Minnesota Department of Education

Comparison of Programs

The purpose of the seamless summer option is to encourage more School Food Authorities (SFAs) to provide meals in the summer and at other times when school is not in session. The seamless summer option combines features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). By replacing most of the SFSP rules, this option reduces paperwork and administrative burden, making it easier for SFAs to feed children in low-income areas during the summer months or during the extended breaks of a year-round school schedule. However, the reimbursement for SFSP is significantly higher than for the seamless option. So consider SFSP if the program has a large number of participants or long duration. This side-by-side comparison of the programs serves to highlight the similarities between the seamless summer option, SFSP and NSLP/SBP.

TOPIC	SFSP	Seamless Option	NSLP/SBP
Times of Operation	May – September for traditional school calendar areas. October - April during unanticipated school closures (for example, emergencies). During student vacations for schools on continuous calendar school years.	Same as SFSP.	When school is in session as established by the school district, including accredited summer school.
Meal Service Locations	Camps Churches Community centers Housing projects Libraries Migrant centers Parks Playgrounds	Same as SFSP.	Schools Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs)

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	Pools Schools		
Reimbursement Rates	SFSP fiscal year rates announced January annually.	NSLP and SBP free rates. Rates change July 1 annually.	NSLP and SBP rates. Rates change July 1 annually.
Public Notification	Sponsor must send public media notice regarding program and eligibility.	Public media notice may be done but is not required. SFA must promote each site (excluding closed enrolled sites) to the neighborhood community.	SFA must send public media notice regarding program and letter or notice with an application to parents for all children in attendance at the school at the beginning of each school year.
Establishing Site Eligibility	Open sites: 50 percent or more of the children in an area qualify for free or reduced-price school meals, based on school or census data. Enrolled sites: 50 percent of household income applications that families submitted are determined eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Closed enrolled sites that are located in eligible areas may qualify for participation in the Seamless Summer Option using area data. Migrant sites: Certification by a migrant	Same as SFSP.	**Schools:** Public and private nonprofit schools of high school grade and under that are part of the state's education system. **Afterschool Snacks:** District must run the NSLP and sponsor or operate an afterschool care program with educational/ enrichment activities. **Afterschool snack sites in eligible areas:** 50 percent or more of the children in the attendance area of a school qualify for free/reduced-price school

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	organization that the sites serve children of migrant farm workers. Camps: offer regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children. Other data may also be considered if approved.		meals, based on school data. **RCCIs:** Public and licensed, nonprofit, private.
Site Redeterminations	Census eligible areas are eligible until next census. If site is located within the geographic boundaries of a school attendance area and the school has 50 percent or more free and reduced-price eligibility, site is eligible for five years (unless the site is determined to be seriously deficient in the administration of the SFSP or CACFP). Enrolled site redetermined annually.	Census eligible areas are eligible until next census. If site is located within the geographic boundaries of a school attendance area and the school has 50 percent or more free and reduced-price eligibility, site is eligible for five years (unless a SFA has significant problems operating either the NSLP or SBP, or the site is determined to be seriously deficient in the administration of the SFSP or CACFP).	Redetermined annually.
Eligible Participants	Persons 18 years or younger and persons 19 or older with a physical or mental disability, as defined by the state agency.	Same as SFSP.	Students enrolled in a school of high school grade and under determined by the state agency, including persons enrolled in a school program for the mentally or physically disabled, and persons under 21 enrolled in an RCCI.

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Meal Cost for Children	All meals are free. (Although camps are only reimbursed for children who qualify for free/reduced-price meals, camp sponsors may, and usually do, provide meals free of charge to all children.) Second meals served: Up to two percent of sponsor's total meals are reimbursable.	Same as SFSP. Second meals not reimbursable. May have ala carte.	Meal cost (free/reduced-price/paid) for children is based on their income eligibility. Second meals not reimbursable. May have ala carte. Afterschool snacks at area eligible sites are free for all children.
Type of Meals	Breakfast Lunch Snack (a.m. or p.m.) Supper Except for camp and migrant sites, lunch and supper cannot be reimbursed for the same day by the same site.	Same as SFSP.	Lunch Snack (Afterschool only)
Maximum Number of Meals	Two for most sites. Three for migrant sites and camps.	Same as SFSP.	Three.
Reimbursement Method	Maximum level for all sites except camps equals total meals by	Total meals by type times NSLP/SBP free rate	Total meals by type times free, reduced or paid rate

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	type of meal times operating and administrative rates. Maximum level for camps equals total meals by type for eligible children times operating and administrative rates. Summer program sponsors receive maximum reimbursement levels without comparison to costs.	including: Extra $.02 per lunch if 60 percent of lunches in second preceding year were free/reduced-price. Additional payments for free/reduced-price breakfasts in severe need schools. Total afterschool snacks times free rate in eligible areas (no administrative reimbursement provided).	for each type of meal. Extra $.02 per lunch if 60 percent of lunches in second preceding year were free/reduced-price. Additional payments for free/reduced-price breakfasts in severe need schools. Total afterschool snacks times free rate in eligible areas.
Commodities	$.015 per meal for public sponsors and self-preparation sites. May receive bonus commodities.	Same as NSLP.	Entitlement rate per lunch announced annually. May receive bonus commodities.
Monitoring Required by SFA	Pre-operational visits before a new or problem site operates the summer program. Site visits the first week of operation. State agency may waive upon request on a site-by-site basis for successfully operated sites.	Review of meal counting, claiming and meal pattern compliance within three weeks of start of operations.	Onsite review of lunch counting and claiming system for each school by February 1 each year.

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	Site review during first four weeks of operation.		
Monitoring Required by State	Review every three years; more frequently based on program size and prior problems identified.	Sponsors will be reviewed the summer following the Coordinated Review Effort (CRE).	CRE every five years. School Meal Initiative (SMI) review every five years to determine how well SFA is meeting the nutrition standards.
Meal Pattern	Meal pattern must meet 7 CFR 225.16(d) standards. However, SFAs may substitute NSLP/SBP meal patterns.	Same as NSLP/SBP.	Must meet requirement for NSLP menu planning approaches in 7 CFR 210.10; or SBP approaches in 7 CFR 220.8, including those based on meal patterns.
Training	Mandatory training.	No mandatory training.	Recommend attending training.
Edit Checks	No edit check requirement.	No edit check requirement. SFA should ensure that meal counts match participation and that claims reflect the number of meals served.	The SFA shall compare each school's daily counts of free, reduced-price and paid lunches against the product of the number of children in that school currently eligible for free, reduced-price and paid lunches, respectively, times an attendance factor.