

IDENTIFYING REIMBURSABLE SCHOOL MEALS

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL



INSTITUTE OF
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IDENTIFYING REIMBURSABLE SCHOOL MEALS

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

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Key Areas: 1 – Nutrition and 2 – Operations

USDA Professional Standards Codes: Menu Planning (1100) and Serving Food (2200)

INSTITUTE OF CHILD NUTRITION

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

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Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Instructor's Note: The purpose of the background information section is to help you become familiar with the context of the training. It is not a part of the training detail.

Introduction

Identifying Reimbursable School Meals is a 3-hour face-to-face training that communicates and identifies reimbursable school meal strategies and best practices for school nutrition professionals. The training includes practical applications, individual knowledge checks, and hands-on applications. *Identifying Reimbursable School Meals* provides general concepts to help directors, managers, and school nutrition staff understand the general requirements for a reimbursable lunch and breakfast meal under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) using the Offer versus Serve (OVS) provision.

Prompts are as follows:

SAY: What the instructor states to the participants. This is the content that teaches the learning objectives.

ASK: This prompt is used when the instructor should ask the participants a question.

FEEDBACK: This prompt ensures certain elements are covered in discussions.

DO: This prompt explains what the instructor/participants are to do. It may lead to activities, demonstrations, or videos.

SHOW SLIDE: This prompt is used to show slides. Each slide must have its unique title. Slides should not be content-heavy nor contain content not covered in the Instructor's Manual.

PRE-/POST-ASSESSMENTS: This manual includes a Pre-/Post-Assessment that will be administered at the beginning and the end of the training.

FUNCTIONAL AREA AND COMPETENCIES

Functional Area 5: USDA Meal Program Requirements

Competency 5.1. Reports and Records

Knowledge Statement: 5.1b. Knows meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal.

Source: Institute of Child Nutrition. (2022). Competencies, knowledge, and skills of effective school nutrition technicians/assistants. University, MS: Author.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Operations – 2000

Key Area Code: Serving Food (2200)

Employee will be able to correctly and efficiently serve food portions to meet all USDA school meal pattern requirements and encourage healthy food selections, including those for special diets.

2210 – Identify/serve portions of food items according to USDA school meal pattern requirements and diet restrictions.

2220 – Use offer Versus Serve correctly.

OBJECTIVES

- Recall the required NSLP reimbursable meal components.
- Categorize foods into the correct NSLP meal components.
- Recognize an OVS reimbursable meal at lunch.
- Recall the SBP reimbursable meal components.
- Categorize foods into the correct SBP meal components.
- Recognize an OVS reimbursable meal at breakfast.

GROUND RULES

The ICN has developed Ground Rules to help this training session run smoothly and allow all participants to benefit from the course instruction and information. (These Ground Rules can be found on the ICN website – [Ground Rules for Training Mini-Posters.](#))

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Instructions: The following tasks are necessary for presenting this lesson. Assign each task to a specific person and determine the date that each task must be completed. Keep track of the progress by checking off tasks as they are completed. [Items may vary according to the needs of lessons.]

Task	Person Responsible	Completion Date	
<p>Reserve equipment and gather supplies as needed for use on the day of class (6 weeks prior).</p> <p>Instructor's Manual</p> <p>Roster of participants attending for instructor</p> <p>Participants' sign-in sheets</p> <p>List of equipment and supplies needed</p> <p>Microphone (preferably wireless)</p> <p>Computer to present slides</p> <p>Projector and Screen</p> <p>Speakers</p> <p>Wireless presenter device and laser pointer</p> <p>Chart paper (self-adhesive strip sheets)</p> <p>Painter's tape (do not use masking tape)</p> <p>Markers (for chart paper)</p> <p>ICN Ground Rules Mini Posters</p> <p>Pens, pencils, note paper, highlighters, self-adhesive notes, page markers, index cards (each table)</p> <p>Name tags and table tents</p>	Instructor		
<p>Participant's Workbook</p>			
<p>Agenda, roster of presenters/participants, and handouts</p>			
<p>Pre-/Post-Assessments</p>			
<p>Other handouts (documents from outside sources needed for training)</p>			

Introduction Lesson-at-a-Glance

Time	Objective(s)	Key Topics	Icebreaker Activity
15 minutes	Establish the training topic and set the tone for the training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training overview• Introductions• Pre-assessment	Participants will introduce themselves and complete "My Favorite School Meal..." School nutrition professionals will share their favorite school meals, which will help foster a personal connection to their work and set a positive tone for the training.

INTRODUCTION

Instructor's Note: Before beginning the session, place the class materials on the tables, post the Ground Rules mini-posters, and create a chart paper labeled "Bike Rack." Greet the arriving participants and direct them to a table that includes the participants' materials. Confirm that participants have all the necessary materials for the lesson. Circulate the sign-in sheet and request each participant sign the sheet. Point out the location of the restrooms and water fountain/beverages to the group.

SHOW SLIDE: **Identifying Reimbursable School Meals**

SAY: Welcome. Thank you for taking part in today's training. Reimbursable school meals are required to meet specific nutrition standards and the required meal components and food items. The school meals program menu requirements reflect the key food groups recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs)*. The DGAs are updated every 5 years, so the meal patterns are constantly updated for consistency.

This training provides general concepts to help directors, managers, and school nutrition staff understand the general requirements for a reimbursable lunch and breakfast meal under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). It contains activities that reinforce key messages to help you identify a reimbursable meal using the Offer versus Serve (OVS) option.

To help guide you through this training, the Institute of Child Nutrition has provided each of you with a Participant's Workbook. The workbook contains important information and activities developed specifically for this training.

This training will cover various topics, so questions are highly encouraged. Because all your questions are important, please write them on self-adhesive notes and post them to the Bike Rack. Sometimes, questions may require research or a longer answer than time allows at that point.

Instructor's Note: Introduce yourself and provide participants with a brief overview of your background related to School Nutrition.

SHOW SLIDE: **Icebreaker: My Favorite School Meal**

DO: Activity: Icebreaker

Purpose: Participants will complete the icebreaker activity to introduce themselves and list what they hope to get from the training.

Materials Needed: chart paper and marker

Instructions: Participants begin the icebreaker activity by walking around the room to find someone they have not met before. They introduce themselves, share their names and roles, and share their favorite school meal from childhood. After discussing their favorite meals, each participant states what they hope to learn about planning reimbursable school meals in today's session in no more than five words. To conclude the activity, they will introduce each other to the rest of the group, sharing their names, favorite school meals, and the learning goals discussed in their conversation.

Time: 5 minutes

SAY: We are going to do a quick icebreaker activity. This activity will help you meet new people, learn their favorite school meals, and identify what you want to learn about planning reimbursable school meals. Move around the room, locate someone you do not know, introduce yourself to that individual, and share your favorite school meal from childhood. Then, describe in no more than five words what you would like to learn about a reimbursable school meal. At the end of the activity, you will introduce each other to the rest of the group and state the individual's response.

DO: Write the participants' responses on chart paper. List the responses.

SAY: This is quite an impressive list.

SHOW SLIDE: *Pre-Assessment*

DO: Activity: Pre-Assessment

Purpose: Participants will complete the pre-assessment to identify what they know about the requirements for serving reimbursable meals in school meal programs.

Materials Needed: Pre-Assessment and smart device

Instructions: Provide the participants with the materials needed to complete the pre-assessment.

Time: 5 minutes

SAY: A pre-assessment is a training tool that provides the participants' baseline knowledge of the training topic. Use the QR code to access the pre-assessment.

DO: Allow participants time to complete the pre-assessment.

Instructor's Note: The Pre-/Post-Assessment is in the back of the manual in the Appendix.

SHOW SLIDE: *Reimbursable School Meals*

SAY: *Identifying Reimbursable School Meals* is a 3-hour training that will teach you how to determine which school meals qualify for reimbursement. You will learn about the meal pattern requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). We will cover identifying reimbursable meals using real-life examples and practice exercises. This training is designed for school nutrition staff, including directors and managers.

The [National School Lunch Program](#) (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The program provides children with nutritionally balanced, low or no-cost lunches each school day. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. All schools are required to offer students the five required meal components. Meal components are offered in quantities that meet or exceed the minimum serving sizes established by the regulations. The meal components at lunch are fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates (M/MA), and fluid milk.

Offer versus Serve (OVS) is a provision in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) that allows students to decline some of the food offered. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste in the school meals programs while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat. Programs implementing OVS at lunch follow specific guidelines. OVS is required for lunches served in high schools but is optional in middle and elementary schools. During OVS lunch service, students must select at least three of the five required meal components, including at least ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable, for a reimbursable lunch.

Instructor's Note: The *National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Fact Sheet* is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the fact sheet can be found in the Introduction section of their Participant's Workbook.

The [School Breakfast Program](#) (SBP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The program began as a pilot project in 1966 and was made permanent in 1975. The required meal components at breakfast are the grains and/or M/MA component, the fruits (or vegetables as a substitute) component, and the fluid milk component. For OVS at breakfast, schools must offer students all three required meal components in quantities that meet or exceed the minimum serving sizes established by the regulations.

Under OVS at breakfast, a student must be offered at least four food items and select at least three, one of which must be ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetables.

DO: Refer the participants to the fact sheets in their Participant's Workbook.

Instructor's Note: The *School Breakfast Program (SBP) Fact Sheet* is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the fact sheet can be found in the Introduction section of their Participant's Workbook.

SHOW SLIDE: *Learning Objectives*

SAY: Here are the learning objectives for today's training session:

- Recall the required NSLP reimbursable meal components.
- Categorize foods into the correct NSLP meal components.
- Recognize an OVS reimbursable meal at lunch.
- Recall the SBP reimbursable meal components.
- Categorize foods into the correct SBP meal components.
- Recognize an OVS reimbursable meal at breakfast.

