

Menu Planning and Meal Pattern Requirements

Menu Planning

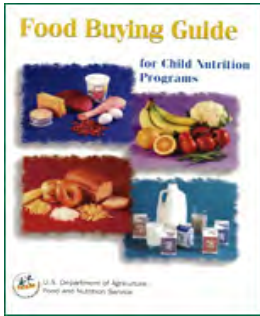
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Additional Resources

- [ISBE Meal Pattern and Nutrition Standards Website](#)
- [USDA Offer Versus Serve Guidance Document](#)

Menu Planning Resources



[USDA Recipes](#)

[USDA What Cooking, Mixing Bowl](#)

[USDA Food Buying Guide](#)

[USDA Food Buying Guide Calculator](#)

Required Menu Planning Records

Menu

The menu is the core of the program and must list all food items offered to students as part of a reimbursable meal. When planning the menu, the menu planner should consider the foods available (including commodities), standardized recipes available, and the food service budget.

Menu Planning Checklist

- ☐ Schedule a time to plan and collect menu resources.
- ☐ Consider previous menus and current meal pattern requirements.
- ☐ Determine number of days to be planned.
- ☐ Focus on grade group(s) to be served.
- ☐ Decide on the number of choices to be offered.
- ☐ Select the entrée for each day being planned.
- ☐ Select the other required meal components. Keeping in mind the NSLP requirement to plan a variety of vegetables throughout the week.
- ☐ Ensure at least 2 milk choices are offered.
- ☐ Make sure the daily and weekly minimum serving sizes are met for each component.
- ☐ Evaluate success of current and past menus, and make notes for future menus.
- ☐ Consider marketing ideas, menu themes, school events, and seasonal items.
- ☐ Plan for *Cook's Choice* days to use up excess quantities of food prior to long school breaks or vacations.

Cycle Menu

A cycle menu that follows meal pattern requirements is encouraged. Menu planners can decide on the length of the cycle to be used, which may be a set number of days or weeks. Some of the benefits of cycle menus are:

- Reduces the labor/time involved in planning menus;
- Helps reduce plate waste through use of tried and tested meals;
- Reduces foods costs by allowing more foods to be ordered in bulk;
- Cuts ordering/purchasing time due to repeated use of foods/meals; and
- May increase participation through planning of the most popular meals.

Sample Cycle Menu

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Hamburger on a Bun Fresh Apple Slices Tater Tots 2 Pkts Ketchup Vegetarian Baked Beans Milk*	Sweet Sesame Chicken Stir Fry with Asian Brown Rice Apricots California Casserole Fortune Cookie Milk	Cheese & Pepperoni Breadsticks with Marinara Sauce Pears Spinach Strawberry Salad Milk	Walking Taco Peaches in Gelatin Cowboy Corn Salad Tortilla Scoop, 1 oz Milk	Chicken Nuggets 1 oz BBQ Sauce Pineapple Sweet Potato Fries Green Beans & Carrots Whole-Grain Roll Milk
Week 2	Grilled Chicken Sandwich 1 Tbsp Low-Fat Mayo Pears Baked Beans Milk	Hatton Chicken Crunch with Brown Rice Peach Cup Milk	Rotini & Meat Sauce Parmesan Cheese, 1 Tbsp Apricot Cup Tossed Side Salad 2 Tbsp Reduced-Fat Ranch Dressing Milk	Beef & Refried Bean Burrito with Salsa Fresh Tangerine Corn Milk	Grilled Cheese Sandwich Fresh Grapes Waffle Fries 1 Pkt Ketchup Carrots Milk
Week 3	Mac & Cheese Fruit Salad Baby Carrots with Hummus Green Beans Milk	Chicken Broccoli Bowl Applesauce Cup California Blend Milk	Cheese & Pepperoni Pizza Pears in Cherry Jell-O Tossed Side Salad 2 Tbsp Reduced-Fat Ranch Dressing Milk	Quirky Quesadillas Fresh Orange Wedges Mexicali Corn Milk	Hamburger on a Bun Peaches Sweet Potato Puffs 2 Pkts Ketchup Milk
Week 4	BBQ Chicken Sandwich Pink Grapefruit Lemon Broccoli Potato Wedges 2 Pkts Ketchup Milk	Teriyaki Chicken with Brown Rice Fresh Apple Slices Veggies & Hummus Whole-Grain Cookie Milk	Mini Meatball Sub with Marinara Sauce Fresh Banana Bean & Corn Salad Milk	Taco Salad 2 Tbsp Reduced-Fat Ranch Dressing Mandarin Oranges Whole-Grain Tortilla Chips with Salsa Milk	Turkey & Gravy Strawberry Cup Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Whole-Grain Roll 1 Pat Butter Milk
Week 5	Sock-Rockin' Chili Applesauce Fresh Cucumber & Tomato Dip Whole-Grain Roll 1 Pat Butter Milk	Sweet & Sour Chicken Nuggets with Brown Rice Fresh Red Grapes Carrots Corn Milk	Chicken Alfredo with a Twist Pears in Cherry Jell-O Garlic Broccoli Milk	Mexican Pizza Peach Cup Tossed Side Salad 2 Tbsp Reduced-Fat Ranch Dressing Milk	Turkey & Ham Deli Sub 1 Tbsp Low-Fat Mayo Fresh Banana Baby Carrots with Hummus Milk

*Selections include a choice of 1-cup serving of Low-Fat (unflavored) or Fat-Free (unflavored or flavored) milk.

