

MICRO-TRAINING



PLANNING REIMBURSABLE SCHOOL MEALS FOR MENU PLANNERS: GRAINS COMPONENT

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Key Area: Nutrition (1000)

USDA Professional Standard: Menu Planning (1100)

Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills (CKS): Functional Area 7: Menu and Nutrition Management

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PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Key Area: Nutrition (1000)

USDA Professional Standard: Menu Planning (1100)

Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills (CKS): Functional Area 7: Menu and Nutrition Management

INTRODUCTION

Planning Reimbursable School Meals for Menu Planners: Grains Component is one of four micro-trainings designed for use by program operators/menu planners to train their staff. These short (less than 30 minutes) and easy-to-use trainings include a lesson plan and activities related to the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – [Final Rule](#).

This lesson plan contains the following:

- Learning objectives
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- Additional resources to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the menu planners and other program staff

LESSON: GRAINS COMPONENT

Objectives:

- Describe the grains component requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).
- Apply the grains component requirements in a one-day menu that meets the meal pattern requirements.

Outcome:

Provide menu planners an overview of the grains component for the NSLP and SBP.

Why It Is Important:

It is critical that program operators/menu planners understand and can implement the menu requirements for the NSLP and SBP.

Materials:

- Grains Component Lesson Overview
- Grains: Transitional Standards for School Years 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 infographic
- Menu Planning – Grains worksheet
- Speed Action Planning worksheet
- Pens/pencils
- Planner or cell phone calendar app

Instructions:

Follow these steps to complete this training:

- Discuss the lesson overview with the participants.
- Review the infographic and how it relates to the training topic.
- Complete the discussion questions.
- Complete the activity as instructed.
- Answer any questions participants may have about the lesson.
- Encourage participants to complete the Speed Action Planning activity.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Grains must be offered as part of reimbursable school meals. Grains contribute energy, dietary fiber, iron and other minerals, and vitamins to the diet. Dietary fiber and iron are nutrients of concern identified in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020–2025* (DGA) because most Americans do not consume enough of these nutrients daily. The DGAs suggest that at least half of the grains we consume be whole grains. Whole grain intake at recommended levels is associated with reduced risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, and improved immunity and digestive tract health.

Grains are divided into two subgroups: whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole grain cornmeal, and brown rice. Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Some examples of refined grain products are white flour, corn grits, white bread, and white rice.

Refined grain choices served as part of the NSLP or SBP should be enriched. This means certain B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron are added back in after processing. Fiber is not added back to enriched grains. Check the ingredient list on refined grain products to make sure that the word “enriched” is included in the grain name. Some food products are made from mixtures of whole grains and refined grains. Only foods that are made with 100% whole grains are considered whole grains.

Foods in the grains component include:

- Cereal grains (oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, wheat berries, cracked wheat, whole-meal corn, whole-grain pasta made from cereal grain, etc.)
- Baked goods made from cereal grain flours (breads, rolls, tortillas, pitas, flatbreads, crusts, pancakes, waffles, and some limited dessert items, etc.)
- Ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals (flakes, puffs, shreds, and rings of various grains, granolas, etc.)
- Other grains are listed in the [Food Buying Guide](#)

Grains are measured by weight and use ounce equivalents (oz eq) as the unit for NSLP/SBP. Grains have both daily and weekly required minimum serving amounts. The daily and weekly required minimum serving amounts vary by meal type and grade group. See the NSLP and SBP meal pattern charts for more details on specific requirements (pages 7–9).

Transitional Standards

Beginning with School Year (SY) 2022–2023, the implementation of the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – [Final Rule](#) establishes transitional standards to support the continued effort to provide nutritious school meals as schools respond to and recover from the pandemic. These transitional standards establish meal pattern requirements for milk, whole grains, and sodium for SY 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 to give schools time to transition in the short term.

Final Rule for Grains

- ▶ Beginning with SY 2022–2023, at least 80% of the grains offered must be whole grain-rich (WGR).
 - Whole grain-rich means the product must contain at least 50% whole grains to be eligible as a whole grain-rich product at breakfast and lunch.
- ▶ The remaining 20% of grains offered must be enriched.