SHOW SLIDE: *Ground Rules*

SAY: Let's take a minute to review the ground rules for this training. The ICN Ground Rules are:

1. Show up on time.
2. Be present.
3. Let everyone participate.
4. Listen with an open mind.
5. Think before speaking.
6. Attack the problem, not the person.

SHOW SLIDE: *Key Terms*

SAY: Let's take a minute to review some of the key terms and definitions in this training.

DO: Refer to the Key Terms chart in your Participant's Workbook. Highlight the key terms with the group.

Instructor's Note: A chart with the key terms of this training is in the manual's Appendix.

SHOW SLIDE: *What Is the Meal Pattern?*

ASK: In your own words, how would you describe the meal pattern?

DO: Encourage participants to respond. Listen and accept all responses.

FEEDBACK: Respond with the correct response in the prompt below.

SAY: The meal pattern dictates which meal components and daily and weekly minimum serving amounts must be served for different grade groups to provide adequate calories and nutrients.

Now, let's look at the meal pattern charts.

Instructor's Note: The School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern Charts are in the back of the manual in the Appendix.

DO: Introduce the meal pattern charts and refer participants to their Participant's Workbook.

SHOW SLIDE: *Meal Components*

ASK: What are the five meal components?

DO: Encourage participants to share until all five meal components are stated.

FEEDBACK: Fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk. Be prepared to explain the difference between a meal component and a menu item.

SAY: There are five meal components required in menu planning: fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk.

SHOW SLIDE: *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

SAY: Meal patterns have changed over the years to reflect current nutrition science. School meals were first required to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) beginning in 1994. The DGAs are a joint publication of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and are revised every five years. Meal pattern requirements are designed to reflect the most current edition of the DGAs, so requirements may be updated over time as the guidelines are revised.

The DGAs provide science-based recommendations on what to eat and drink to promote health and help reduce the risk of diet-related disease across all life stages. In the context of school meals, the DGAs inform the meal pattern by shaping the required meal components, serving sizes, and weekly dietary specifications — including limits on calories, sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.

As a school nutrition professional, you do not need to be an expert on the current edition of the DGAs to do your job well. Your responsibility is to ensure that meals meet the meal pattern requirements as established in USDA regulations and guidance. Those requirements are where the DGAs are translated into the daily and weekly minimums you will practice applying throughout this training.

Now, let's begin.

Lesson 1-at-a-Glance

Reimbursable School Meals–Lunch–55 minutes

Time	Objectives	Key Topics	Activities and Materials
15 minutes	Recall the required NSLP reimbursable meal components.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal components for NSLP Grade groups Planned, offered, selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill-in-the-Blanks Lunch Meal Components handout Pens
20 minutes	Categorize the correct foods into the NSLP meal components.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits component Vegetables component Grains component Meats/meat alternates component Fluid milk component 	
20 minutes	Recognize an OVS reimbursable meal at lunch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for a reimbursable lunch OVS overview “Extra” foods Selecting additional fruits and vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch handout Pens

LESSON 1: REIMBURSABLE SCHOOL MEALS—LUNCH

Objective: Recall the required NSLP reimbursable meal components.

SHOW SLIDE: *Reimbursable School Meals—Lunch*

SAY: Today, we will explore what constitutes a reimbursable school meal under the NSLP. This session is designed to sharpen your skills in identifying and categorizing the meal components that qualify for reimbursement under the NSLP meal pattern, especially within the context of the OVS provision.

In this lesson, we will engage in various activities to help you recall, categorize, and recognize the meal components of a reimbursable lunch. We aim to enhance your ability to ensure that meals served at your schools align with federal guidelines to secure reimbursement.

Let us start by revisiting the meal components of the NSLP. Understanding these meal components will provide the groundwork for recognizing what makes a meal reimbursable. We will cover everything from the meal components required to how students plan, offer, and select them under the OVS method.

SHOW SLIDE: *NSLP Meal Components Overview*

SAY: A meal component refers to one of the food groups that make up a reimbursable lunch under the NSLP. There are five required meal components at lunch. Each meal component must be offered in at least the daily minimum required amounts, and where applicable, the weekly minimum amounts must also be met. The meal components for a reimbursable lunch include fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates (M/MA), and fluid milk. These meal components must be present in the specified amounts to align with meal pattern requirements and be reimbursable.

SHOW SLIDE: *Grade Groups*

SAY: Schools are required to plan lunch and breakfast menus based on the grade groups K–5, 6–8, and 9–12. Specific meal component amounts and calorie levels are prescribed for each grade group to ensure the meals are nutritious and appropriate for the age group. Please consult your state agency contact if your district has an unusual grade configuration or service setting.

SHOW SLIDE: *Role of the Menu Planner*

SAY: To qualify for reimbursement, menu planners must design lunch and breakfast menus that meet all meal pattern requirements, which ensure all students have access to the necessary meal components and their correct amounts. The menu planner plays a crucial role in creating meals that meet meal pattern requirements, appeal to students, and fit within school nutrition program requirements. Effective menu planning involves:

- Complying with meal pattern requirements.
- Creating student-friendly menus.
- Adapting to the operational limits of the school nutrition environment.
- Incorporating diverse textures, colors, and flavors.
- Providing a variety of choices to enhance student satisfaction.

The menu planner must communicate clearly with the school nutrition staff to ensure that meals prepared and served are reimbursable under federal guidelines. The menu planner is also responsible for staying updated on any changes in federal regulations, including available waivers and flexibilities.

SHOW SLIDE: *Menu Choices*

SAY: Menus should cater to student preferences and provide various choices within the meal components. For instance, the menu planner might offer different selections within the same meal component, such as choosing between a bagel or toast or allowing students to pick two of three available vegetables. Offering choices empowers students to construct healthy meals, enhancing meal acceptance, minimizing waste, and promoting higher consumption rates.

SHOW SLIDE: *Recall NSLP Meal Components*

DO: *Activity: Fill-in-the-Blanks Lunch Meal Component*

Purpose: Participants will recall and identify the required NSLP meal components by associating them with health benefits and dietary guidelines.

Materials Needed: *Fill-in-the-Blanks Lunch Meal Component* handout and pens

Instructions: Refer the participants to the *Fill-in-the-Blanks Lunch Meal Component* handout. Participants are tasked with reading through the descriptions and writing down next to each description that NSLP meal component they believe it refers to. After completing the worksheets,

conduct a group discussion to review the answers, providing correct responses and additional information on how each meal component supports a healthy diet according to the Dietary Guidelines. This discussion will help clarify any misconceptions and reinforce the importance of each meal component in contributing to a balanced and nutritious school meal.

Time: 10 minutes

Instructor's Note: The *Fill-in-the-Blanks Lunch Meal Component* handout is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the handout can be found in the Lesson 1 section of their Participant's Workbook.

SAY: We will now engage in an activity that will help us refresh and apply our knowledge of the

NSLP meal components and their importance in a healthy diet. You will find several descriptions on your handout. Each description is linked to a specific meal component based on its health benefits and role in meeting dietary guidelines. Please read each description carefully and write down next to it that NSLP meal component you think it refers to. The meal components are fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk. Once everyone has finished, we will review the answers together. This review will allow us to discuss and clarify any areas of uncertainty and reinforce our understanding of how each meal component contributes to creating nutritious and balanced school meals.

DO: Allow participants 5 minutes to complete the handout.

SHOW SLIDE: *Recall NSLP Meal Components—Answers*

SAY: Now, let's discuss your answers.

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have completed their handouts. Go over the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss additional information on how each meal component supports a healthy diet according to the Dietary Guidelines.

ASK: Which meal component does this describe?

- High in calcium and vitamin D, which is essential for bone health.
- Important for heart health and can provide essential fats.

FEEDBACK: The meal component is fluid milk.

ASK: Which meal component does this describe?

- Rich in protein, which helps in muscle building and repair.
- Contains iron and B vitamins, crucial for energy production and red blood cell formation.

FEEDBACK: The meal component is meat/meat alternates.

ASK: Which meal component does this describe?

- Provides carbohydrates, the body's main energy source, which is especially important for young, active students.
- Includes fiber-rich options that support healthy digestion and sustained energy levels.

FEEDBACK: The meal component is grains.

ASK: Which meal component does this describe?

- A good source of vitamin C and can help boost the immune system.
- Often consumed fresh or as juice and known for high antioxidant content.

FEEDBACK: The meal component is fruits.

ASK: Which meal component does this describe?

- Rich in dietary fiber, which aids in digestion and supports a healthy gut.
- Includes a variety of colors and types, each offering different vitamins and minerals crucial for health.
- Listed as subgroups in the meal pattern requirements.

FEEDBACK: The meal component is vegetables.

DO: Thank the participants for actively contributing to the activity. Ask if they have any questions before continuing.

Objective: Categorize foods into the correct NSLP meal components.

SHOW SLIDE: Meal Components Expanded

SAY: During the next portion of this lesson, we will explore each meal component in more detail.

SHOW SLIDE: Fruits Component for the NSLP

SAY: The meal component we will look at first is the fruits component.

SHOW SLIDE: Creditable Types of Fruits

SAY: There are over 360 entries for creditable types of fruits—fresh, canned, frozen, and dried—in the [Food Buying Guide](#) (FBG). The fruits component includes:

- Fresh (apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, etc.)
- Frozen (blueberries, sliced peaches, melon balls, strawberries, etc.)
- Canned in juice, water, or light syrup (applesauce, apricots, pineapple, pears, mixed fruit, etc.)
- Dried (cranberries, raisins, cherries, etc.)
- Pasteurized, full-strength (100%) fruit juices (orange, grapefruit, apple, etc.)

Fruits are measured in volume. Fruit amounts must be adequate and recognizable to meet the meal pattern requirements. The minimum creditable amount for fruits is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.