Menu Posting Requirement

Schools are required to post a menu(s) near the beginning of the meal service line(s) so students know what foods are offered or can be chosen as part of a reimbursable meal. Menus **do not** need to include foods that are only served as an a la carte option.

This menu requirement can be satisfied in the form of a written daily or weekly menu, through use of a sample/display tray, or by using menu posters.

Daily Production Record

A daily production record is required and must contain the following information:

- Food components (meat/meat alternate, etc.), condiments, and milk
- Recipe (note if a USDA recipe) or food product used. USDA commodity items should be identified with a "C", and a USDA processed commodity, should be identified with a "PC"
- Planned/projected number of student portions and serving sizes for each grade group
- Planned/projected number of portions and serving sizes for adults
- Total amount of food prepared (for example, number of servings, pounds, cans, etc.)
- Number of reimbursable meals served (indicate this information for each grade group)
- Actual number of non-reimbursable meals served (such as to adults or a la carte sales)
- Leftovers and substitutions

Production records may vary in format, but they must accomplish two things:

- Provide staff information regarding foods, recipes, and portion sizes of servings
- Record actual foods, recipes, and portion sizes served as well as leftovers

Production records must contain all of the required information outlined above. To ensure compliance please copy the sample on the following page or download the electronic version.

Sample Format Production Record

Site _____
Meal Date _____

MENU

Total Projected Reimbursable Lunches _____

[illegible]

NOTE: All foods, including condiments and milk, must be included daily.

*Portion size: must be same as planned. Use separate line if adjusted for age.

**Amount of food used based on USDA Food Buying Guide or USDA recipe.

Completing the Sample Production Record

1. Site: Name of the site (school) where the menu is served and/or prepared.
2. Meal Date: Record the date the menu is served and/or prepared.
3. Menu: List the food items that make the meal reimbursable.
4. Food Item and Form Used: The same food items listed on the menu in number three should be described in more detail. For example, peaches would be listed as *sliced in light syrup*; chicken nuggets would be listed as *breaded and baked*. Listing food item and form information is the first step in effectively communicating the menu to the staff. Listing all food items offered, including condiments, is important for future monitoring by the state agency.
5. Recipe or Product (name or number): This accurately identifies a specific recipe or food item to be used. It is critical to specify exact recipes and products. If the preparer or server uses a different recipe or product than indicated by the menu planner, the food provided to students may not necessarily meet the nutrient standard or meal requirements as planned.
 - Recipe refers to USDA recipes or locally-developed recipes. For example, cherry cobbler could be recorded as USDA C-6. Locally developed recipes can be referred to with a number code or by recipe name. The product name and number refers to processed foods. This number would be obtained from the manufacturer such as Prairie Product #1245. A product information sheet should be on file containing the nutrition information of the product. Generic items such as milk, peaches, and pickles do not require a product number because these types of items are available in the USDA-approved software database.
6. Grade Group: List the grade group(s) of the students for which the menu is planned. For school year 2012-2013 and on, the correct grade groupings for lunch are: K-5; 6-8; and 9-12
7. Portion Size (number, weight, quantity): This information is important to ensure the correct portion size is served as well as planned and prepared. Without this guide on the production sheet, the server may have no way of knowing the correct portion size for the grade group.
8. Student Projected Servings: Projects the number of servings to prepare for student reimbursable meals.
9. Total Projected Servings: This figure includes projected reimbursable student meals, adult meals, and a la carte sales of the food item. The menu planner must also forecast, or predict the approximate number of servings needed of each menu item. Projecting the number of servings is the first step in determining how much food to order, how much time to allot for preparation, and which equipment to use.
 - In menus that offer several different selections with Offer versus Serve (OVS), it will not be necessary to plan and prepare portions of each menu item for each person. Past production records (that must be kept on file) can help accurately forecast future production and menu planning figures for the required USDA menu planning approach.
10. Amount of Food Used (weight or quantity): Site staff must keep records to verify the planned menu was actually prepared and served. Staff should record this information in a way that is appropriate for the food item: Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates should be in ounces (weight measure); Fruits and Vegetables in cup (volume measure); and Milk in ounce or cup measure.
11. Student Servings: Record the actual number of students served.
12. A la Carte Servings: Record the actual amount of the food item that was sold a la carte.
13. Adult Servings: Record the number of adult meals actually served.
14. Leftovers: Once the meal is served, site staff should record leftovers on the production records. Estimate the quantity/portions or number of servings left over from the recipes. This will assist with any revisions when the menu is served in the future.

Sample Format Production Record

Site: Abraham Lincoln Elementary School

Meal Date: January 27, 2014

Total Projected Reimbursable Lunches 175

MENU

Food Item and Form Used	Recipe or Product (Name and Number)	Grade Group	Portion Size* (Number/Weight/Quantity)	Student Projected Servings	Total Projected Servings	Amount of Food Used** (Weight or Quantity)	Student Servings	A la Carte Servings	Adult Servings	Leftovers
							Actual			
Meat/Meat Alternate Chicken Nuggets	PC (List ICS Bulletin number if available)	K-5	4 Each (1.75 oz)	115	130	14 lbs	108		15	1 lb
Vegetable Broccoli & Cauliflower Mix	38	K-5	$\frac{3}{4}$ c	75	115	40 c	69		10	5.5 c
Fruit Orange Slices		K-5	$\frac{1}{2}$ c	95	120	48 c	89		13	3.5 c
Grains/Breads Whole-Wheat Roll	Honey Breads	K-5	1 ea	150	175	175 rolls	138		20	17
Other BBQ Sauce	Big Z	K-5	Portion pack/ 1 ea	115	150	150	129		20	1
Low-Fat Ranch Dressing	H.V.		Portion pack/ 1 ea	100	120	120	93		16	11
Milk: Variety		K-5	1 c	145	170	170	110	23	5	7

NOTE: All foods, including condiments and milk, must be included daily.

