

Commissioner's Memo
8/4/2022

2022 – 2023 Severe Need Reimbursement

Memo Information

Memo Number **CNU-23-003**

Memo Date 8/4/2022

Memo Type Regulatory

Unit Child Nutrition

Regulatory Authority 7 CFR 220.9, SP 11-2022

Response Required YES

Attention Superintendents; Principals; General Business Managers; Child Nutrition Directors/Managers

Primary Contact Information

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Memo Text

Severe Need reimbursement provides additional funds for each breakfast served to free or reduced eligible students attending schools that served at least 40% of lunches at the free or reduced rate during the second preceding year if the school is approved by the state agency.

The school year (SY) 2022-2023 severe need breakfast reimbursement rates are \$0.41 higher for each free and reduced-price meal served over the standard reimbursement rate.

REQUIREMENTS: To qualify for the severe need breakfast reimbursement EACH SCHOOL (not school district) must meet the following criteria:

1. The school is currently participating in or desires to begin a breakfast program.
2. Forty percent (40%) or more of the lunches served to students in SY 2020-2021 were at free or reduced price.

In Arkansas, all districts operated the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), not the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), during SY 2020-2021 allowing all students to eat at the free rate. Free and reduced meal data to qualify for severe need reimbursement is not available when administering SSO. As a result, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided the guidelines below to determine eligibility for severe need reimbursement for SY 2022-2023:

Use the percentage of lunches served free or at the reduced price during SY 2019-2020. Data should only be used for months the school served free and reduced price NSLP meals. The last day of regular meal service for most Arkansas schools was approximately March 17, 2020, when Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson mandated school closures due the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instructions:

- Submit ALL meal count summary reports by school (not district) for each month the district served NSLP in SY 2019-2020.
- The monthly meal count summaries should reflect meals from the first day NSLP meals were served through the last day meals were served before the COVID-19 shutdown.

- The monthly meal count summaries must match the total number of meals reported on the severe need application and the number of meals submitted on monthly claims for reimbursement. If the district had adjustment to meal counts due to Administrative Reviews, Audits, or claim revisions, the district must account for those changes and submit the supporting documentation for the adjustments.
- If the district does not have data for SY 2019 – 2020, please contact Donna Ratliff at 501-324-9502.

The application deadline is September 9, 2022. THIS A HARD DEADLINE. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED OR PROCESSED.

Signed applications and meal count summary reports can be scanned and emailed to: ADE.Severeneed@ade.arkansas.gov

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY SCHOOLS:

Severe need eligibility is based on site-level data. If the school operated under Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) during SY 2019-2020, the individual school's Identified Student Percentage (ISP) must be used to determine eligibility for severe need reimbursement. Therefore, the individual school's ISP from SY 2019-2020 multiplied by 1.6 must be at least 40 percent to qualify for severe need reimbursement.

Schools participating in CEP as part of a group may not use the group free claiming percentage.

** For additional information see the "[Community Eligibility Provision: Planning and Implementation Guidance](#)" page 45, located under Guidance on the Child Nutrition Unit website. **

PROVISION 2 SCHOOLS:

Severe Need eligibility is based on site-level data. If the school operated under Provision 2 during SY 2019-2020, the lunch meals served at that school, and at the free and reduced rate, must be 40% in order for the school to be eligible.

Record Retention:

Districts are reminded to maintain all documentation at the district level to justify student eligibility status, including meal benefit applications and categorically eligible lists (direct certification, homeless, runaway, migrant, etc.) for a period of 5 years after the last claim is filed based on those eligibility determinations.

Attachments

- [2022-2023_Severe_Need_Application_and_Instructions_155658.xlsx](#)