Grain Requirements

When implementing the grain requirements for reimbursable meals, there are a few key items to keep in mind.

- ▶ Minimum Amounts:
 - For all grades, schools must offer a minimum amount of grains daily and weekly. The amount varies by age/grade group.
 - Programs may exceed the grain offering requirements on their weekly menu; however, the meal reimbursement will remain unchanged.
 - Grains offered in amounts less than 0.25 ounce equivalents do not count toward daily and weekly grain requirements.

National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern		
Amount of Food per Week (minimum per day)		
Grades K–5	Grades 6–8	Grades 9–12
8–9 (1 oz eq) servings	8–10 (1 oz eq) servings	10–12 (2 oz eq) servings
School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern		
Amount of Food per Week (minimum per day)		
Grades K–5	Grades 6–8	Grades 9–12
7–10 (1 oz eq) servings	8–10 (1 oz eq) servings	9–10 (1 oz eq) servings

▶ Whole Grain-Rich Requirements:

- A whole grain-rich product contains 50% or more whole grains by weight, with any remaining grains being enriched.
- There is no daily whole grain-rich requirement. 80% of the grains offered during the week must be whole grain-rich.
- Programs may exceed the grain offering requirements on their weekly menu, however, the meal reimbursement will remain unchanged.
- Grains offered in amounts less than 0.25 ounce equivalents do not count toward daily and weekly grain requirements.

Discussion Questions:

▶ How is whole grain-rich defined?

- Answer: To be whole grain-rich, the grain content of a product must contain at least 50% or more whole grains by weight, and any remaining grains must be enriched.

▶ What is the current standard for grains in the NSLP and SBP?

- Answer: At least 80% or more of the grains offered must be whole grain-rich and the remaining grain content must be enriched.

▶ What is the purpose of the Transitional Standards?

- Answer: The Transitional Standards supports the continued provision of nutritious school meals as schools respond to and recover from the pandemic. These Transitional Standards are in place while USDA engages in notice-and-comment rulemaking to update the meal pattern standards to more comprehensively reflect the ***Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020–2025***



GRAINS

**TRANSITIONAL STANDARDS
FOR SCHOOL YEARS 2022–2023 AND 2023–2024**

80%

of grains offered must be whole grain-rich

20%

of the other grains offered must be enriched



National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern

Amount of Food per Week (minimum per day)

Grades K–5	Grades 6–8	Grades 9–12
8–9 (1 oz eq) servings	8–10 (1 oz eq) servings	10–12 (2 oz eq) servings

School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

Amount of Food per Week (minimum per day)

Grades K–5	Grades 6–8	Grades 9–12
7–10 (1 oz eq) servings	8–10 (1 oz eq) servings	9–10 (1 oz eq) servings

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12/19/2022

**School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern**

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^{b c}	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^{b c}	0	0	0
Dark green	0	0	0
Red/Orange	0	0	0
Beans and peas (legumes)	0	0	0
Starchy	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Grains (oz eq) ^d	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq) ^e	0	0	0
Fluid milk ^f (cups)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^{g h}	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Target 1 (mg)	≤ 540	≤ 600	≤ 640
<i>Trans</i> fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Schools must offer 1 cup of fruit daily and 5 cups of fruit weekly. Vegetables may be substituted for fruits, but the first two cups per week of any such substitution must be from the dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), or “Other vegetables” subgroups, as defined in §210.10(c)(2)(iii) of this chapter.

^d At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched. Schools may substitute 1 oz. eq. of meat/meat alternate for 1 oz. eq. of grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met.

^e There is no meat/meat alternate requirement.

^f All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be unflavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

^g The average daily calories for a 5-day school week must be within the range (at least the minimum and no more than the maximum values).

^h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent milk fat are not allowed.