*Portion size: Must be same as planned. Use separate line if adjusted for age.

**Amount of food used: Based on *USDA Food Buying Guide* or USDA recipe.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ½ cup (114g)	
Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 30
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 13g	4%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 80%	Vitamin C 60%
Calcium 4%	Iron 4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

Processed Product Information and Nutrient Fact Information

Nutrition Facts Labels

In order to analyze the nutrient content of a menu, specific nutrient information is required. This information may come in the form of a Nutrition Facts label or a manufacturer's nutrient information sheet. A Nutrition Facts label may be found on the box, can, or package of the food item. Nutrition information is recommended for items received as government-donated commodities.

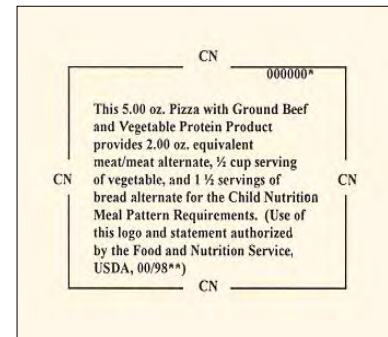
NOTE: Sometimes the Nutrition Facts label does not include the name of the food item or product. If this is the case, please indicate the name of the product somewhere on the nutrient information. Copy the entire product label including the nutrition facts section or write on the nutrition facts section the name of the product.

Child Nutrition Labels

USDA has published a list of manufacturers that have met the Food and Nutrition Service's Quality Control Program requirements for the CN Labeling Program, [CN Label Verification Report](#) and [CN Manufacturers Report](#)

The Child Nutrition (CN) Label is the preferred method for verifying the crediting of menu items. In addition it provides a warranty against audit claims when the product is used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Valid and acceptable documentation for the CN Label is:

- The original CN Label from the product carton; OR
- A photocopy of the CN Label shown attached to the original product carton; OR
- A photograph of the CN Label shown attached to the original product carton.
 - (CN Labels that are photocopied or photographed must be visible and legible.)
- When using the CN Label Verification Report the best practice would be print and maintain a copy of the page showing the CN product and information.



NOTE: CN labels assist in crediting food items to the meal pattern, but do not include nutrient information. Please ensure all products contain nutrient information **and**, if available, a CN label. Additional information regarding [CN labels](#) is provided by USDA.

During an Administrative Review, if the original CN Label, or a valid photograph or photocopy of the original CN Label **is not** available, program operators may provide an invoice that includes the product name, AND:

- A hard copy of the CN Label copied with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor; OR
- An electronic copy of the CN Label with a watermark displaying the product name and CN number provided by the vendor; OR
- A hard copy of the CN Label from the CN Label Verification Report

Fact sheets and product labels provide a way for food manufacturers to communicate with program operators about how their products may contribute to the meal pattern requirements for meals served under USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. Schools are not required to offer processed products with CN Labels; however, it is important to recognize that CN Labeled products ensure that the food provides the stated contribution toward CN meal pattern requirements.

Products purchased to be used in reimbursable meals that do not have a CN Label, should have a completed and signed Product Formulation Statement on the manufacturers' letterhead that states how the processed product contributes to the meal pattern requirements. If there is no Nutrition Facts panel on the processed product, nutrient information must be obtained from the manufacturer. Program operators are ultimately responsible if a menu does not fulfill meal pattern requirements; therefore they must keep records of supporting documentation (original CN product label from the product carton or signed Product Formulation Statements) provided by the manufacturers. It is the program operator's responsibility to request and verify that the supporting documentation is accurate.

General Guidance for Reviewing Product Formulation Statements

An appropriate Product Formulation Statement will provide specific information about the product and show how the credit is obtained citing [CN Program Resources and/or Regulations](#). Specific guidance and policies for [Alternate Protein Products](#) and [Food-based Menu Planning Tools](#) are provided by USDA.

- **Review Product Formulation Statements prior to purchasing processed products.**
 - [Reviewer's Checklist](#)
 - [Product Formulation Statement Templates](#).
- **Determine that creditable ingredients listed in the product formulation statement match a description in the [Food Buying Guide Calculator for Child Nutrition Programs](#).** If a Product Formulation Statement for a specific product claims to provide a higher credit than what is listed in the FBG, the statement must clarify all crediting ingredients, and demonstrate how the product provides that credit according to FNS regulations, guidance, or policy.
- **Verify that the amount of credit that a product may contribute to the meal pattern requirements is not greater than the serving size of the product.** For example, a 2.2 fluid ounce ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) frozen fruit pop or bar may not credit for more than 2.2 fluid ounces or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit or fruit juice.

- **Assure that the Product Formulation Statement proves how the claimed credit was obtained.** It is never acceptable for a manufacturer to simply state that the product provides a certain amount of credit for the CN meal pattern.