SHOW SLIDE: Fruits Component Requirements—NSLP

SAY: The meal pattern requirements are described in the Meal Pattern Chart found in your Participant's Workbook.

Menu planners may allow students to select more than the daily minimum serving (except for juice) for fruit if the calorie restrictions for lunches offered averaged over the school week are met. Let's review the grade groups, the daily minimum fruit requirements, and the weekly minimum fruit requirements for lunch.

The minimum daily requirement for fruits for the 9–12 grade group is 1 cup, and the minimum weekly requirement is 5 cups. The minimum daily requirement for fruits for the K–5 and 6–8 grade groups is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, and the minimum weekly requirement is 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific to Fruits: Juice

SAY: Only pasteurized 100% full-strength fruit juice or fruit/vegetable juice blend are creditable. Full-strength juice may be offered to meet no more than half of the fruit or vegetable weekly lunch or breakfast requirements.

Juice cannot be credited when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, except for smoothies. Pureed fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned), when served in a smoothie, are credited as juice and are subject to the limitations regarding juice service.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific to Fruits: Dried Fruit

SAY: Whole dried fruit and whole dried fruit pieces are credited at twice the volume served. For example, a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raisins contributes $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup fruit toward the fruit requirement. Please note: $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of any fruit (frozen, fresh, or dried) is the minimum creditable amount; $\frac{1}{16}$ cup of dried fruit does not credit as $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruit because the serving size of $\frac{1}{16}$ cup is less than the minimum required amount of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.

Be aware that dried fruit is sometimes processed with sugar to keep the fruit pieces separated and therefore can be high in added sugars.

SHOW SLIDE: Vegetables Component for the NSLP

SAY: The next meal component we will look at is the vegetable component.

SHOW SLIDE: Creditable Types of Vegetables

SAY: Vegetables must be fresh, frozen, canned, dried (including dried legumes), or 100% full-strength vegetable juice. Examples of creditable vegetables can be found in the FBG. The FBG has over 630 entries for vegetables. The meal pattern requirements are described in the Meal Pattern Chart found in your Participant's Workbook.

SHOW SLIDE: Vegetables Component Requirements for the NSLP

SAY: The minimum quantity to be credited toward the vegetable component is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup. Menu planners may allow students to select more than the daily minimum serving (except for juice) for the vegetable component if the calorie restrictions for lunches offered over the school week are met.

Students in all grades must be offered daily and weekly minimum amounts for the vegetable component at lunch. Vegetables are measured by volume; the required minimum daily and weekly serving amounts vary by grade group. Over the week, schools must offer vegetables from five subgroups: dark green, red/orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other.

For grades 9–12, the minimum daily and weekly requirements for the vegetable component are the same as the fruit component for NSLP: 1 cup daily and 5 cups weekly. The minimum daily requirement for grade groups K–5 and 6–8 is $\frac{3}{4}$ cup and the minimum weekly requirement is 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups.

For all grades, schools must offer a variety of vegetables from the vegetable subgroups; refer to the Meal Pattern Chart and your menu planner if you have questions on whether the subgroups are being offered as directed.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific to Vegetables: Beans, Peas, and Lentils

SAY: Beans, peas, and lentils require special attention for crediting. This subgroup refers to dry, mature beans, lentils, and split peas (canned, dried, or frozen). Wax beans and green peas are not part of this subgroup. Beans, peas, and lentils may be counted toward the M/MA or vegetables component, but not as both simultaneously. In the NSLP, beans, peas, and lentils offered as a meat alternate may also count toward the weekly beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroup requirement.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific to Vegetables: Juice

SAY: To be creditable, vegetable juice must be pasteurized, 100% vegetable juice or a vegetable/fruit juice blend where the vegetables are the highest quantity ingredient. Vegetable juice may be offered to meet no more than half of the vegetable weekly lunch or breakfast requirements. Full-strength vegetable juice blends that contain vegetables from the same subgroup may contribute toward that vegetable subgroup. Vegetable juice blends containing vegetables from more than one subgroup may be credited as additional vegetables. Vegetable juice may be credited toward up to half of the vegetables at lunch weekly, provided all subgroups are met. Like fruits, vegetables blended in smoothies may be credited toward the vegetable component and count toward the weekly juice limit.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific to Vegetables: In Lieu of Grains

SAY: Vegetables can be served instead of grains in schools that serve primarily American Indian or Alaska Native students.

Additional guidance from policy: The final rule clarifies that any creditable vegetable can be substituted for grains or breads and expands the vegetables-for-grains substitution to:

- School food authorities and schools that are Tribally operated, operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, and that serve primarily American Indian or Alaska Native children
- All schools, sponsors, sites, institutions, and facilities in Guam and Hawaii.

The vegetables served must meet the daily minimum grain quantity required and can be used to meet the whole grain-rich requirement. One-half cup vegetables substitutes for one ounce equivalent grains. There is no limit on how many times vegetables may be substituted for the grains requirement. The vegetables substituting for grains may not also credit as the required vegetable component in the applicable meal pattern.

SHOW SLIDE: Grains Component for the NSLP

SAY: The next meal component we will look at is grains.

SHOW SLIDE: Creditable Types of Grains

SAY: The following types of ingredients are considered creditable grains in Child Nutrition Programs:

- Whole grains (i.e., whole wheat, whole-wheat meal/flour, brown rice, rolled oats, whole corn)
- Enriched grains (i.e., enriched wheat meal/flour, enriched rice)
- Bran or germ can be used to meet the enriched grain requirements in Child Nutrition Programs

SHOW SLIDE: Grains Component Requirements—NSLP

SAY: The meal pattern requirements are described in the Meal Pattern Chart found in your Participant's Workbook.

The grains component is required for a reimbursable lunch meal. Let's review the grade groups, the daily minimum grains requirements, and the weekly minimum grains requirements for lunch. Grains require minimum serving amounts both daily and weekly, which vary by meal type and grade group.

For grades K–5, the minimum daily requirement is 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq), and the weekly requirement is 8-9 oz eq. For grades 6–8, the minimum daily requirement is also 1 oz eq and the weekly requirement is 8-10 oz eq. For grades 9–12, the minimum daily requirement is 2 oz eq and the weekly requirement is 10-12 oz eq.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific to Grains: Whole Grain-Rich Criteria

SAY: Eighty percent of the grains served weekly must be whole grain-rich. Whole grain-rich is the term designated by FNS to indicate that the grain content of a product is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched.

SHOW SLIDE: Meats/Meat Alternates Component for the NSLP

SAY: The next meal component we will examine is M/MA.

SHOW SLIDE: Creditable Types of Meats/Meat Alternates

SAY: M/MA are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq). An oz eq of meats/meat alternates is the amount of the food that represents 1 ounce of edible lean meat without the bone.

Foods in the M/MA component include:

- Fresh and frozen meats (lean beef, pork, poultry, fish, shellfish, etc.)
- Processed meats (beef crumbles, chicken tenders/nuggets, deli meats, fish patties/sticks, etc.)
- Canned meats (chicken, tuna, salmon, etc.)
- Meat alternates (cheese, eggs, yogurt, nuts/seeds, butters, beans, peas, and lentils, tofu, etc.)

SHOW SLIDE: Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements for NSLP

SAY: The meal pattern requirements are described in the Meal Pattern Chart found in your Participant's Workbook.

The M/MA component is required for a reimbursable lunch. For food to contribute to the M/MA component, it must contain a minimum of 0.25 oz eq of an M/MA. Let's review the grade groups' daily minimum M/MA requirements and the weekly minimum M/MA requirements for lunch.

The minimum daily requirement for grades K–5 is 1-ounce equivalent (oz eq), and the weekly requirement is 8-10 oz eq. For grades 6–8, the minimum daily requirement is also 1 oz eq and the weekly requirement is 9-10 oz eq. For grades 9–12, the minimum daily requirement is 2 oz eq and the weekly requirement is 10-12 oz eq.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific to M/MA: Updates

SAY: Nuts, seeds, and nut and seed butter may contribute toward the entire M/MA component for all meals and snack requirements.

Beans, peas, and lentils may be counted toward the M/MA or vegetables component, but not as both simultaneously. In the NSLP, beans, peas, and lentils offered as a meat alternate may also count toward the weekly beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroup requirement.

SHOW SLIDE: Crediting Specific: Combination Foods

ASK: What combination foods are offered on your menu, and how do they credit?

DO: Allow participants time to list combination foods served in their programs. Accept all responses, as there are no right or wrong answers.

SAY: A combination food is a single serving of a food item that contains more than one meal component that cannot be separated, such as pizza, soup, casseroles, burritos, and sandwiches. Some combination foods may be credited for up to three meal components. School menus often feature these food items as entrées. For example, pizza will credit toward both the grains and M/MA components.

SHOW SLIDE: Fluid Milk Component for the NSLP

SAY: The last meal component we will look at is fluid milk.

SHOW SLIDE: Creditable Types of Fluid Milk

SAY: All fluid milk must be pasteurized and meet State and local standards. Fluid milk offered must contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We will highlight the specified levels later in this lesson.

Schools participating in the NSLP may offer the following fluid milk options at lunch:

- Whole milk
- Reduced-fat (2%) milk
- Low-fat (1%) milk
- Fat-free (skim) milk

Milk may be flavored or unflavored. Organic and nonorganic options are allowed.

Schools must:

- Offer at least two different milk options each day
- Offer unflavored milk at every meal service
- Ensure flavored milk meets added sugars limits

The meal pattern requirements are described in the Meal Pattern Chart found in your Participant's Workbook.

Let's take a look at the Food Buying Guide. The Food Buying Guide lists other types of pasteurized milk as acceptable milk options, such as:

- Lactose-free
- Buttermilk
- Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) milk, both unflavored and flavored, fat-free and 1%; often shelf-stable.

You may be wondering about nondairy milk substitutions. The FBG for milk provides additional information regarding these choices.

