

**Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Division**  
**Nutrition Services**  
**POLICY STATEMENT FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS**  
**2026-2027**

The School Food Authority/Local Education Agency (SFA/LEA) agrees to participate in the following program(s):

- \_\_\_\_\_ National School Lunch (NSLP) CFDA # 10.555
- \_\_\_\_\_ School Breakfast (SBP) CFDA # 10.555/10.553
- \_\_\_\_\_ Afterschool Snack (approved Schedule B required before implementation) CFDA # 10.555
- \_\_\_\_\_ Special Milk (available only for schools without NSLP or SBP, or for half-day kindergarten students to whom breakfast or lunch is unavailable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seamless Summer Option (approved Schedule C required before implementation) CFDA # 10.555

The School Food Authority agrees to participate in the following Special Provision:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): Cycle Beginning Year 20\_\_\_\_ - 20\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provision 2: Base Year 20\_\_\_\_ - 20\_\_\_\_

The SFA/LEA accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction.

- I. Meals - Serve all students in the school(s) participating in the special provision breakfast and lunch at no charge.
- II. Eligibility - Applications shall not be distributed and no eligibility determinations shall be made. All students will be coded as free. Direct Certification and Categorically eligibility documentation will continue to be checked and maintained. Students who are eligible via direct certification or extended benefits will continue to be coded as an 04 in eSchool.
- III. Equal Treatment - Ensure no physical segregation or any other discrimination against any child because of his/her inability to pay the full price of the meal. The names of the children eligible to receive free or reduced price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens, tickets, or any other means. Further assurance is given that children eligible for free or reduced price meals shall not be required to:
  - work for their meals,
  - use a separate dining room service area,
  - go through a separate serving line,
  - enter the dining room through a separate entrance,
  - eat meals at a different time, or
  - eat a meal different from the one sold to children paying the full price
- IV. Nondiscrimination - Operate the school nutrition programs in accordance with federal law to prohibit discrimination so that no child shall be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.
- V. Disclosure - To prevent the disclosure of confidential free and reduced price eligibility information, the SFA/LEA will adopt all measures stated in 7 CFR 245.6(f-k).
- VI. Media Release - Submit a media/press release containing reduced price eligibility guidelines and other information contained in the parent letter to the local news media, local unemployment offices, local minority and grassroots organizations, and major employers contemplating or experiencing large layoffs. The Media Release is an attachment to this Policy Statement and is updated each school year.
- VII. Revisions to Policies - Submit, in writing, to NS, any revisions to the administrative procedures outlined above before implementation. Such changes will be effective only upon approval. All changes in eligibility criteria must be publicly announced in the same manner as announced at the beginning of the school year.

VIII. Meal Counts- Only total reimbursable meals will be counted toward the claim for reimbursement. All meal counts shall be taken at the point of service. The annual percentages established during the base year will be applied to the number of reimbursable meals to determine the claiming amounts by category. If reimbursements and/or other program income are not sufficient to cover the total nonprofit school food service program cost, the district shall use non-federal funds to cover the difference.

IX. Policy Statement and Attachments - All attachments and procedures provided with this Policy Statement are considered part of the Agreement.

X. Meal Count/Collection Procedure - Complete Meal Count and Collection Procedure, for both breakfast and lunch, and return with the Policy Statement.

XI. Forms and Letters Packet - Sample Forms and Letters is a part of the Free and Reduced Price Meals Policy Statement. These forms will be used as instructed or the altered forms will be attached to this Free and Reduced Price Meals Policy Statement for approval by the NS.

XII. Child Nutrition Contact Information - The Child Nutrition Contact Information is the consolidated statement of district personnel assigned responsibilities in the Child Nutrition Program.

XIII. Limited English Proficient (LEP) - Families will be provided assistance and/or applications to assure there are no language barriers prohibiting eligibility of benefits or participation in the programs defined in this policy statement. LEAs are required to communicate with parents and guardians in a language they can understand throughout the certification and verification processes.

**MEAL COUNT AND COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The procedures listed below will help assure equal treatment of all children, regardless of his or her ability to pay the full price for meals.

**DIRECTIONS:** For each section 1-6, select the option(s) that best describe the procedure used by each school. List the letter of the selected response under the section number, beside the school on the Meal Count and Collection Procedure Checklists for both breakfast and lunch.