Standardized Recipes

Standardized recipes are required for any menu item that contains 2 or more ingredients. Standardized have been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use by a given food service operation. Standardized recipes produce the same good results and help:

- Ensure product quality;
- Make menu planning more consistent;
- Make cost control easy; and
- Produce the same consistent product.

If a school is standardizing a recipe, or modifying an existing recipe, detailed records should be kept. The following information must be included on the form:

- *Yield:* Include serving size and number of servings.
- *All ingredients:* Provide as much information as possible for each ingredient. Include the form such as fresh, frozen, or canned; packing medium such as canned in juice or light syrup, frozen with added sugar, or plain; fat content such as 20 percent fat ground beef or ground pork, no more than 30 percent fat.
- *Correct measures, weights, and/or package size.*
- *Preparation procedures.*

Mixing Bowl –

New and improved USDA Standardized Recipes on What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl. These recipes provide Child Nutrition Program operators exciting, new, nourishing, and wholesome dishes that meet the current meal pattern requirements. These custom-made recipes have been standardized to provide updated crediting information, including the vegetable subgroups. They also provide recipes that include beans and legumes, whole grains, and dark green and red/orange vegetables.

Visit the [Institute of Child Nutrition](#) to access the complete USDA Recipes for Schools database.

USDA NSLP Meal Pattern

The USDA implemented current NSLP meal pattern requirements beginning with school year 2012-13. The meal pattern is a food component based menu plan. The meal pattern only applies to schools in the NSLP, grades K and above. Pre-K grades should continue to follow the Traditional Meal Pattern for school year 2016-2017. School food authorities, must comply with the updated Pre-K Meal Pattern Requirements no later than October 1, 2017. ISBE will issue guidance for implementation.

Highlights of USDA NSLP Meal Pattern

The following are the general requirements for menu plans.

- Fruits and Vegetables must be menued as separate meal components.
- Vegetable group is made up of 5 vegetable sub-groups: Dark Green; Red/Orange; Beans/Peas(Legumes); Starchy; and Other
- Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates groups have daily and weekly minimum servings.
- Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates groups have suggested weekly maximum servings.
- All creditable grains planned for the week must be whole grain-rich.
- Daily calories have a minimum and maximum (Average daily calories over the week).
- Flavored milk must be fat-free, unflavored milk can be fat-free or 1%.
- Calories from saturated fat limited to 10%.

Grade Groupings

The USDA meal pattern for NSLP has 3 grade groupings*:

- K-5
- 6-8
- 9-12

* School sites that have grades that overlap K-5 and 6-8, or that includes any or all grades in the K-8 range have the option of doing a combined K-8 grade grouping.

Each of the grade groups has specific requirements that must be met. The USDA no longer allows schools that have one grade outside a set grade grouping to plan menus that meet the majority of the students. However, the updated USDA menu plan does have an overlap in the meal requirements for the K-5 and 6-8 grade groupings. This would allow a K-8 school to plan to serve the same amount of food for the entire school.

The 9-12 grade grouping does not overlap the requirements of the two younger grade groups so a school that is K-12, would need to be prepared to serve at least two grade groups.

In the following section, each meal component is discussed. Overlaps in grade group requirements will be highlighted to assist in meal planning.

Meal Components

All lunch meals planned under the current guidelines are required to have 5 components: Fruits; Vegetables; Grains; Meat/Meat Alternates; and Fluid Milk.

Fruits

The K-5 and 6-8 grade groups have the same total weekly requirement of 2 ½ cups, and the same daily requirement of a ½ cup. Shown in the chart below as 2 ½ (½), with the daily requirement shown in parenthesis.

The 9-12 grade group has a weekly requirement of 5 cups, and a daily requirement of 1 cup.

Lunch Meal Pattern - Fruits			
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
	K-8 Combined Grouping		
Total Cups per Week (Daily Serving)	2 ½ (1/2)		5 (1)

Juice is allowed to be served, and credits for the amount served. However, of the total weekly fruit cups that must be planned for the week, no more than half may come from juice. On a daily basis schools may plan to serve whole fruits only, juice only, or a combination of both as long as the total of the juice planned for the week does not exceed half of the weekly total.

For the K-5 and 6-8 grade groups, the total planned amount of juice cannot exceed 1 ¼ cups for the week. For the 9-12 grade group, the total planned amount of juice cannot exceed 2 ½ cups for the week.

Dried fruits are allowed to be served and credit for twice the amount served. For example, a ¼ cup of dried apricots would credit for a ½ cup serving of fruit.

Vegetables and Vegetable Subgroups

The K-5 and 6-8 grade groups have the same total weekly requirement of 3 ¾ cups, and the same daily requirement of a ¾ cup. Shown in the chart on the following page as 3 ¾ (¾), with the daily requirement shown in parenthesis. The 9-12 grade group has a weekly requirement of 5 cups, and a daily requirement of 1 cup.

The vegetable component has [5 subgroups](#) that must be served during the week. The 5 groups are: *Dark Green*, *Red/Orange*, *Beans/Peas (Legumes)*, *Starchy*, and *Other*.

Schools can choose to serve a given group on one day of the week, for example Monday could be Dark Green day. Or schools can choose to serve a variety of vegetables each day, and have multiple days with smaller servings of each of the vegetable groups that when totaled up for the week meets the weekly requirement for a variety of groups.