National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^b	2½ (½)	2½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^b	3¾ (¾)	3¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark green ^c	½	½	½
Red/Orange ^c	¾	¾	1¼
Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^c	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^h	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Interim Target 1 (mg) ^h	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,420
Sodium Interim Target 1A (mg) ^{h i}	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280
<i>Trans</i> fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is 1/8 cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as 1/2 cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Larger amounts of these vegetables may be served.

^d This category consists of “Other vegetables” as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(E) of this section. For the purposes of the NSLP, the “Other vegetables” requirement may be met with any

additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) vegetable subgroups as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii) of this section.

^e Any vegetable subgroup may be offered to meet the total weekly vegetable requirement.

^f At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched.

^g All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be flavored or unflavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

^h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent are not allowed.

ⁱ Sodium Interim Target 1A must be met no later than July 1, 2023 (SY 2023-2024).

ACTIVITY: Menu Planning – Grains For Facilitator/Instructor ONLY

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: Menu Planning – Grains worksheet, pens/pencils

Instructions: Participants will complete a one-day menu applying the meal pattern requirements (Grades 9–12) for the grains component of the NSLP and SBP. Distribute the *Menu Review – Grains worksheet*. Read the instructions to the participants. Instruct the participants that for the days missing grains component food items, suggest food items to satisfy the meal pattern requirements. After participants complete the chart, discuss the answer key and possible food items.

Answer Key:

- At least 80% of the grains offered must be whole grain-rich. The remaining 20% of grains offered must be enriched.
- Possible food items:

Day 1 – Breakfast	Day 1 – Lunch
Entrée – Grains	Entrée – M/MA
French Toast Sticks 2 oz eq WGR	Chicken Fajita 2 oz eq meat
	Grains
	2 oz eq WGR tortilla 0.5 oz eq tortilla chips
	Vegetables
	¾ cup tossed salad ½ cup refried beans
Fruits	Fruits
½ cup banana ½ cup applesauce	½ cup diced pears ½ cup apple
Milk	Milk
1 cup 1% unflavored 1 cup fat-free chocolate	1 cup 1% unflavored 1 cup fat-free chocolate

Participant Worksheet: Menu Planning – Grains

Instructions: Using a one-day menu, complete a one-day menu applying the meal pattern requirements (Grades 9–12) for the NSLP/SBP for the grains component.

Day 1 – Breakfast	Day 1 – Lunch
Entrée – Grains	Entrée – M/MA
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> _____ oz eq _____	Chicken Fajita 2 oz eq meat
	Grains
	<hr/> _____ oz eq _____
	<hr/> _____ oz eq _____
	<hr/> _____
	Vegetables
	¾ cup tossed salad ½ cup refried beans
Fruits	Fruits
½ cup banana ½ cup applesauce	½ cup diced pears ½ cup apple
Milk	Milk
1 cup 1% unflavored 1 cup fat-free chocolate	1 cup 1% unflavored 1 cup fat-free chocolate

ACTIVITY: Speed Action Planning

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is for program operators/menu planners to establish an action plan for applying the information learned in this session in their workplaces.

Materials Needed: Speed Action Planning worksheet, planner or cell phone calendar app, and pens/pencils

Instructions: Distribute the Speed Action Planning worksheet. Inform participants that it is important to develop a plan for using the information from the training. Ask them to take 1–2 minutes to answer the following three questions to establish an action plan. Once the participants have finished, encourage them to save this goal to a planner, calendar app, or other sources to ensure they follow through with their plan.

- What did you learn in this training?
- How will you apply this information in your current or future roles?
- When will you apply this information?

Speed Action Planning

Instructions: Today’s training featured key information on the grain component for the NSLP and SBP. Answer the following three questions to establish a plan for using the information.

1. What did you learn in this training?

2. How will you apply this information in your current or future roles?

3. When will you apply this information (for example, one week, one month, six months, etc.)?

REFERENCES

Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Final Rule, 7 C.F.R. § 210, 215, 220, and 226. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/07/2022-02327/child-nutrition-programs-transitional-standards-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium>

Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, 7 C.F.R. § 210, 220. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/01/26/2012-1010/nutrition-standards-in-the-national-school-lunch-and-school-breakfast-programs>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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