<b>Item 1: The medium of exchange at the point of service</b> – Ticket, token, ID, name, number or physical identifier which students exchange for a meal:						
a. Roster system including coded/un-coded rosters, number lists, and class lists	b. Coded ticket/ token system with various ticket procedures	c. Coded ID cards used in manual and automated systems	d. Verbal identifiers (names & numbers)	e. Thumb print or finger print identification	f. Students enter ID# into automated systems	g. Other – attach description

<b>Item 2: The collection of payment</b>
a. Point of service payment with advance payments and/or charged meals – Students may pay daily, weekly or monthly, prior to meal service in both the cafeteria line and a designated area other than the cafeteria line (for example the school office or classroom); and/or students may charge full price lunch meals. The meal charge may be paid in both the cafeteria line and a designated area other than the cafeteria serving line. In all cases, the students receiving the free and/or reduced price meals are treated like students who have prepaid or charged their meals. <b>Money is collected BOTH:</b> in serving line <b>AND</b> in a designated area other than the cafeteria serving line.
b. Students or parents may pay daily, weekly or monthly prior to meal service <b>only in a designated area other than the cafeteria serving line</b> (for example the school office or classroom); and/or students may charge full price lunch meals. The meal charges may be paid in a designated area other than the cafeteria serving line. <b>No money is collected in the serving line.</b>
c. Advance payments and/or charged meals – Students or parents may pay daily, weekly or monthly prior to meal service <b>through on-line payment system.</b>
d. No money is collected from students for reduced price meals. Meals are counted and claimed by category with daily record documentation including Edit Check 1 and 2.
e. No money is collected from students for paid student breakfast meals. Meals are counted and claimed by category with daily record documentation including Edit Check 1 and 2.
f. This is a Provision 2 (P2) non-pricing school. No money is collected from students for meals.
g. This is a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) non-pricing school. No money is collected from students for meals.
h. This is a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI). No money is collected from students for meals.
i. This is a standard counting and claiming school, but no money is collected for meals. The district uses nonfederal funds to cover the cost of meals

<b>Item 3: Notification of Payment Procedure</b> – used at the beginning of the school year and/or registration to inform students of the payment and/or charge procedure for meal payments. If this is a P2 or CEP (non-pricing) school what is the method of notification to households informing them about the program?					
a. Letter to households	b. Public announcements to all students and households	c. Newspaper / newsletter	d. Posted notice (sign) displayed in the cafeteria	e. Notification in Student Handbook with signed acknowledgment from household	f. Other – attach description

The procedures described below will assure that a daily meal counts are made at the point of service and that no child will be aware that any other child receives a free or reduced price meal.

<b>Item 4: Meal Count by Category</b> – Only one reimbursable breakfast / lunch / snack may be claimed each day for each student.
a. Cashier at the end of the serving line who counts meals by category and monitors meals to assure only reimbursable meals are claimed for reimbursement. The cashier at the end of the serving line <b>MUST</b> be trained in meal pattern requirements. <b>Documentation of training, signed by the cashier, must be on file.</b>
b. *Cashier at the beginning of the serving line with a monitor at the end of the serving line to assure only reimbursable meals are claimed for reimbursement. The cafeteria monitor at the end of the serving line <b>MUST</b> be trained in meal pattern requirements. <b>Documentation of training, signed by the monitor, must be on file.</b>
c. *Classroom counts by category are confirmed at the serving line by the teacher or adult monitor who accompanies the class to the cafeteria and a cafeteria monitor at end of serving line to assure only reimbursable meals are claimed for reimbursement. The cafeteria monitor at the end of the serving line <b>MUST</b> be trained in meal pattern requirements. <b>Documentation of training, signed by the monitor, must be on file.</b>
d. *Other – attach a description
*A monitor at the end of the serving line <u>must notify</u> the person responsible for recording meal counts if a student does not take a reimbursable meal. The monitor must note the name of the student, so the meal count can be adjusted in the correct eligibility category. No substitute employee should be used for this duty without proper training.