For example, the K-5 group must have a total of a ½ cup of Dark Green vegetables for the week. A school could choose to serve Dark Green vegetables twice a week, at a ¼ cup each time to meet the ½ cup weekly requirement for the Dark Green vegetables. The minimum amount of any vegetable that can credit towards daily or weekly totals is 1/8 cup.

It is important to note that the daily vegetable serving requirements are often greater than each vegetable subgroups weekly requirement. For example, the 6-8 grade group has a total weekly vegetable requirement of 3 ¾ cups, and a daily minimum requirement of ¾ cup. Shown in the chart below as 3 ¾ (¾), with the daily amount shown in parenthesis. Each week the 6-8 grade group must be served at least a ½ cup of the Dark Green vegetable group. That ½ cup counts toward the weekly total of 3 ¾ cups. If a school chose to make Monday, Dark Green vegetable day and **only** served a ½ cup of Dark Green to meet that vegetable subgroup requirement, they would be short a ¼ cup of meeting the minimum daily requirement for the 6-8 grade group of ¾ cup. This is when the Additional Vegetables to Reach Total row on the chart is used.

The Additional Vegetables to Reach Total is not one of the 5 vegetable groups. When any grade groups vegetable subgroups amounts are totaled, they fall short of the total weekly vegetable amount. For grade group 6-8 the **total** weekly vegetable amount is 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups, and when each of the vegetable subgroup amounts is totaled for this grade group, the total is 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups which is short 1 cup of the weekly requirement.

Returning to the example above of a school that serves grades 6-8, and chose Monday as Dark Green vegetable day, the original amount to be served was a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. The school could choose to serve a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving of Dark Green vegetables for the day. This would satisfy the minimum daily vegetable serving of $\frac{3}{4}$ cup, the minimum weekly requirement of $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Dark Green vegetable, with a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Additional Vegetables to Reach Total amount being used.

Lunch Meal Pattern - Vegetables			
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
	K-8 Combined Grouping		
Total Cups per Week (Daily Serving)	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ($\frac{3}{4}$)		5 (1)
Dark Green per Week	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$
Red/Orange per Week	$\frac{3}{4}$		1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Beans/Peas (Legumes) per Week	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$
Starchy per Week	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$
Other per Week	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{3}{4}$
Additional Amount of Any Vegetable to Reach Weekly Total	1		1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Mixed Vegetable Dishes, such as a vegetable medley, that has multiple vegetables can count toward meeting the weekly and daily vegetable requirements, but may not credit toward meeting any of the 5 vegetable subgroup weekly requirements. A grade 6-8 student given a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving of a vegetable medley meets the daily vegetable requirement, but if none of the vegetables in the medley is equal to or greater than a $\frac{1}{8}$ cup, the school would not get credit toward any of the vegetable subgroup requirements. The vegetable medley would be considered as using a portion of the *Additional Vegetables to Reach Weekly Total*.

To allow mixed vegetable dishes to credit toward vegetable subgroups, schools should choose CN labeled products that show the creditable amounts of vegetables, or have a standardized recipe that would substantiate the specific vegetables in a mixed vegetable dish as being provided in an amount of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup or greater. Again, any vegetable in an amount less than $\frac{1}{8}$ cup cannot be credited toward a given vegetable subgroup.

Vegetable Juice is allowed to be served, and falls under the same guidelines as fruit juice. Juice credits for the amount served. However, no more than half of the weekly amount of the vegetables planned may come from juice.

Leafy vegetables only credit for half of the amount served. For example, 1 cup of Romaine lettuce would only credit for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving of vegetables

Grains

All Grains served as part of a NSLP reimbursable meal must be whole grain rich (WGR). The amount of Grains to be served is shown in the chart on the following page. The chart shows the minimum daily requirements, and minimum weekly requirements for the Grains component for all grade groups. Maximums shown are **suggested** maximums set by the USDA. Exceeding the suggested maximums is allowed as long as *Calories, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, and Sodium* standards are not exceeded.

The Grains chart below has the weekly minimums and suggested maximums listed with the daily minimum serving in parenthesis. For example, grades 9-12 has a weekly minimum of 10 oz equivalents, and a minimum daily serving of 2 oz equivalents, shown as 10 (2).

Grade groups K-5 and 6-8 have a weekly minimum of 8 oz eq which would allow schools that have grades that fall into both of these grade groups to serve at least 8 oz eq per week. K-5 and 6-8 grade groups both have a minimum of 1 oz eq daily requirement.

Lunch Meal Pattern – WGR Grains				
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	K-8 Combined Grouping	Grades 9-12
Total Weekly Ounce Equivalents (Daily Ounce Equivalents)	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	8-9 (1)	10-12 (2)

The Whole Grain Rich Requirement is met if the Grain meets one of the following:

- Whole grains per serving \geq 8 grams
- Product includes FDA's whole grain health claim on its packaging
- Product label's ingredient list, lists a whole grain item first. i.e. Whole wheat flour. A product with *Wheat flour* as the first ingredient would not qualify.

Grain Based Desserts are allowed to be served by schools as long as the amount served does not exceed 2 oz eq. The 2 oz eq is counted toward the weekly Grains in the chart shown above; it is **not in addition to** the weekly amounts. Schools can choose how to serve the 2 oz eq of grain based desserts: One, 2 oz cookie; Two, 1 oz cookies; Four, .5 oz cookies, etc.

Additional Grain requirements information is available in [USDA Policy Memo SP 30-2012](#).

