/Home/Resources/mississippi-healthy-school-self-assessment_20151019093438_594915%20(1).doc)

Meal Apps & Verification

Updates & Reminders

Meal Application Distribution

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We know you get a lot of pressure from your district, but....



- Applications for the upcoming school year cannot be distributed before July 1.
- Any applications received prior to July 1 will be considered for the current school year, not the upcoming one.

SNAP numbers on Apps / Verification for Cause

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Pg. 34 & 99 of Eligibility Manual



- Must Provide meal free meal benefits based on SNAP number on application
- Review the case number to see if it appears legitimate and has the correct number of digits. (ex. 123456789 is suspicious)
- Try your best to locate the child on the DC list (this removes them from Verification pool)
- If you can't find them on the DC list, you have the option to verify them for cause (separate from the formal Verification process)

Households that Fail to Apply

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7 CFR 245.6 (d); pg. 42 of Eligibility Manual



- Local School official may complete an app for a child known to be eligible for meal benefits, if the family has not applied.
- Intended for LIMITED USE IN INDIVIDUAL SITUATIONS – must NOT be used to make eligibility determinations for categories or groups of children
- These apps are excluded from Verification; but total number must be reported on 3-3 of Verification Report (“Non Applicant but approved by Local Officials”)

SOPs for obtaining Categorical Eligibility Documentation

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Came up during Several ARs this past year



- Should have internal procedure for obtaining foster and homeless documentation from your designated district representative (Typically the McKinney Vento Coordinator)
- Should not be scrambling to find this information during an AR; it should already be on file

Household Notification of Verification (Letter)

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Required Element (pg. 106 of Eligibility Manual)




- A telephone number the household can call at no cost for assistance
 - The LEA may **establish a toll free number or allow the household to reverse the charges** if any households in the LEA are outside the local calling area
 - The LEA may also provide different telephone numbers for each local calling area within the LEA

Finances

Updates & Reminders

What's up with the difference in the rates?



SEVERE NEED: Schools are eligible for severe need **breakfast** reimbursement rates if 40% or more of NSLP lunches served to students during the second preceding SY were at the F/R rate.


TWO CENT DIFFERENTIAL: Schools are eligible for two cent differential **lunch** reimbursement if 60% or more of NSLP lunches served in the second preceding SY at the F/R rate.

Can be Problematic depending on the Program and Purpose



- The purchase of water bottles for either adult or student consumption outside of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) settings does not qualify as an allowable expense under these programs. If such purchases are occurring:
- Districts should ensure they are managing and funding these purchases separately from NSLP/SBP budgets.
- Water bottles should not be supplied for classroom use or by the school nurse as part of these programs.
- Child Nutrition (CN) staff are entitled to in-kind meals under the NSLP, but water does not constitute part of these meal patterns. However, providing accessible, free potable water during meal services is a requirement under the NSLP. Conversely, for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), providing free water bottles is not mandated and such expenses are considered unallowable.

Subtitle

- 
- **Equipment with Remaining Useful Life:** If the equipment still has useful life and is listed in the Child Nutrition (CN) inventory, it can be repurposed for other federal programs without complications. Simply remove the equipment from CN inventory.
 - **Using Equipment for Non-Federal Purposes:** If the district wishes to use the equipment for non-federal purposes and it still has useful life, the district must compensate CN by paying the fair market value or price equivalent to the remaining useful life of the equipment.
 - **Equipment with No Usable Life:** Check the district's salvage policy for equipment that no longer has usable life.
 - **Need for Approvals and Documentation:**
 - If you plan to sell the equipment, obtain board approval and keep receipts associated with the sale.
 - If the equipment is to be disposed of, also secure board approval and document the disposal process.

Questions: For any specific inquiries, contact the State Agency (SA) for guidance.

Resources

Available to You

Can Be Accessed at any time



Child Nutrition Resources

To assist you with information related to operating a Child Nutrition Program, please select from the list of resource information listed below. This information includes manuals and materials available on-line as well as links to other web sites with additional resources.

New Administrator Orientation (NAO) 2023

- NAO Part I
- NAO Part II

State Conferences:

- July 2023
- July 2022

Child Nutrition Resource Information:

- Administrative Reviews
- Adult Meal Pricing Tool – SY 23/24
- ASCP Monitoring Form
- Capital Expenditure Request
- CEP Sample Letter to Households (Rev 5/2023)
- Child Nutrition 101: What LEA Administrators Need to Know (Updated 10/10/2023)

Child Nutrition

- 601-576-5000
- Staff
- FAQ

Services

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Claims and Finance
- Nutrition Education
- Purchasing and Food Distribution
- School Meals
- Summer Food Service Program
- Training and Program Outreach

Resources Available in "Download Forms"

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Can Access at any time in MARS

- Open MARS > SNP > Applications > Download Forms



Form ID	Description	Last Modified	New Organization?
SNP 0002	Designated Administrative Title Form	07/06/2023	Y
SNP-0001	Permanent Agreement - SNP	07/06/2023	Y

Non-Discrimination

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Full Non-Discrimination Statement link:



USDA United States Department of Agriculture

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

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Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, and American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online, at <https://www.asec.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-000-11-28-17%20Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 698-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
fax:
(800) 255-1065 or (202) 690-7442;
email:
program.intake@usda.gov.

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La información del programa puede estar disponible en otros idiomas además del inglés. Las personas con discapacidades que requieren modos de comunicación alternativos para obtener información sobre el programa (por ejemplo, Braille, letra grande, grabación de audio y lenguaje de señas americano) deben comunicarse con la agencia estatal o local responsable que administra el programa o con el TARGET Center del USDA al (202) 720-2600 (voz y TTY) o comunicarse con el USDA a través del Servicio Federal de Transmisión de Información al (800) 877-8339.

Para presentar una queja por discriminación en el programa, el reclamante debe completar un formulario AD-3027, Formulario de queja por discriminación del programa del USDA, que se puede obtener en línea, en <https://www.asec.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-000-11-28-17%20Mail.pdf>, en cualquier oficina del USDA, llamando al (866) 698-9992, o escribiendo una carta dirigida al USDA. La carta debe contener el nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del reclamante, y una descripción escrita de la supuesta acción discriminatoria con suficiente detalle para informar al Subsecretario de Derechos Civiles (ASCR, por sus siglas en inglés) sobre la naturaleza y la fecha de la presunta violación de los derechos civiles. La carta o el formulario AD-3027 completado debe enviarse al USDA por medio de:

correo postal:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; o
fax:
(810) 255-1065 o (202) 690-7442;
correo electrónico:
program.intake@usda.gov.

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Form AD-3027—Revised Notice of Remedial September 2019