SHOW SLIDE: Nondairy Milk Substitutes

SAY: The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025, signed into law on January 14, 2026, expanded the fluid milk options that may be offered in the NSLP and changed how schools may offer nondairy beverages. A school meal program may now choose to offer nondairy beverages, such as fortified soy milk, to all students at lunch as a standard menu option. If your school meal program chooses to do so, those beverages must be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk and meet the nutrient standards established at 7 CFR 210.10(d)(2)(ii). Fluid milk substitutes must also be fortified in accordance with FDA fortification guidelines.

The fluid milk substitute must meet the milk substitute nutrition standards for nine nutrients to credit toward the milk component of a reimbursable meal. If the Nutrition Facts label on a product does not list all of these nutrients, request documentation from the product manufacturer to confirm the presence of all required nutrients at the proper levels. You must verify that the nondairy beverage you offer is an allowable fluid milk substitute before meals containing it can be claimed as reimbursable.

Nutrient	Requirement per Cup (8 fl oz)
Protein	8 gm
Calcium	276 mg
Vitamin A	150 mcg
Vitamin D	2.5 mcg
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	222 mg
Potassium	349 mg
Riboflavin	0.44 mg
Vitamin B12	1.1 mcg
* Q&As – Milk Substitution for Children with Medical or Special Dietary Needs (Non-Disability) Policy Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010, SFSP 05-2010, page 4	

SHOW SLIDE: Offering Nondairy Milk Substitutes

SAY: There are now three pathways for serving a nondairy beverage at lunch, and the documentation requirements differ for each.

First, an SFA may choose to offer nondairy beverages to all students as part of the regular menu. When the SFA selects this option, the beverage must meet the fluid milk substitute nutrition standards on the previous slide. Under the updated regulations, the SFA is no longer required to notify the State agency that it is offering nondairy beverages, and individual students are no longer required to submit a written request to receive one.

Second, when an SFA does not offer nondairy beverages to all students, an individual student may still request a fluid milk substitute for a non-disability reason. In that case, the prior process is unchanged. The SFA must receive a written request, must notify the State agency, and the substitute must meet the fluid milk substitute nutrition standards. The written request identifies the medical or other special dietary need that precludes consumption of cow's milk, and the substitution can also be a way to meet preferences of students requesting a nondairy option.

Third, when a student has a disability that restricts the diet, the school must provide an appropriate fluid milk substitute upon receipt of a written statement. Under the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025, that written statement may now be provided by a State-licensed health care professional, a registered dietitian, or a parent or legal guardian. This expansion applies only to meal modifications for fluid milk substitutes at lunch in the NSLP.

Be aware that other plant-based beverages, such as almond, oat, rice, or pea, are typically not nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk for all of the nutrients listed and may not credit toward the milk component without manufacturer documentation confirming the required nutrient levels. When a substitution is requested for a diet-related disability, follow your SFA's established disability accommodation procedures.

Check with your State agency for information on specific brands of fortified soy milk available in your area that are nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk, including any State or local requirements..

SHOW SLIDE: Fluid Milk Component Requirements for the NSLP

SAY: For the NSLP, the minimum daily requirement for fluid milk for all grade groups is 1 cup (8 fl oz or ½ pint). The minimum daily requirement also meets the weekly requirement (5 cups).

SHOW SLIDE: Non-Reimbursable Item: Offering Water

SAY: Although water is not a required part of a reimbursable meal, schools participating in the NSLP and SBP must make potable water available to students at no charge during meals in the foodservice area or on the service line—separate from fluid milk (to prevent confusion). Program operators must not promote or offer water, juice, or any other beverage as an alternative to fluid milk in a reimbursable meal throughout the foodservice area. Schools must not directly or indirectly restrict the sale or marketing of fluid milk.

There are a variety of ways schools can implement this requirement. For example, water pitchers and cups can be offered on lunch lines, tables, a water fountain, or a faucet that allows students to fill bottles or cups. Whatever solution is chosen, water must be available without restriction in the location where meals are served.

Objective: Recognize an OVS-reimbursable NSLP meal.

SHOW SLIDE: Offer versus Serve (OVS) Concept

SAY: OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and meal service. OVS allows students to choose food items, which means they may decline some foods offered in a reimbursable lunch or breakfast. Remember, reimbursable school meals must meet specific nutrition standards the USDA sets, ensuring students receive adequate portions of the meal components. Since students may choose fewer selections under OVS, guidance is provided on what constitutes a reimbursable lunch and breakfast. To succeed at the point of service, schools are encouraged to conduct training for cashiers and serving line staff to help students select reimbursable lunches and breakfasts.

SHOW SLIDE: OVS Benefits

OVS aims to reduce food waste and allow students to choose the foods they want to eat. Everyone plays a role. When students and cafeteria staff understand OVS, lunch lines move smoothly, allowing students to make the most of the lunch break and enjoy the wholesome and appealing foods. OVS also helps reduce overall food costs.

At lunch, schools must offer all five meal components in at least the minimum required quantities:

- A meal component is one of five required food groups in reimbursable lunches. These are fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk.
- A food item is a specific food offered within the five meal components. For example, spaghetti (whole grain-rich pasta with tomato sauce) is one food item that credits toward the grains and vegetables components.

SHOW SLIDE: Planned, Offered, and Selected

SAY: Planned: A planned menu is what the menu planner intends to offer to students. It represents the School Food Authority's (SFA's) calculation of the items that must be prepared for a school's usual average daily participation. Ideally, the planned and offered meals are the same.

Offered: An offered menu is what is actually prepared and set out on the serving lines for students. Offered menus may differ from planned ones because, for example, a planned food item was not received from the distributor, and the menu planner had to offer a different food item.

Selected/Served: A selected, or served, menu refers to which food items were taken by students. Menu planners should use selected/served food item data to inform future menu planning (production records should be updated based on this data to reflect serving trends) and reduce food waste (i.e., so the school does not offer items that students do not select).

SHOW SLIDE: OVS at Lunch

SAY: Under OVS at lunch, all five meal components must be offered in the minimum required amounts. All students at any grade level must select the following for a reimbursable meal:

- A minimum of three meal components
- At least one choice of these three must be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving of fruit and/or vegetable.

A great resource is the [Offer vs Serve Lunch Program Tip Sheet](#); the tip sheet is in your Participant's Workbook.

DO: Refer the participants to the fact sheets in their Participant's Workbook.

Instructor's Note: The tip sheet is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the handout can be found in the Lesson 1 section of their Participant's Workbook.

SHOW SLIDE: "Extra" Foods, Extra Calories

SAY: "Extra" foods may be offered but do not credit toward the meal components. These "extra" foods are frequently used as condiments and seasonings to round out the meal, improve acceptability, and satisfy participants' appetites. The student may select an "extra" food in addition to the required meal components, but it does not count toward the reimbursable meal. These "extra" foods must be included in a nutrient analysis to assess compliance with the weekly dietary specifications (calories, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars). Examples of extra foods include salad dressing, ketchup, mustard, and other condiments offered.

SHOW SLIDE: Fruit and Vegetable Components for Lunch

SAY: To be credited as part of a reimbursable lunch for OVS, the minimum quantity a student must select is:

½ cup of vegetables

OR

½ cup of fruits

OR

½ cup of an item with both fruits and vegetables (e.g., a carrot raisin salad)

OR

Two ¼ cup servings of either the same or different fruit or vegetable

If a student does not select at least a total ½ cup serving of fruits and/or vegetables, the lunch is not reimbursable, even if they have three other meal components (e.g., meat/meat alternates, grains, and/or milk).

Cashiers should allow these students to select fruits or vegetables from the serving line or have these items available at the point of service. The meal is not reimbursable if the student still does not select at least a ½ cup serving of fruits and/or vegetables. The school may charge the student à la carte prices for selected foods.

SHOW SLIDE: Selecting Additional Fruits and Vegetables

SAY: For OVS purposes, the meal component is credited only once if the menu planner allows students to select more than the minimum required daily serving of fruits or vegetables (such as from a salad bar). Menu planners may allow students to select more than the minimum required daily serving if the weekly dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars are not exceeded with the additional food offered.

SHOW SLIDE: Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch

DO: Activity: Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch

Purpose: Participants will recognize examples of reimbursable meals for the NSLP.

Materials Needed: *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch* handout, pens

Instructions: Refer the participants to the *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch* Handout. Participants are tasked with recognizing examples of trays of reimbursable meals. After completing the handout independently, conduct a group discussion to review the answers and provide correct responses.

Time: 20 minutes

Instructor's Note: The *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch* handout is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the handout can be found in the Lesson 1 section of their Participant's Workbook.

SAY: We will practice being a cashier for the next few minutes. The previous activities have prepared you for the speed round. You will have three seconds (about the same time at school) to recognize whether a selected OVS meal is reimbursable. Record your answers in the *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch* handout in the Participant's Workbook. At the end of the activity, we will discuss the answers. Be prepared to justify your answers. For the sake of the activity, assume these

meals are being reviewed at the high school level (grades 9–12).

SHOW SLIDE: NSLP: Tray Example #1

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is not reimbursable. While the student selected four meal components, they only selected a full serving of two meal components: fruits (banana) and grains (fried rice). The fried rice provides only 1 oz eq M/MA, which falls short of the required daily minimum serving of the 2 oz eq for students in grades 9–12. The fried rice also only provides $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetables, which is less than the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup reduced portion of vegetables for students in grades 9–12. The student could select the chicken fried rice, a vegetable, or a milk for a reimbursable meal.