Meat/Meat Alternates

There are minimum daily requirements, and minimum weekly requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates component for all grade groups. Maximums shown are **suggested** maximums set by the USDA. Exceeding the suggested maximums is allowed as long as *Calories, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, and Sodium* standards are not exceeded.

Similar to the Grains, the Meat/Meat Alternates has the weekly minimums listed with the daily minimum serving in parenthesis. For example, grades 9-12 has a weekly minimum of 10 oz eq, and a minimum daily serving of 2 oz eq, shown as 10 (2).

Grade groups K-5 and 6-8 have an overlap of amounts allowed to be served. K-5 has a weekly minimum of 8 oz eq, and the 6-8 grade group has a weekly minimum of 9 oz eq. This would allow schools that have grades that fall into both of these grade groups to plan to serve a minimum of 9 oz eq per week and satisfy both groups. Both of these grade groups have a minimum of 1 oz eq daily requirement.

Lunch Meal Pattern – Meat/Meat Alternates				
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	K-8 Combined Grouping	Grades 9-12
Total Weekly Ounce Equivalents (Daily Ounce Equivalents)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)

Tofu and Soy Products

Please view [USDA Policy Memo SP 16-2012](#) for crediting information.

Fluid Milk

Two types of milk must be offered. Any two types that meet the following criteria are allowed.

- Unflavored, Fat-Free or Low-Fat (1%)
- Flavored, Fat-Free Only

Whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk are not allowed.

Lunch Meal Pattern – Milk			
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
	K-8 Combined Grouping		
Total Cups per Week (Daily Serving)	5 (1)		5 (1)

Four Dietary Specifications

Meals served as part of the NSLP, must meet the following requirements.

Lunch – Four Dietary Specifications				
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	K-8 Combined Grouping	Grades 9-12
Min & Max Calories	550-650	600-700	600-650	750-850
Saturated Fat (% of Total Calories)	<10	<10	<10	<10
Sodium (mg) ¹	≤ 640	≤ 710	≤ 640	≤ 740
Trans Fat ²	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving.			

The standards for sodium, calorie minimums and maximums, and saturated fat are met based on averages for the week. During the week, 1 or more days may be out of the required ranges, or past the maximums, but the averages are what is used to judge compliance.

¹ Sodium requirements listed are end point amounts, after multi-year phase in. Please view the Timeline Chart at the end of the Menu Planning to see the yearly requirements.

² Products and ingredients used to prepare meals must be trans-fat free (less than 0.5 gram per serving). This only applies to trans-fat added products, not products with naturally occurring trans-fat.

Offer versus Serve - Lunch

Schools that are grades K-8 have the option of being a Serve Only or an Offer vs Serve school. Schools that are grades 9-12 are required to be Offer vs Serve.

K-8 schools that are Serve Only, do not allow students any choice as to whether meal components are denied or accepted. Students must receive the required minimum daily serving of all 5 components: Fruit; Vegetable; Grain; Meat/Meat Alternate; and a Fluid Milk.

K-8 schools that choose to use Offer vs Serve, and all schools that are grades 9-12, must allow students to deny up to 2, of the 5 required components. For a meal to be reimbursable under Offer vs Serve a student must walk away with at least 3, of the 5 required components, **and at least 1 of the 3 components taken, must be a Fruit and/or Vegetable.**

Students must be offered all five required components:

1. Fruit
2. Vegetable
3. Grain
4. Meat/Meat Alternate
5. Fluid Milk

Once a student has at least 3 components in the required serving sizes (one of which is a fruit and/or vegetable) schools can allow or encourage tasting or partial servings of the remaining components. This may be especially effective when introducing new foods or when working

with younger students who may not be as comfortable trying new foods. The smaller tasting portions will not be as overwhelming to a younger student as a full serving would be.

Regardless of whether a student in an Offer vs Serve school chooses 3, 4 or all 5 components, meals are priced as a unit. Meaning, Paid and Reduced-Price students pay the same Paid or Reduced meal price regardless of whether they select 3, 4 or all 5 components.

The use of Offer versus Serve may help decrease food cost and food waste, since schools will only be preparing foods that students are actually selecting, and students will only select foods they are most likely to eat.

USDA SBP Meal Requirements

Highlights of USDA SBP Meal Pattern

The following are some of the major changes from prior menu plans.

- Grains component has daily minimum serving sizes.
- Grains have weekly minimums and suggested maximums.
- Minimum of 1 cup of Fruit must be menued each day.
- Schools choosing to do Offer vs Serve for breakfast, must require students to walk away with at least a ½ cup of Fruit
- No requirement to serve or offer Meat/Meat Alternates
- All grains menued for the week must be whole grain-rich.
- Daily calories have a minimum and maximum (Average daily calories over the week).
- Flavored milk must be fat-free, unflavored milk can be fat-free or 1%.
- Calories from saturated fat limited to 10%.

USDA Q & A Breakfast Program

Grade Groupings

USDA meal pattern for NSLP has 3 grade groupings*:

- K-5
 - 6-8
 - 9-12
- * School sites that have grades that overlap K-5 and 6-8, or that includes all grades K-8 have the option of doing a combined K-8 grade grouping.
- * Districts that serve grades K-12 can choose to do one K-12 grade grouping.

SBP Meal Components

The components listed in the table below are required for breakfast. Maximums shown for grains are **suggested** maximums set by the USDA. Exceeding the suggested maximums is allowed as long as *Calories*, *Saturated Fat*, *Trans Fat*, and *Sodium* standards are not exceeded.

