



BREAKFAST AND LUNCH  
PROGRAM  
FREE AND REDUCED  
PRICE MEALS

H62.00  
Revised  
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## PROCEDURE

### Introduction

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program must serve meals free or at a reduced price to any child from a family with an income at or below the eligibility standards set by the federal government and listed in a periodic letter to parents.

### Identification

#### 1. DEFINITIONS

- a. Free and Reduced Price Meals - The Seattle School District receives nearly 250,000 each month in support of the free and reduced price meal program. Each school must be accountable for the proper procedure in approving free and reduced price meal applications, and each lunchroom manager is responsible for keeping accurate records of the meals served by category.

To qualify for federal reimbursement, all meals must meet the nutritional requirements specified in the U.S.D.A. regulations.

#### 2. ELIGIBILITY (DETERMINED BY FEDERAL REGULATIONS)

##### a. Foster Children

- (1) In those cases where the welfare agency is legally responsible for the child, and the foster home is, in fact, an extension of the welfare agency, the foster child shall be considered as a one-member family. The payments made by the welfare agency for the care of that foster child shall be considered as the income of that one-member family. Therefore, if the annual income of the foster child is not above the income level for free or reduced price meals of a one-member family as set forth in the income guidelines prescribed by the state educational agency, the foster child shall receive the meal to which he or she is entitled.
- (2) In those cases where the welfare agency has placed a child in a permanent home and/or subsidizes the adoption of the child, the child shall be considered as a member of the household with whom he or she resides. The family size and total income of the family shall be used to determine the child's eligibility for free and reduced price meals.



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b. Children Living in Group Homes or Institutions

Eligibility of Institutionalized Children for free or reduced price meals are as follows:

- (1) In those situations where the family is required or expected to contribute to the support of the institutionalized child, the eligibility of such a child for free or reduced price meals must be based on the individual family size and income.
- (2) In those situations where there is no family or where the institution does not receive or expect to receive financial support from the family for the child, consideration must be given to the history and purpose of "special assistance" funds. The legislative history is very clear that special assistance funds are intended to supplement other funds in providing free and reduced price meals to needy children. With this intent in mind, the problem of applying the two factors of family size and income in order to determine the eligibility of these children must be addressed. Family size poses no problem since the child may be considered a family of one. The problem is to determine income.

The Federal Agency is aware of the general inadequacy of any attempt by a local school district to review an institution's budget in making this determination and feels the best approach in these situations is to allow some degree of local latitude and discretion.

In these situations, the local school district may make individual determinations of income on the basis of information available (in most instances, the level of income will likely be zero). In carrying out this provision, the state agency shall require local school districts to obtain or maintain on file applications for individual students submitted by officials of the institution indicating the level of resources (if any) available to provide the meal service.

c. Income

The income eligibility scale for reduced price meals cannot be used for determining eligibility for free meals.



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3. Nondiscrimination Practices

- a. School districts shall take such actions as are necessary to insure that the names of children eligible to receive free or reduced price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner.
- b. There shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens or tickets or by any other means.
- c. Children eligible for a free or reduced price meals shall not be required to work for their meal, however, children may work for their meal if the parents have signed a request.
- d. Children eligible for a free or reduced price meal shall not be required to use a separate lunchroom, go through a separate serving line, enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance, eat meals at different times, or eat a different meal from the meal sold to children paying the full price of such a meal.
- e. Please see the section, "Uniform Collection System for School Meals", for the appropriate procedure.

Procedures

1. Applications

Application forms for free and reduced price meals in sufficient quantity for distribution to all parents are sent to each school. A notice must be distributed to parents on or about the first day of each school year.

- a. For the first 30 operating days of the school year only, before applications for the new school year are received and approved, school officials should serve free and reduced price meals to children from families with approved applications on file from the previous school year. Students without applications from the previous year may only be served three (3) days and they may not be counted as free or reduced priced meals for reimbursement.
- b. Applications may be made at any time during the school year.