SHOW SLIDE: NSLP: Tray Example #2

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is not reimbursable. The menu planner chose the count the beans in the fiesta wrap as a meat alternate, so while the student selected three meal components (milk, meats/meat alternates, and grains), they failed to select an F/V, and as we know $\frac{1}{2}$ cup is required for a reimbursable meal. Under the final rule, beans, peas, and lentils offered as a meat alternate may now also count towards the weekly vegetable subgroup requirement. However, OVS applies to daily selections and the beans in this wrap count towards the meats/meat alternates meal component and NOT the vegetable meal component. In this example, the student could select a fruit OR vegetable for a reimbursable lunch.

SHOW SLIDE: NSLP: Tray Example #3

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is not reimbursable. While the student selected three meal components, they did not select a full serving of all three meal components, which is required for a reimbursable lunch. If a student wants to select both the fruits and vegetables components, they may select a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup portion of one component but must select the full portion of the second component. For students in grades 9–12, a full serving of both the fruits and vegetables meal components are 1 cup each. In this scenario, if the student wants to take a smaller portion of the fruits component, they must select 1 cup of vegetables to count as a full serving of the vegetables meal component. Instruct the student to select a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables in addition to the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of potatoes for a reimbursable meal. If the student wants to select a smaller serving of vegetables, they must select another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits in addition to the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of apples for a full serving of the fruits component.

SHOW SLIDE: NSLP: Tray Example #4

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is not reimbursable. While the student selected three meal components, they did not select a full serving of all three meal components, which is required for a reimbursable lunch. If a student wants to select both the fruits and vegetables components, they may select a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup portion of one component but must select the full portion of the second component. For students in grades 9–12, a full serving both the fruits and vegetables meal components are 1 cup each. In this scenario, if the student wants to take a smaller portion of the fruits component, they must select 1 cup of vegetables to count as a full serving of the vegetables meal component. Instruct the student to select a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables in addition to the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of potatoes for a reimbursable meal. If the student wants to select a smaller serving of vegetables, they must select another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits in addition to the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of apples for a full serving of the fruits component.

SHOW SLIDE: *NSLP: Tray Example #5*

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is not reimbursable. While the student selected four meal components, they did not select a full serving of fruits or vegetables components, which is required for a reimbursable lunch. To make it reimbursable, you would need to offer additional vegetables to reach the full amount required. However, if other vegetable items are offered to reach the total 1 cup requirement, the meal could then be considered reimbursable if students select at least three components (one being at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables).

DO: Thank the participants for actively contributing to the activity. Ask if they have any questions before continuing.

SHOW SLIDE: *OVS Lunch Wrap Up*

SAY: This brings our review of the OVS for meals served under NSLP to a close.

ASK: What did you learn about the meal components and recognizing a reimbursable lunch?

DO: Respond appropriately to participants' observations. Accept all responses, as there are no right or wrong answers.

SAY: Now that we have covered lunch, let's move on to breakfast.

Lesson 2-at-a-Glance

Reimbursable School Meals–Breakfast–30 minutes

Time	Objectives	Key Topics	Activities and Materials
5 minutes	Recall the SBP reimbursable meal components.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal components for SBP Food items Grade groups Planned, offered, selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Components handout Pens
10 minutes	Categorize the correct foods into the SBP meal components.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluid milk component Fruits component Grains and/or M/MA component 	
15 minutes	Recognize an OVS reimbursable meal at breakfast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for a reimbursable breakfast OVS breakfast overview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Breakfast handout Pens

LESSON 2: REIMBURSABLE SCHOOL MEALS—BREAKFAST

Introduction

Objective: Recall the required SBP reimbursable meal components.

SHOW SLIDE: *Reimbursable School Meals—Breakfast*

SAY: We will explore what constitutes a reimbursable school meal under the School Breakfast Program (SBP). This session is designed to sharpen your skills in identifying and categorizing the meal components that qualify for reimbursement under the SBP meal pattern, especially within the context of the Offer versus Serve (OVS) provision.

In this lesson, we will engage in various activities that will help you recall, categorize, and recognize the meal components of a reimbursable breakfast. We aim to enhance your ability to ensure that meals served at your schools align with federal guidelines to secure reimbursement.

Let us start by revisiting the required meal components of the SBP. Understanding these meal components will provide the groundwork for recognizing what makes a meal reimbursable. We will cover everything from the meal components required to how students plan, offer, and select them under the OVS method.

SHOW SLIDE: *SBP Meal Components Overview*

SAY: A meal component refers to one of the food groups that make up a reimbursable breakfast under the SBP. There are three required meal components at breakfast. Each meal component must be offered in at least the daily minimum required amounts, and where applicable, the weekly minimum amounts must also be met. The meal components for a reimbursable breakfast include fruits, combined grains and meats/meat alternates (M/MA), and fluid milk. These meal components must be present in the specified amounts to align with meal pattern requirements for a meal to be reimbursable.

SHOW SLIDE: *Recall SBP Meal Components*

DO: *Activity: Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component*

Purpose: Participants will recall and identify the required SBP meal components by associating them with health benefits and dietary guidelines.

Materials Needed: *Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component* handout, pens

Instructions: Refer the participants to the *Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component* handout. As a group, participants are tasked with reading through the descriptions and writing down next to each description the SBP meal component they believe it refers to. Conduct a group discussion to go over the answers and provide correct responses.

Time: 3 minutes

Instructor's Note: The *Fill-in-the-Blanks Meal Component* handout is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the handout can be found in the Lesson 2 section of their Participant's Workbook.

SAY: We will now engage in an activity that will help us recall and identify the required SBP meal components by associating them with health benefits and dietary guidelines. You will find several descriptions on your handout. Each description is linked to a specific meal component based on its health benefits and role in meeting dietary guidelines. I will show a slide with each description, and we will determine the correct answer as a group. The meal components are fruits, combined grains and M/MA, and fluid milk.

DO: Conduct a group discussion of the questions and allow participants to answer. Go over the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss additional information.

SHOW SLIDE: *Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component Q1*

ASK: For the following definition, what is it describing?

- One of the three required groups of reimbursable meals. The three required at breakfast to be offered to students are fluid milk, fruits, and combined grains and M/MA.

FEEDBACK: The definition is for a meal component.

SHOW SLIDE: *Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component Q2*

ASK: For the following definition, what is it describing?

- A specific food is offered within the three required meal components for breakfast: fluid milk, fruits, and combined grains and M/MA.

FEEDBACK: The definition is for a food item.

SHOW SLIDE: *Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component Q3*

ASK: Which meal component does this describe?

- High in calcium and vitamin D, essential for bone health.
- Important for heart health and can provide essential fats.

FEEDBACK: The meal component is fluid milk.

SHOW SLIDE: *Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component Q4*

ASK: Which meal component does this describe?

- Provides carbohydrates, the body's main source of energy, which is especially important for young, active students.
- Includes fiber-rich options that support healthy digestion and sustained energy levels.

FEEDBACK: The meal component is combined grains and M/MA.

SHOW SLIDE: Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component Q5**ASK:** Which meal component does this describe?

- A good source of vitamin C and can help boost the immune system.
- Often consumed fresh or as juice and known for high antioxidant content.
- What can be substituted for this meal component?

FEEDBACK: The meal component is fruits. Vegetables may be substituted for fruits.**DO:** Thank the participants for actively contributing to the activity. Ask if they have any questions before continuing.**Objective: Categorize foods into the correct SBP meal components.****SHOW SLIDE: Meal Component Requirements—SBP****SAY:** As we look deeper at the meal pattern requirements for the SBP, remember the specific crediting details for each meal component we discussed during the NSLP lesson. We will be focusing on the required amounts and optional meal component substitutions for breakfast.**SHOW SLIDE: Fluid Milk Component Requirements—SBP****SAY:** For SBP, the minimum daily requirement for fluid milk for all grade groups is 1 cup (8 fl oz or ½ pint). The minimum daily requirement also meets the weekly requirement (5 cups). Creditable types of milk were discussed in the lunch lesson; the same information applies to breakfast.**SHOW SLIDE: Fruits Component Requirements—SBP****SAY:** The daily minimum serving of fruits for all grade groups is a minimum of 1 cup daily for a total of 5 cups per week.**SHOW SLIDE: Fruits Component: Vegetable Substitutions****SAY:** Schools choosing to offer vegetables at breakfast in place of fruits one day per week can offer vegetables from any vegetable subgroup. Schools choosing to offer vegetables at breakfast instead of fruits two or more days per week must offer vegetables from at least two different vegetable subgroups. Vegetable subgroups may be offered on any day of the week and may be repeated or combined with multiple vegetable subgroups. Note: this is a menu planning flexibility and there is no requirement to substitute vegetables for fruits at breakfast.**SHOW SLIDE: Combined Grains and M/MA Component Requirements—SBP****SAY:** For grades K–5, the minimum daily requirement is 1-ounce equivalent (oz eq), and the weekly requirement is 7-10 oz eq. The minimum daily requirement for grades 6–8 is also 1 oz eq and the weekly requirement is 8-10 oz eq. The minimum daily requirement for grades 9–12 is 1 oz eq and the weekly requirement is 9-10 oz eq. In this combined meal component, grains, meats/meat alternates, or a combination can be used to meet the combined meal component.

Objective: Recognize an OVS reimbursable meal at breakfast.

SHOW SLIDE: Meal Components for OVS Breakfast

SAY: Remember, the meal components that must be offered in a reimbursable breakfast include:

- Fruits (or vegetables as a substitute)
- Combined grains and M/MA
- Fluid milk

It is important to note that OVS at breakfast is optional for all grade levels.

SHOW SLIDE: OVS at Breakfast

SAY: Under OVS at breakfast, at least four food items from the three required meal components must be offered. Remember, food items are individual foods and may credit toward one or more meal components. All students at any grade level must select:

- At least three food items
- At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and/or vegetables

A great resource is the [Offer vs Serve Breakfast Program Tip Sheet](#); the tip sheet is in your Participant's Workbook.

DO: Refer the participants to the fact sheets in their Participant's Workbook.

Instructor's Note: The tip sheet is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the handout can be found in the Lesson 1 section of their Participant's Workbook.