Weekly amounts are listed, with daily required serving sizes listed in parenthesis. For example, each grade group has a weekly requirement of 5 cups of milk, with a required daily serving of 1 cup, shown as 5 (1).

	K-5	6-8	9-12
Fruits	5 (1) - Cups	5 (1) - Cups	5 (1) - Cups
Grains	7-10 (1) - Oz Eq	8-10 (1) - Oz Eq	9-10 (1) - Oz Eq
Fluid Milk	5 (1) - Cups	5 (1) - Cups	5 (1) - Cups

Fruit

- One cup must be menued and offered daily.
 - Schools may choose to serve vegetables to satisfy the 1 cup of fruit requirement.
 - Schools choosing to use vegetables must select the first 2 cups of vegetables for the week from the *Dark Green*, *Red/Orange*, *Beans/Peas*, or *Other* subgroups.
- No limit on fruit, however calorie range requirements must be met.
- Fresh, frozen, canned, 100% juice, and dried fruits or vegetables are allowed.
- No more than ½ the fruit menued during the week can come from juice.
- Fruit smoothies are allowed
 - Smoothies prepared on-site may credit toward the fruit and milk components.
 - Commercial smoothies can only credit toward the fruit component.

Grains

- All grains offered must be whole grain rich (WGR).
- At least one ounce equivalent of grains must be menued every day.
 - Meat/Meat Alternate as a substitute for a Grain. After one ounce equivalent of grains is menued, a meat/meat alternate can also be added to the menu which counts towards the grains requirements.
- Breakfast cereals must be fortified.

Fluid Milk

Two types of milk must be offered. Any two types that meet the following criteria are allowed.

- Unflavored, Fat-Free or Low-Fat (1%)
- Flavored, Fat-Free Only

Whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk **are not allowed**.

Meat/Meat Alternates and Vegetables as Extras

There is no requirement to serve Meat/Meat Alternates OR Vegetables for breakfast. As stated above with the Grains component, Meat/Meat Alternates can satisfy part of the required Grains component range after at least one Grain has been menued.

Schools can choose to offer a Meat/Meat Alternate or Vegetable as an extra with the meal. If extras are offered, they will not count towards any of the components, but they will count towards the calories, sodium, and saturated fat requirements.

Any extras offered will not count toward the required components/items for schools choosing to do Offer vs Serve.

Calorie Requirements

Grades	Calories
K-5	350-500
6-8	400-550
9-12	450-600

Breakfast Requirements Allow for One Menu Plan for All Grades

K – 12 Breakfast		
	Weekly Amount/Range	Daily Minimum
Fruits	5 Cups	1 Cup
WGR Grains	9-10 Oz Eq	1 Oz Eq
Fluid Milk	5 Cups	1 Cup
Min & Max Calories	450-500	-
Saturated Fat (% of Total Calories)	Less than 10%	-
Sodium (mg)¹	≤ 430	-
Trans Fat²	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving.	

The standards for sodium, calorie minimums and maximums, and saturated fat are met based on averages for the week. During the week, 1 or more days may be out of the required ranges, or past the maximums, but the averages are used to judge compliance.

¹ Sodium requirements listed are end point amounts, after multi-year phase in. Please view the Timeline Chart at the end of the Menu Planning to see the yearly requirements.

² Products and ingredients used to prepare meals must be trans-fat free (less than 0.5 gram per serving). This only applies to trans-fat added products, not products with naturally occurring trans-fat.

Offer versus Serve – Breakfast

- Offer vs Serve at breakfast is optional for all grades.
- Students must be offered all three components.
- At least 4 items must be menued from the 3 required component areas.
- Student must walk away with at least 3 items, one of which must be a fruit.

What Counts as an <i>Item</i> ?	
Components	1 <i>Item</i> Equals
Fruits	1/2 cup
Grains	1 oz eq
Fluid Milk	1 Cup

Fruit Item

One *item* of fruit is a ½ cup. Schools are required to offer at least 1 cup of fruit daily. The 1 cup of fruit offered can come from one fruit, or a combination of fruits. Since 1 *item* of fruit equals a ½ cup, schools may choose to offer multiple fruits in ½ cup amounts. Doing so would satisfy the requirement of offering at least 1 cup of fruit daily, and would provide multiple *items* toward the Offer vs Serve requirement to offer at least 4 *items*.

A fruit *item* must be selected under Offer vs Serve for the meal to be reimbursable.

Schools are allowed to use vegetables to count towards the fruit, but vegetables are not a required component and/or *item* for breakfast.

Grain Item

One *item* of grain is 1 oz eq. Menu planners have a choice in how larger grain items, like a muffin or bagel, are classified. If the grain being offered is 2 oz eqs, the menu planner could choose to classify it as 1 or 2 items since 1 *item* of grains is only 1 oz eq.

If the menu planner has chosen to classify a 2 oz eq grain as 2 “items”, a student selecting it would have 2 *items* toward the 3 *item* minimum that must be selected to meet the requirements of Offer vs Serve.

Fluid Milk Item

One *item* of milk is 1 cup. There is no requirement under Offer vs Serve for a student to select a milk. While schools could offer multiple 1 cup *items* of milk, it is not recommended due to the amount of calories milk contributes.

