

Old Capitol Building
PO Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

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Action Required

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Informational

BULLETIN NO. 041-21 CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: SY21–22 Returning to School Guide for School Nutrition Programs

CONTACT: Elizabeth Beechler, School Meal Programs Supervisor
360-725-6220, elizabeth.beechler@k12.wa.us

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Washington’s K–12 public schools are expected to provide students the opportunity to attend school in-person full-time in School Year 2021–22 (SY 21–22). School meal programs are vital to ensuring students have access to nutritious meals during the school day and that meal service is conducted safely as students return to school.

This bulletin provides information about school meal operations and USDA waivers for SY 21–22 and Department of Health Guidance to support safe school meals.

Specific details on completing program applications will be provided in a future bulletin.

USDA WAIVERS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued waivers to support the safe re-opening of schools and childcare institutions while ensuring program access. These waivers allow operational flexibility in meal service, while providing healthy nutritious meals free of charge to all children as the pandemic continues to impact the food and nutrition security of children across our state.

During SY 21–22, schools have the option to operate the USDA’s National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

Seamless Summer Option

The USDA waivers for SY 21–22 allows **all** schools to serve meals free of charge to all students through the SSO. This option:

- Maintains nutrition standards of school meal programs – including an emphasis on providing fruits and vegetables, fluid milk, and whole grains.
- During SY 21–22, schools operating SSO will receive higher-than-normal USDA meal reimbursements for every meal served. This higher reimbursement will support nutritious meals and potential increased costs associated with pandemic-related operational and supply chain challenges.
- Provides options in meal service.
- The SSO may be served at a “closed site” or an “open site”. There is no requirement to operate an open site and districts should evaluate their resources to determine what type of meal service is best for their circumstances.
 - Closed site- students attending class on campus are served meals.
 - Open site- sites where any child from the community may pick up a meal.

National School Lunch Program

Schools operating NSLP must claim students based on the child’s free, reduced, and paid student eligibility status. A paid lunch price must be established as this option does not allow meals to be served at no cost to all students. The exception is schools have been approved for the NSLP Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Only schools operating SSO will receive the higher per meal reimbursement.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

Program operators should consider the intent and purpose of USDA Child Nutrition Programs to ensure access to nutritious meals for all students. Meal service models should consider combining COVID safety measures, while ensuring children have access to meals to support their academic success. The following outlines the expectations around state requirements and operation during SY 21–22:

- Schools required to operate a School Breakfast Program (SBP) ([RCW 28A.235.160](#)) are expected to offer SSO breakfast meals or SBP meals **on campus**.
- Schools required to operate a School Lunch Program ([RCW 28A.235.160](#)) are expected to offer SSO lunch meals or the NSLP meals **on campus**.
- Schools required to operate the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) ([RCW 28A.235.230](#)) are expected to operate SSO or CEP and offer meals free of charge to all students.
- Schools required to implement Breakfast After the Bell (BAB) ([RCW 28A.235.210](#)) are expected to offer SSO breakfast meals or SBP meals to all students **on campus**.

DOH REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has provided guidance for student and staff health and safety. Schools are required to implement mandatory mitigation measures including requiring face coverings and masks, ventilation and sanitizing and disinfecting.

Physical distancing is recommended, and schools should plan for three feet physical distancing in classroom settings and six feet during meal times. This guidance is a recommendation and should be implemented in the degree possible and reasonable.

Schools should update infection control plans to reflect what is known about COVID-19. While school food service has Standard Operating Procedures in place for cleaning and sanitizing, COVID-19 requires *disinfecting* of surfaces between students. Some disinfectants are **not** compatible with food service locations or require rinsing. Carefully read and follow label directions and work closely with your districts Facility Director to identify and procure appropriate disinfecting products.

Recent guidance includes the [Department of Health K–12 COVID-19 Requirements for Summer 2021 and the 2021-22 School Year](#), and a FAQ document answering questions about returning to school in Fall 2021.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Liz Beechler, School Meal Programs Supervisor, at 360-725-6220 or email elizabeth.beechler@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

Tennille Jeffries-Simmons
Chief of Staff

T.J. Kelly
Chief Financial Officer
Financial Resources

Leanne Eko
Director
Child Nutrition Services

CR:ln

ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Sponsor hereby agrees that it will comply with: i. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.); ii. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.); iii. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794); iv. Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.); v. Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as amended by the ADA Amendment Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 12131-12189); vi. Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." (August 11, 2000); vii. All provisions required by the implementing regulations of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) (7 CFR Part 15 et seq.); viii. Department of Justice Enforcement Guidelines (28 CFR Parts 35, 42 and 50.3); ix. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) directives and guidelines to the effect that, no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination under any program or activity for which the Program applicant receives Federal financial assistance from USDA; and hereby gives assurance that it will immediately take measures necessary to effectuate this Agreement. x. The USDA non-discrimination statement that in accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

This assurance is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal financial assistance, grants, and loans of Federal funds, reimbursable expenditures, grant, or donation of Federal property and interest in property, the detail of Federal personnel, the sale and lease of, and the permission to use Federal property or interest in such property or the furnishing of services without consideration or at a nominal consideration, or at a consideration that is reduced for the purpose of assisting the recipient, or in recognition of the public interest to be served by such sale, lease, or furnishing of services to the recipient, or any improvements made with Federal financial assistance extended to the Program applicant by USDA. This includes any Federal agreement, arrangement, or other contract that has as one of its purposes the provision of cash assistance for the purchase of food, and cash assistance for purchase or rental of food service equipment or any other financial assistance extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in this assurance.

By accepting this assurance, the Sponsor agrees to compile data, maintain records, and submit records and reports as required, to permit effective enforcement of nondiscrimination laws and permit authorized USDA personnel during hours of program operation to review and copy such records, books, and accounts, access such facilities and interview such personnel as needed to ascertain compliance with the nondiscrimination laws. If there are any violations of this assurance, the Department of Agriculture, FNS, shall have the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance. This assurance is binding on the Sponsor, its successors, transferees and assignees as long as it receives assistance or retains possession of any assistance from USDA.

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