SHOW SLIDE: OVS Breakfast Choices

SAY: Except for the requirement to select a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable, the student chooses to select or decline food items, as long as at least three food items are taken. The menu planner determines how to offer food items, which may affect a student's selections to build a reimbursable breakfast. Remember, the cashier is responsible for following the intent of the menu and ensuring students select a reimbursable meal.

Just like in lunch meal planning, if choices of food items within the meal components are offered, the menu planner must indicate what choices or combinations of choices the student may select, including any minimum or maximum number that may be taken.

SHOW SLIDE: Food Items

SAY: A food item is a specific food offered in a reimbursable meal from one of the meal components. Food items may include multiple choices from any required meal components and offered in the minimum quantity for the meal component to be credited. For example, separate $\frac{1}{2}$ cup servings of peaches, applesauce, and pears are three food item choices that, when selected, comprise one meal component (fruit). Although three different food items are offered, all choices are from the same meal component (fruit).

A breakfast food item is a specific food offered in a reimbursable breakfast from the three meal components. For OVS, a school must offer at least four food items from the three required meal components (fruits, grains and/or M/MA, fluid milk).

For example, if a pre-packaged product is offered, the package may be counted as one food item even if it credits as 1 oz eq grains and 1 oz eq meats/meat alternates. Bagels may be offered as either 1 oz eq or 2 oz eq (half or whole) so that each half counts as a food item. Half would be one item; the whole bagel would be two food items.

SHOW SLIDE: Combination Foods

SAY: The menu may offer combination foods that contain more than one food item that cannot be separated, such as a fruit parfait. In this example, if the student only wanted the yogurt, the student would not be able to decline the fruit, even if the student had no intent to consume it. A student must select one additional food item for three total items and a breakfast reimbursable meal. Examples of combination breakfast choices that cannot be separated may include a yogurt parfait, a breakfast burrito, or a milk/fruit smoothie.

SHOW SLIDE: Smoothies

SAY: Smoothies are another popular combination food offered at breakfast. Smoothie ingredients may include fruits, vegetables, milk, or yogurt, all of which may credit toward the meal components. If there is at least 1 cup of milk and at least ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable (including 100% full-strength juice) in the smoothie, the smoothie may count as two food items for purposes of OVS. A student must select one additional food item for three total items and a breakfast reimbursable meal.

SHOW SLIDE: Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Breakfast

DO: Activity: Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Breakfast

Purpose: Participants will recognize examples of reimbursable meals for the SBP.

Materials Needed: *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Breakfast* handout, pens

Instructions: Refer the participants to the *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Breakfast* Handout. Participants are tasked with recognizing examples of trays to determine if they are a reimbursable meal or not. After completing the handout independently, conduct a group discussion to review the answers and provide correct responses.

Time: 15 minutes

Instructor's Note: The *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Breakfast* handout is in the back of the manual in the Appendix. For participants, the handout can be found in the Lesson 2 section of their Participant's Workbook.

SAY: We will practice being a cashier for the next few minutes. The previous activities have prepared you for the speed round. You will have three seconds (about the same time at school) to recognize whether a selected OVS meal is reimbursable. Record your answers in the *Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Breakfast* handout in the Participant's Workbook. At the end of the activity, we will discuss the answers. Be prepared to justify your answers. For the sake of the activity, assume these meals are being reviewed at the high school level (grades 9–12).

SHOW SLIDE: SBP: Tray Example #1

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not? Also, how many food items are on the tray?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is reimbursable. There are three food items.

SHOW SLIDE: SBP: Tray Example #2

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not? Also, how many food items are on the tray?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is not reimbursable. The breakfast vegetable quesadilla does contain the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F/V, but it is only two food items, and three food items are needed for a reimbursable breakfast. While the breakfast vegetable quesadilla is a single menu item, it is being counted as two food items for OVS because it contains a full serving of two meal components: the fruits component and the combined grains and meats/meat alternates component. As a reminder, menu planners have the flexibility to determine how to count food items at breakfast when planning menus. When combination foods, such as this quesadilla, are offered at breakfast, it is important to communicate how many food items are in the combination food and what additional food items a student needs to select for a reimbursable meal. In this scenario, the student could select fruit, potatoes, or milk for a reimbursable meal.

SHOW SLIDE: SBP: Tray Example #3

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not? Also, how many food items are on the tray?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is not reimbursable. While the student selected three food items, they did not select a fruit or vegetable, and, as we know by now, a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of a fruit or vegetable is needed for a reimbursable meal. When large grain items are offered at breakfast, it is important to communicate how many food items the large grain item counts as and what additional food items a student needs to select for a reimbursable meal. In this scenario, if a student selects a bagel, they also need to select an fruit for a reimbursable breakfast!

SHOW SLIDE: SBP: Tray Example #4

ASK: Is this a reimbursable meal? Why or why not? Also, how many food items are on the tray?

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

FEEDBACK: The meal is reimbursable. There are three food items.

DO: Conduct a group discussion after all participants have independently answered. Review the answers, provide correct responses, and discuss any additional need to reinforce the activity.

DO: Thank the participants for actively contributing to the activity. Ask if they have any questions

before continuing.

SHOW SLIDE: *OVS Breakfast Wrap Up*

SAY: This brings our review of the OVS for meals served at breakfast to a close.

ASK: What did you learn about the meal components and recognizing a reimbursable breakfast?

DO: Respond appropriately to participants' observations. Accept all responses, as there are no right or wrong answers.

Wrap Up Lesson-at-a-Glance

Time	Objective	Key Topics	Activities and Materials
20 minutes	Conclude the training and summarize the main points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training summary• Post-assessment• Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-assessment• Evaluation

WRAP UP

SHOW SLIDE: Training Summary

SAY: This training covered identifying a reimbursable school lunch and breakfast. Before wrapping up, let's review the highlights we learned:

- For NSLP, the required meal components are fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk. Under OVS, students must take at least three meal components in the required serving sizes. One selection must be at least ½ cup from the fruits or vegetables component.
- For SBP, the required meal components are fluid milk, fruits, and grains and/or meats/meat alternates. For OVS at breakfast, schools must offer students four food items from the three required meal components in the minimum required amounts. Under OVS, a student must select at least three food items, one of which must be ½ cup of fruit or vegetables.

SHOW SLIDE: Questions?

SAY: Now is the time to ask if you have questions about identifying a reimbursable menu.

DO: Allow participants to ask questions.

SHOW SLIDE: Post-Assessment

DO: Activity: Post-Assessment

Purpose: Participants will complete the post-assessment to identify what they learned about the requirements for serving reimbursable meals in school meal programs.

Materials Needed: Post-Assessment and smart device

Time: 10 minutes

SAY: Thank you for your active participation and attention in the training. If there are no more questions, we will proceed with the training post-assessment and evaluation.

DO: Direct the participants to use the QR codes for the post-assessment and the evaluation form. Review the assessment answers. Distribute certificates.

SHOW SLIDE: Thank You!

APPENDIX

Key Terms

Key Terms	Definition
as purchased (AP)	The form(s) in which a food is purchased.
combined grains and meats/meat alternates (M/MA) component	A merged meal component for the school breakfast meal pattern that includes grains, meat/meat alternates, or a combination of both.
child nutrition (CN) labeling program	<p>A program that provides manufacturers the option to include a standardized food crediting statement on their product labels. CN Labels must be authorized by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) prior to being used. Manufacturers must have an approved quality control (QC) program and inspection oversight that meet FNS, Child Nutrition Programs requirements. CN Labeled products are generally purchased by providers for USDA meal programs. Benefits of CN Labels are that they clearly identify the contributions of the product toward the meal pattern requirement and provide a warranty against audit claims if the CN Label is used according to the manufacturer's directions.</p> <p>It is important to know the CN Logo (the box with CN on each side that surrounds the meal pattern contribution statement) is one of the four integral parts of a label. The CN Logo must include the weight of the serving, the CN crediting statement, authorization statement, the approval date, and the six-digit identification number. The other three integral parts are the product name, ingredient statement, and inspection legend. All four parts must be on the product carton in order for the CN Label to be valid.</p>
creditable (and non-creditable)	If a food contributes (or credits) toward a meal component (fluid milk, grains, meats/meat alternates, fruits, or vegetables) in the Child Nutrition Programs, then it is creditable. The Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs provides crediting information for all meal components. Food items that do not contribute toward the meal components are non-creditable.
cycle menu	A series of menus that is repeated over a specific period of time, such as 4 weeks.
daily required minimum serving amount	The minimum amount of a food needed to meet the meal pattern requirement in a specific meal. Amounts required are specified by meal components for each meal pattern and by age/grade group.
Dietary Guidelines for Americans	The cornerstone document of Federal nutrition policy and nutrition education activities, providing food-based recommendations to promote health, help prevent diet-related disease, and meet nutrient needs. The US Department of Health and Human Services and USDA jointly publish the <i>Dietary Guidelines</i> every five years.
edible portion (ep)	The amount of a food that can actually be eaten after trimming and cooking.
enriched grains	Refined grains that have been processed in a way that removes the nutrient-rich bran and germ, then have thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid, and iron added after processing, as required by the Federal standard of identity for products labeled as "enriched."
fluid milk component	The meal component in Nutrition Standards for School Meals that includes pasteurized unflavored or flavored fat-free and 1% (low-fat) milk.