USDA Offer versus Serve Guidance

Additional information related to Offer vs Serve for breakfast and lunch is available at:

- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP57-2014a.pdf>; And
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/es/file/9213>

Implementation Timeline Chart

Jan. 2012

Implementation Timeline for Final Rule

"Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs"

Implementation of most meal requirements in the NSLP begins SY 2012-2013. In the SBP, the meal requirements (other than milk) will be implemented gradually beginning SY 2013-2014.

New Requirements	Implementation (School Year) for NSLP (L) and SBP (B)						
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2022/23
Fruits Component							
• Offer fruit daily	L						
• Fruit quantity increase to 5 cups/week (minimum 1 cup/day)			B				
Vegetables Component							
• Offer vegetables subgroups weekly	L						
Grains Component							
• Half of grains must be whole grain-rich	L	B					
• All grains must be whole-grain rich			L, B				
• Offer weekly grains ranges	L	B					
Meats/Meat Alternates Component							
• Offer weekly meats/meat alternates ranges (daily min.)	L						
Milk Component							
• Offer only fat-free (unflavored or flavored) and low-fat (unflavored) milk	L, B						
Dietary Specifications (to be met on average over a week)							
• Calorie ranges	L	B					
• Saturated fat limit (no change)	L, B						
• Sodium Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Target 1 ◦ Target 2 ◦ Final target 			L, B			L, B	L, B
• Zero grams of <u>trans</u> fat per portion	L	B					
Menu Planning							
• A single FBMP approach	L	B					
Age-Grade Groups							
• Establish age/grade groups: K-5, 6-8, 9-12	L	B					
Offer vs. Serve							
• Reimbursable meals must contain a fruit or vegetable (1/2 cup minimum)	L		B				
Monitoring							
• 3-year adm. review cycle		L, B					
• Conduct weighted nutrient analysis on 1 week of menus	L	B					

School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern Requirements Summary Chart

Breakfast Meal Pattern			
Meal Pattern	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
	Amount of Food Per Week (Minimum Per Day)		
Fruits (cups)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups)	0	0	0
Dark green	0	0	0
Red/Orange	0	0	0
Beans and pea (legumes)	0	0	0
Starchy	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Additional Veg to Reach Total	0	0	0
Grains (ounce equivalent)	7 (1)	8 (1)	9 (1)
Meats/Meat Alternates (ounce equivalent)	0	0	0
Fluid milk (cups)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal)	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated fat (% of total calories)	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (mg)	≤ 430	≤ 470	≤ 500
<u>Trans</u> fat	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <u>trans</u> fat per serving.		

National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern Requirements Summary Chart

Lunch Meal Pattern			
Meal Pattern	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
	Amount of Food Per Week (Minimum Per Day)		
Fruits (cups)	2 1/2 (1/2)	2 1/2 (1/2)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups)	3 3/4 (3/4)	3 3/4 (3/4)	5 (1)
Dark green	1/2	1/2	1/2
Red/Orange	3/4	3/4	1 1/4
Beans and peas (legumes)	1/2	1/2	1/2
Starchy	1/2	1/2	1/2
Other	1/2	1/2	3/4
Additional Veg to Reach Total	1	1	1 1/2
Grains (ounce equivalent)	8 (1)	8 (1)	10 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (ounce equivalent)	8 (1)	9 (1)	10 (2)
Fluid milk (cups)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal)	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories)	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (mg)	≤ 640	≤ 710	≤ 740
Trans fat	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <u>trans</u> fat per serving.		

National School Lunch After-School Care Program

Reimbursement for snacks served in After-School Care Programs that serve children through 18 years of age is now available. The intent of this option is to assist schools in operating organized programs of care that include educational or enrichment activities to help reduce or prevent children's involvement in juvenile crime or other high-risk behavior.

Content of Snacks

Snacks must meet the meal pattern as established in the National School Lunch Program regulations. Snacks must contain two different components from the following four:

1. A serving of fluid milk as a beverage, on cereal, or used in part for each purpose.
2. A serving of meat or meat alternate.
3. A serving of vegetable(s) or fruit(s) or full-strength vegetable or fruit juice or an equivalent quantity of any combination of these foods. Juice may not be served when milk is served as the only other component.
4. A serving of whole-grain or enriched bread; or an equivalent serving of cornbread, biscuits, rolls, or muffins made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour; or a serving of cooked whole-grain or enriched pasta or noodle products or cereal grains; or an equivalent quantity of any combination of these foods.

Sweet-type desserts such as cookies, granola bars, or sweet rolls, may be used to meet one serving of grain or bread per day. Sweet-type desserts or snacks should not be served as a snack more than twice a week.

Portions for children 13 through 18 years of age shall be no less than the portions for the 6 through 12 years of age group. Larger portions should be offered to the older children.			
Component	Age 1–2	Age 3–5	Age 6–12
Select two different components from the four areas listed below.			
Fluid Milk	½ c	½ c	1 c
Meat or meat alternate¹	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz
Fruit, vegetable, or juice	½ c	½ c	¾ c
Bread or cereal:			
Enriched or whole-grain bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal: Cold, dry	¼ c	⅓ c	¾ c
or hot, cooked	¼ c	¼ c	½ c

* Schools must offer at least two choices from the following: fat-free flavored, fat-free unflavored, or 1% unflavored.

¹ Yogurt can be used as a meat alternate. Four ounces or ½ cup of plain or sweetened and flavored yogurt equals one ounce of meat or meat alternate.