<b>Item 5: Charge Policy - Each school and/or school district must have a written charge policy that is published to households and implemented as published. How are households notified of the charge policy?</b>					
a. Letter to households	b. Public announcement to all students and households	c. Newspaper / newsletter	d. Posted notice (sign) displayed in the cafeteria	e. Notification in Student Handbook with signed acknowledgment from household	f. Other – attach description

<b>Item 6: Does this school have a SEPARATE a la carte line that serves ONLY non-reimbursable food items?</b>	
a. Yes, and the school has a policy in place to ensure that free and reduced price students are not being overtly identified in the separate a la carte line.	b. No, this school does not have a separate a la carte line that serves non-reimbursable meals.

### LUNCH MEAL COUNT/COLLECTION PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Read carefully Meal Count and Collection Procedures on page 1 of this Attachment. List schools as reported on Program Schedule A. Beside each school name listed, select the letter(s) which best describe(s) the procedure(s) used by the school for each item 1-6 on page 5.

List letter(s) in the appropriate columns below. **In some cases more than one option may apply, if so list ALL options that apply.** If more lines are needed add additional pages.

**N/A is not an acceptable option.**

	List all schools listed on CN Program Schedule A	Item #1. Medium of Exchange	Item # 2. Payment/ Collections	Item # 3. Procedure Notification	Item # 4. Meal Count	Item # 5. Charge Policy	Item # 6. Separate A la Carte Line
	EXAMPLE School	a	d	a	b	a	b
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2							
3							
4							
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**LUNCH**

### BREAKFAST MEAL COUNT/COLLECTION PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Read carefully Meal Count and Collection Procedures on page 1 of this Attachment. List schools as reported on Program Schedule A. Beside each school name listed, select the letter(s) which best describe(s) the procedure(s) used by the school for each item 1-6 on page 5.

List letter(s) in the appropriate columns below. **In some cases more than one option may apply, if so list ALL options that apply.** If more lines are needed add additional pages.

**N/A is not an acceptable option.**

	List all schools listed on CN Program Schedule A	1. Medium of Exchange	2. Payment/ Collections	3. Procedure Notification	4. Meal Count	5. Charge Policy	6. Separate A la Carte Line
	EXAMPLE School	a	d	a	b	a	b
1							
2							
3							
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**BREAKFAST**

SFA/School District: \_\_\_\_\_

LEA #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Method(s) Used by the SFA for distribution of  
Public Media Release  
2026-2027 Policy Statement**

Please indicate below (by checking the appropriate boxes) the method(s) the school district uses to distribute the public media release. A sample media release can be found on the Forms page of the NS website.

**The SFA must advertise available Child Nutrition Programs through a public release. How does the district plan to distribute the public release?**

**Check all that apply:**

Website

Radio

Newspaper

Food Banks

Public offices

Health Clinics

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional Information Collection for School Year 2026-2027

The SFA is planning to participate in the following program(s) in addition to NSLP/SBP and Afterschool Snack:

\*Please note that selecting the programs below does not exempt the SFA from application requirements prior to implementation of program. This data is collected for information purposes only.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Special Milk
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seamless Summer Option (approved Schedule C required before implementation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) (approved application with NS before implementation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) (approved application with NS before implementation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ CACFP At Risk Program (approved application with NS before implementation)

### Contact Information

Does the district wish to add a secondary Child Nutrition Contact?                      Yes                      No

If yes, please provide the contact's name and email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Vended Meals

In a vended meal contract the contractor (also referred to as a vendor) provides the meals only (bulk or unitized) and does not manage any aspect of the school food service.

Does the SFA purchase meals or snacks through a vended meal contract?                      Yes                      No

If yes, who provides the meal/snack? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the SFA provide meals or snacks to another entity using a vended meal?                      Yes                      No

If yes, who is receiving the vended meal/snack? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which site is preparing the vended meal/snack? \_\_\_\_\_

### Food Service Management Company (FSMC)

In an food service management company (FSMC) contract the company manages some aspect of the school food service program. Generally, the FSMC prepares and serves the meals and/or manages the school meal program(s).

Does the SFA contract with a FSMC?                      Yes                      No

If yes, which FSMC company is used? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, who is the FSMC on-site director? \_\_\_\_\_

### Resource Management

Does the SFA collect indirect cost from the Child Nutrition Program?                      Yes                      No