Key Terms	Definition
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)	The agency under the United States Department of Agriculture responsible for administering the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, and other nutrition and food assistance programs.
food-based menu planning (FBMP)	The method for meal planning for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program that includes required quantities from specific meal components for daily and weekly meal patterns. These components are fluid milk, fruits, vegetables (including subgroups), grains, and meats/meat alternates. Minimum portion sizes are established by age and grade groups.
Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG)	The authoritative guide developed by USDA to help child nutrition professionals determine purchase amounts of foods for crediting meal components in food-based menu planning. The FBG and related resources are available at https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutritionprograms
food item	A specific food offered within the five meal components: fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk. For example, a hamburger patty on a bun is one food item with two of the five meal components (meats/meat alternates and grains).
fruits component	The meal component in Nutrition Standards for School Meals that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and pasteurized full-strength juice). Up to half of fruit offerings may be in the form of full-strength juice.
grade group (age/grade group)	USDA-established groupings used for menu planning that reflect the grade structure of the majority of schools: K–5 (ages 5–10), 6–8 (ages 11–13), and 9–12 (ages 14–18).
grains component	The meal component in Nutrition Standards for School Meals that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. 80% of foods credited toward grains in school meals must be whole grain-rich, and the remaining 20% must be enriched.
main dish (entrée)	<p>An item that is served as the main dish and is either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combination food of meat and/or meat alternates and grains; or • A combination food of vegetables and/or fruit and meat and/or meat alternates; or • A meat or meat alternate alone with the exception of yogurt, low-fat or reduced-fat cheese, nuts, seeds, nut or seed butters, and meat snacks (such as dried beef jerky); or • A grain that is served as the main dish of the School Breakfast Program reimbursable meal.
meal component	One of the five food categories that make up a reimbursable meal or snack according to USDA meal pattern requirements. The five meal components are: fluid milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/meat alternates (M/MA).
meats/meat alternates component	The meal component in Nutrition Standards for School Meals that includes meats (beef, pork, poultry, fish, etc.) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans and peas (legumes), nuts, and seeds.
minimum creditable amount	The smallest portion of a food that contributes toward a meal component.
MyPlate	MyPlate is the current consumer-focused nutrition guide published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion and is based on the scientific findings and recommendations in the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> .

Key Terms	Definition
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	The program authorized under the National School Lunch Act that allows participating schools to operate a nonprofit lunch program in accordance with 7 CFR 210. General and special cash assistance and donated food assistance are made available to schools in accordance with 7 CFR 210.
Offer versus Serve (OVS)	A provision in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program that allows students to decline some of the food offered. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste in the school meals programs while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat.
ounce equivalent (oz eq)	Ounce equivalents (oz eq) are used to demonstrate the amount of grains or meats/meat alternates in a portion of food. Food items that contribute toward the grains and meats/meat alternates components in Child Nutrition Programs are credited based on oz eq.
product formulation statement (PFS)	A document that provides specific information about a food product and shows how the food credits toward the child nutrition meal pattern citing Child Nutrition Program resources and/or regulations.
recognizable food item	A recognizable food is a food item visible in the breakfast or lunch offered that allows students to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtime. Except for noodles made from bean or legume flours that credit toward the vegetable component, foods must be recognizable to be creditable in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.
reimbursable meal	A meal served to a participant of the Child Nutrition Programs that meets the meal pattern requirements, such a meal that qualifies for reimbursement with Federal funds.
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	The program authorized by Section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, which provides meals to children in the morning hours served at or close to the beginning of the child's day at school that meet the nutritional requirements set out in 7 CFR 220.8.
School Food Authority (SFA)	The governing body responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate Federal school meal programs therein or is otherwise approved by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to operate Federal school meal programs.
school week	The period of time used to determine compliance with the meal requirements.
State agency (SA)	The State educational agency or any other agency of the State that has been designated by the Governor or other appropriate executive or legislative authority of the State and approved by the Department to administer the program in schools, as specified in 7 CFR 210.3(b); or the Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office (FNSRO), where the FNSRO administers the program as specified in 7 CFR 210.3(c).
Team Nutrition (TN)	An initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for food service, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	The Federal entity designated by Congress to administer the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, and Special Milk Programs.
vegetable subgroups	The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables component required in school lunches across the menu week: dark green, red/orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables.

Key Terms	Definition
vegetables component	The meal component in Nutrition Standards for School Meals is comprised of vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, pasteurized full-strength juice) and includes five subgroups (see vegetable subgroups). Up to half of vegetable offerings may be in the form of full-strength juice.
whole grain-rich	The term designated by FNS to indicate that the grain content of a product is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched.
whole grains	Grains that consist of the intact, ground, cracked, or flaked grain seed whose principal anatomical components—the starchy endosperm, germ, and bran—are present in the same relative proportions as they exist in the intact grain seed.



Activity Handouts

Fill-in-the-Blanks Lunch Meal Component

Instructions: Below are groups of health benefits and dietary roles associated with various meal components. Please read each group of descriptions and write the NSLP meal component that you think best matches the descriptions provided.

Meal Component: _____

- High in calcium and vitamin D, essential for bone health.
- Important for heart health and can provide essential fats.

Meal Component: _____

- Rich in protein, which helps in muscle building and repair.
- Contains iron and B vitamins, which are crucial for energy production and red blood cell formation.

Meal Component: _____

- Provides carbohydrates, the body's main source of energy, which is especially important for young, active students.
- Includes fiber-rich options that support healthy digestion and sustained energy levels.

Meal Component: _____

- A good source of vitamin C and can help boost the immune system.
- Often consumed fresh or as juice and known for high antioxidant content.

Meal Component: _____

- Rich in dietary fiber, which aids in digestion and supports a healthy gut.
- Includes a variety of colors and types, each offering different vitamins and minerals crucial for health.
- Listed as subgroups in the meal pattern requirements.

Fill-in-the-Blanks Lunch Meal Component ANSWERS

Instructions: Below are groups of health benefits and dietary roles associated with various meal components. Please read each group of descriptions and write the NSLP meal component that you think best matches the descriptions provided.

Meal Component: Fluid Milk

- High in calcium and vitamin D, essential for bone health.
- Important for heart health and can provide essential fats.

Meal Component: Meats/Meat Alternates

- Rich in protein, which helps in muscle building and repair.
- Contains iron and B vitamins, which are crucial for energy production and red blood cell formation.

Meal Component: Grains

- Provides carbohydrates, the body's main source of energy, which is especially important for young, active students.
- Includes fiber-rich options that support healthy digestion and sustained energy levels.

Meal Component: Fruits

- A good source of vitamin C and can help boost the immune system.
- Often consumed fresh or as juice and known for high antioxidant content.

Meal Component: Vegetables

- Rich in dietary fiber, which aids in digestion and supports a healthy gut.
- Includes a variety of colors and types, each offering different vitamins and minerals crucial for health.
- Listed as subgroups in the meal pattern requirements.

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch

Instructions: Below are photos of foods served for a school lunch. Please recognize if the tray includes what is needed to be a reimbursable meal under OVS in the NSLP. If not, list what to include to make the meal reimbursable. For the sake of the activity, assume these meals are being reviewed at the high school level (grades 9-12).

TRAY EXAMPLE #1

Chicken Fried Rice

- 2 oz eq grains
- 1 oz eq meats/meat alternates
- 1/8 cup of vegetables

Banana

- 1/2 cup of fruits



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?

TRAY EXAMPLE #2

Fiesta Wrap

- 1 oz eq grains
- 1 oz eq meats/meat alternates

Milk

- 1 cup of milk



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch

TRAY EXAMPLE #3

Apple

- ½ cup of fruits

Potatoes

- ½ cup of vegetables

Milk

- 1 cup of milk



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?

TRAY EXAMPLE #4

Bean and Meat Chili

- 2 oz eq meats/meat alternates
- ¾ cup of vegetables

Roll

- 1 oz eq grains

Green Beans

- ½ cup of vegetables



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch ANSWERS

Instructions: Below are photos of foods served for a school lunch. Please recognize if the tray includes what is needed to be a reimbursable meal under OVS in the NSLP. If not, list what to include to make the meal reimbursable. For the sake of the activity, assume these meals are being reviewed at the high school level (grades 9-12).

TRAY EXAMPLE #1

Chicken Fried Rice

- 2 oz eq grains
- 1 oz eq meats/meat alternates
- $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetables

Banana

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why? While the student selected four meal components, they only selected a full serving of two meal components: fruits (banana) and grains (fried rice). The fried rice only provides only 1 oz eq M/MA, which falls short of the required daily minimum serving of the 2 oz eq for students in grades 9–12. The fried rice also only provides $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetables, which is less than the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup reduced portion of vegetables for students in grades 9–12. The student could select the chicken, a vegetable, or a milk for a reimbursable meal.

TRAY EXAMPLE #2

Fiesta Wrap

- 1 oz eq grains
- 1 oz eq meats/meat alternates

Milk

- 1 cup of milk



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why? The menu planner chose the count the beans in the fiesta wrap as a meat alternate. So, while the student selected three meal components (milk, meats/meat alternates, and grains), they failed to select an F/V; and as we know, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup is required for a reimbursable meal. Under the final rule, beans, peas, and lentils offered as a meat alternate may now also count towards the weekly vegetable subgroup requirement. However, OVS applies to daily selections and the beans in this wrap count towards the meats/meat alternates meal component and NOT the vegetable meal component. For this scenario, the corn and carrot sticks are the only menu items that count towards the vegetables meal component. In this example, the student could select a fruit OR vegetable for a reimbursable lunch.

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch ANSWERS

TRAY EXAMPLE #3

Apple

- ½ cup of fruits

Potatoes

- ½ cup of vegetables

Milk

- 1 cup of milk

Select one: Meal or No Meal



If not, why? While the student selected three meal components, they did not select a full serving of all three meal components, which is required for a reimbursable lunch. If a student wants to select both the fruits and vegetables components, they may select a ½ cup portion of one component but must select the full portion of the second component. For students in grades 9–12, a full serving both the fruits and vegetables meal components are 1 cup each. In this scenario, if the student wants to take a smaller portion of the fruits component, they must select 1 cup of vegetables to count as a full serving of the vegetables meal component. The student should be instructed to select a ½ cup of vegetables in addition to the ½ cup of potatoes for a reimbursable meal. If the student wants to select a smaller serving of vegetables, they must select another ½ cup of fruits in addition to the ½ cup of apples for a full serving of the fruits component.