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- c. After the letter to parents and applications have been distributed, school authorities may determine that a child for whom an application has not been submitted meets the eligibility criteria for free or reduced price meals. In such a situation, the approving official shall complete and file an application for such child, setting forth the basis of determining the child's eligibility form based on the best household size and income information available.
- d. Students upon whose application a decision has not been rendered are eligible to receive free meals or reduced price meals up to 10 working days. Information must be noted on the application. The household must be notified the child is receiving the benefit,
- e. Decisions with respect to the eligibility of any child for free or reduced price meals shall be made on the - basis of the information supplied in the application, or by the direct certification form from the Department of Social and Health Services.
- f. All children in the same family will receive the same benefits.
- g. The decision of each application submitted must be relayed to the parent or guardian who submitted the application.
- h. Students who have transferred from another Seattle School District school shall be eligible even though the application is on file in the previous school. A copy of the application must be sent with the student's records.
- i. Each application on file is to be clearly marked approved for free, approved for reduced, or denied and signed by the school staff member making the decision.
- j. All applications approved or denied must be kept on file at the school for four (4) years (including the current school year).
- k. Refer to the USDA Eligibility Guidance for School Meals manual

2. Uniform Collection System for School Meals

In order to protect the anonymity of students receiving free or reduced price meals. A uniform collections system has been established. This is a dual system of cash and meal tickets, with all free and reduced meal recipients using meal tickets. These same meal tickets must also be used for prepaid meals.



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a. **Plan A**

(l) Ticket Issuance

- (a) The principal will place a notice in a bulletin to parents advising them that lunch and breakfast may be purchased in units of 20 meals.

The meal ticket has 31 numbers, consequently up to 31 meals may be purchased at one time. However, a more common number of meals to be purchased will be 20, and at that time, the employee issuing the meal ticket will punch out, or mark with a pen, the last 11 numbers on the ticket before issuing the meal ticket. (The 31 numbers are used as a calendar, indicating one month that the student is the custodian of that ticket.) This procedure limits a ticket holder to one lunch per day and avoids abuse of the free meal ticket.

- (b) Money for cash and reduced tickets is received by the food service employees each morning as needed. In a satellite lunchroom where no food service employee is regularly on duty in the morning, the satellite server can be on duty before school opens on the 1st and 2nd school day of each month or, if needed, on one specified day each week for the purpose of selling meal tickets.
- (c) Free and reduced lunch tickets are filled out by food service employees as approved applications are received.
- (d) Tickets are coded by numbers.
- (e) All tickets must be validated by the signature of an authorized staff person.
- (f) A record of all meal tickets issued must be maintained on the ticket register sheet which shows the date, student's name, ticket code, ticket number issued, number of meals, and amount of payment.
- (g) Unused tickets may be transferred with a student to other schools in the Seattle School District.



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- (h) Refunds for students transferring outside the district may be received by presenting the unused ticket to the lunchroom manager and then submitted to the Child Nutrition Services offices (CNS).
- (i) Tickets are issued to the building by the CNS office upon receiving ticket request form. Tickets are numbered in sequence and must be treated as cash. When the schools receive the tickets, please check and sign copies of request forms enclosed with tickets and return to Food Services Office as a receipt. Order only enough tickets for normal use in order to minimize the possibility of loss due to theft.
- (j) Tickets are not issued to the students but are filled out with student name and grade on the appropriately coded ticket, then filed alphabetically in a card file box.

(2) Meal Serving Time

- (a) As students go through the line, those on ticket lunch of any kind merely give their names to the cashier. She pulls their ticket from the file box and puts it in the currency section of her cash box. There is no need for the student to indicate the type of ticket as all tickets are filed by name only.
- (b) Following the serving period, the food service employee counts the tickets by code number for accounting purposes, punches the reduced and cash tickets to indicate a meal purchased, and returns all tickets to the file.

b. **Plan B**

(l) Ticket Issuance

(a)-(k) - Same as Plan A, with one addition as follows:

An alphabetical list or tally sheet of all tickets in the file is typed and given to the cashier. These tallies are ruled and cover a two-week period.



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(2) Meal Serving Time:

- (a) Students give name as above and cashier checks tally off for that day. (Ticket coding letter may be used as student's middle initial for easy identification for accounting.)
- (b) Following the serving period, the cashier counts tallied names by code indicated, pulls free, cash and reduced tickets from the file, punches, and re-files.

c. **Plan C: Recommended for Secondary Schools Only**

- (l) Ticket Issuance - Same as Plans A and B steps (a) through (j) with four additions as follows:
  - (a) Tickets are issued to the students and they shall be responsible for their safekeeping.
  - (b) The current month is to be punched on the free and reduced price meal tickets.
  - (c) Free and reduced price meal tickets are issued each month.
  - (d) Cash tickets are to be used until all numbers for meals purchased are punched out. If 20 meals are purchased, numbers 21 through 31 are marked or punched out.

(2) Meal Serving Time

- (a) Students give the meal ticket to the cashier who punches out a number for each meal.
- (b) Free meals are indicated by a punched out number corresponding to the date of the month. The B is punched out for breakfast.
- (c) Cash and reduced meal tickets are punched out in consecutive order.