

Commissioner's Memo  
3/20/2023

## Determining Eligibility for Severe Need and Safety Net Reimbursement for SY 2023-24 Meals Served

### Memo Information

Memo Number	CNU-23-015
Memo Date	3/20/2023
Memo Type	Regulatory
Unit	Child Nutrition
Regulatory Authority	7 CFR 220.9, USDA Policy Memo #SP 11-2022 and SP 02-2023
Response Required	YES
Attention	Bookkeepers; Child Nutrition Directors/Managers; Superintendents

### Primary Contact Information

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### Memo Text

Since Arkansas schools utilized the nationwide waiver allowing school meals to be served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO) during school year (SY) 2021-22 the second preceding year data necessary to determine eligibility for severe need reimbursement rates for breakfast and the two (2) cent differential (safety net) reimbursement for lunches served in SY 2023-24 is not available.

Therefore, USDA has provided Guidance in Policy Memo # [SP 11-2022](#) and [SP 02-2023](#) that indicates the percentage of lunches served free or at the reduced price during SY 2022-23 must be used to determine eligibility for SY 2023-24 severe need and safety net funding. The eligibility criteria and the process for applying for funding is discussed below.

**SEVERE NEED BREAKFAST REIMBURSEMENT ELIGIBILITY:**

In order to be eligible to receive severe need breakfast reimbursement at least 40% of the lunch meals served during SY 2022-23 must be at the Free or Reduced rate at the school level. This data is not available to the Child Nutrition Unit (CNU) because district's claim meals in a consolidated district claim, not a school level claim. Therefore, districts must apply for this funding.

**TWO (2) CENTS DIFFERENTIAL (SAFETY NET) LUNCH REIMBURSEMENT ELIGIBILITY:**

In order to be eligible to receive the safety net reimbursement at least 60% of the lunch meals served during SY 2022-23 must be at the Free or Reduced rate at the district level.

**PROCESS:**

Districts wishing to apply for Severe Need and Safety Net reimbursement for SY 2023-24 must provide meal counts summary reports for LUNCH meals served for each school each month July through December 2022.

August 1-31, 2022

Rock-n-Roll Elementary  
LUNCH

	Reimbursable Meal Counts
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Date	FREE	REDUCED	PAID	Total
(1-31 listed by day)				
TOTAL				

There is USUALLY a report from the point of sale system that can be set MM/DD/YYYY to MM/DD/YYYY for NAME OF SCHOOL and the report will show information similar to this:

Submit ALL meal count summary reports by school (not district) for each month the district served NSLP (not including Seamless Summer or Summer meals) in SY 2022-2023 for July 2022 – December 2022.

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.

The district’s application will not be processed if the meal counts on the application do not balance with the meal count summaries and the claims for reimbursement.

It is the district’s responsibility to submit accurate meal counts.

**DEADLINES:**

The application deadline is April 24, 2023. Late or inaccurate applications will be denied.

This is 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](mailto:ADE.Severeneed@ade.arkansas.gov)

The body of the email should include:

- District’s name
- LEA number
- Contact person
- Email and phone number
- Area Specialists Name

**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.

Printed copies of the following must also be maintained for the entire record retention period and must be retrievable for any audit by CNU, USDA or Legislative Audit:

- meal count summary for each school each month that supports the claim
- claim for reimbursement, and
- any adjustments to claims with all supporting documentation of the adjustment.

## Attachments

- [SY\\_2023-24\\_Severe\\_Need\\_Application\\_and\\_Instructions\\_150259.xlsx](#)