TRAY EXAMPLE #4

Bean and Meat Chili

- 2 oz eq meats/meat alternates
- ¾ cup of vegetables

Roll

- 1 oz eq grains

Green Beans

- ½ cup of vegetables

Select one: Meal or No Meal



If not, why? While the student selected a ½ cup of vegetables, they only selected two full meal components. The minimum daily required serving of the grains meal component for students in grades 9-12 is 2 oz eq, and one piece of cornbread only provides 1 oz eq. The student would need to select a second piece of cornbread for a full serving of the grains component for a reimbursable meal. The student could also select a milk, both fruit offerings, or one fruit offering and the potatoes for a reimbursable meal.

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable Meal at Lunch ANSWERS

TRAY EXAMPLE #5

Spaghetti with Meat Sauce

- 2 oz eq meats/meat alternates
- 2 oz eq grains
- ¼ cup of vegetables

Mixed Fruits

- ½ cup of fruits



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why? While the student selected four meal components, they did not select a full serving of fruits or vegetables components, which is required for a reimbursable lunch. To make it reimbursable, you would need to offer additional vegetables to reach the full required amount. However, if other vegetable items are offered to reach the total 1 cup requirement, the meal could then be considered reimbursable if students select at least three components (one being at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables).

Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component

Instructions: Below are groups of health benefits and dietary roles associated with various meal components. Please read each group of descriptions and write the SBP meal component that you think best matches the descriptions provided.

Q1: For the following definition, what is it describing? _____

- One of the three required groups of reimbursable meals. The three required at breakfast to be offered to students are fluid milk, fruits, and combined grains and M/MA.

Q2: For the following definition, what is it describing? _____

- A specific food is offered within the three required meal components for breakfast: fluid milk, fruits, and combined grains and M/MA.

The following are the three required meal components for the SBP.

Q3: Meal component: _____

- High in calcium and vitamin D, essential for bone health.
- Important for heart health and can provide essential fats.

Q4: Meal component: _____

- Provides carbohydrates, the body's main source of energy, which is especially important for young, active students.
- Includes fiber-rich options that support healthy digestion and sustained energy levels.

Q5: Meal component: _____

- A good source of vitamin C and can help boost the immune system.
- Often consumed fresh or as juice and known for high antioxidant content.
- _____ (no subgroup requirement) may be substituted.

Fill-in-the-Blanks Breakfast Meal Component ANSWERS

Instructions: Below are groups of health benefits and dietary roles associated with various meal components. Please read each group of descriptions and write the SBP meal component that you think best matches the descriptions provided.

Q1: For the following definition, what is it describing? Meal component

- One of the three required groups of reimbursable meals. The three required at breakfast to be offered to students are fluid milk, fruits, and combined grains and M/MA.

Q2: For the following definition, what is it describing? Food item

- A specific food is offered within the three required meal components for breakfast: fluid milk, fruits, and combined grains and M/MA.

The following are the three required meal components for the SBP.

Q3: Meal component: Fluid milk

- High in calcium and vitamin D, essential for bone health.
- Important for heart health and can provide essential fats.

Q4: Meal component: Grains and/or M/MA

- Provides carbohydrates, the body's main source of energy, which is especially important for young, active students.
- Includes fiber-rich options that support healthy digestion and sustained energy levels.

Q5: Meal component: Fruits

- A good source of vitamin C and can help boost the immune system.
- Often consumed fresh or as juice and known for high antioxidant content.
- Vegetables (no subgroup requirement) may be substituted.

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable SBP Meal

Instructions: Below are photos of foods served for a school breakfast. Please recognize if the tray includes what is needed to be a reimbursable meal under OVS in the SBP. If not, list what to include to make the meal reimbursable. For the sake of the activity, assume these meals are being reviewed at the high school level (grades 9–12).

TRAY EXAMPLE #1

Breakfast potatoes (1 food item each ½ cup serving)

- 2–½ cup of combined fruits/vegetables

Banana (1 food item)

- ½ cup of fruits

Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?



TRAY EXAMPLE #2

Breakfast Vegetable Quesadilla (2 food items)

- ½ cup of combined fruits/vegetables
- 2.5 oz eq combined grains and meats/meat alternates

Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?



Recognize an OVS Reimbursable SBP Meal

TRAY EXAMPLE #3

Whole Grain Bagel (2 food items)

- 2 oz eq combined grains and meats/meat alternates

Milk (1 food item)

- 1 cup of milk



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?

TRAY EXAMPLE #4

Hard Boiled Egg (1 food item)

- 1 oz eq combined grains and meats/meat alternates

Apple (1 food item)

- 1 cup of fruits

Milk (1 food item)

- 1 cup of milk



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable SBP Meal ANSWERS

Instructions: Below are photos of foods served for a school breakfast. Please recognize if the tray includes what is needed to be a reimbursable meal under OVS in the SBP. If not, list what to include to make the meal reimbursable. For the sake of the activity, assume these meals are being reviewed at the high school level (grades 9–12).

TRAY EXAMPLE #1

Breakfast potatoes (1 food item each $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving)

- 2– $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of combined fruits/vegetables

Banana (1 food item)

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits

Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?



TRAY EXAMPLE #2

Breakfast Vegetable Quesadilla (2 food items)

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of combined fruits/vegetables
- 2.5 oz eq combined grains and meats/meat alternates

Select one: Meal or No Meal



If not, why? The breakfast vegetable quesadilla does contain the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F/V, but it is only 2 food items, and 3 food items are needed for a reimbursable breakfast. While the breakfast vegetable quesadilla is a single menu item, it is being counted as two food items for OVS because it contains a full serving of two meal components: the fruits component and the combined grains and meats/meat alternates component. As a reminder, menu planners have the flexibility to determine how to count food items at breakfast when planning menus. When combination foods, such as this quesadilla, are offered at breakfast, it is important to communicate how many food items are in the combination food and what additional food items a student needs to select for a reimbursable meal. In this scenario, the student could select fruit, potatoes, or milk for a reimbursable meal.

Recognize an OVS Reimbursable SBP Meal ANSWERS

TRAY EXAMPLE #3

Whole Grain Bagel (2 food items)

- 2 oz eq combined grains and meats/meat alternates

Milk (1 food item)

- 1 cup of milk



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why? While the student selected 3 food items, they did not select a fruit or vegetable, and as we know by now, a ½ cup of a fruit or vegetable is needed for a reimbursable meal. When large grain items are offered at breakfast, it is important to communicate how many food items the large grain item counts as and what additional food items a student needs to select for a reimbursable meal. In this scenario, if a student selects a bagel, they need to also select an apple for a reimbursable breakfast!

TRAY EXAMPLE #4

Hard Boiled Egg (1 food item)

- 1 oz eq combined grains and meats/meat alternates

Apple (1 food item)

- 1 cup of fruits

Milk (1 food item)

- 1 cup of milk



Select one: Meal or No Meal

If not, why?

Pre- and Post-Assessment With Answers

- The meal components of a reimbursable lunch that must be offered to all students include
 - Meats/Meat Alternates, Legumes, Fruits, Grains, and Fluid Milk.
 - Meats/Meat Alternates, Legumes, Fruits, Grains, and Soy Milk
 - Meats/Meat Alternates, Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, and Soy Milk.
 - Meats/Meat Alternates, Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, and Fluid Milk.**
- For a reimbursable lunch meal, under OVS a student must select _____ out of five meal components.
 - two
 - three**
 - four
 - five
- Under Offer versus Serve (OVS), schools must _____.
 - require students to take all meal components and can provide smaller portions.
 - prepare equal amounts of all meal components offered regardless of popularity.
 - offer enough for each student to take the full required amount of each component.**
 - identify at the beginning of the serving line price options for selecting 3, 4, or 5 meal components.
- A reimbursable OVS lunch meal must include the selection of a minimum ____ of fruit, vegetable, or fruit and vegetable combined.
 - $\frac{1}{8}$ cup
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup**
 - 1 cup
- You are responsible for ensuring the student selection meets the OVS requirements of a reimbursable lunch meal. A question you should ask yourself when determining if student selection is a reimbursable meal is:
 - Has the student selected at least three meal components, and does the selection include a minimum of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable?**
 - Has the student selected at least three meal components, and does the selection include a minimum 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates?
 - Has the student selected at least three meal components, and does the selection include a minimum of 1 cup of milk?
 - Has the student selected at least three meal components, and does the selection include a minimum of 1 oz eq of grains?

6. The meal components of a reimbursable breakfast that must be offered to all students include
- a) Meats/Meat Alternates, Grains, and Fluid Milk.
 - b) Meats/Meat Alternates, Fruits, Grains, and Soy Milk
 - c) Meats/Meat Alternates, Grains, and Soy Milk.
 - d) Fruits, Combined Grains and M/MA, and Fluid Milk.**
7. For a reimbursable breakfast meal, a student must be offered at least ____ food items and must select at least _____ food items.
- a) one; three
 - b) two; three
 - c) three; four
 - d) four; three**

Resources

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2024). Crediting tip sheets in child nutrition programs.
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-tip-sheets-child-nutrition-programs>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2024). National school lunch program meal pattern chart.
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-meal-pattern-chart>
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United States Department of Agriculture

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

National School Lunch Program

What Is the National School Lunch Program?

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost lunches to children each school day in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs). The NSLP was established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, signed into law in 1946.

Who Administers NSLP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the Program at the Federal level. At the State level, NSLP is administered by State agencies, which operate NSLP through agreements with school food authorities.

How Does NSLP Work?

The NSLP is operated by public or nonprofit private schools at the high school level or below. Public or nonprofit RCCIs may also participate in NSLP, and charter schools may participate as public schools. Participating schools receive cash subsidies as well as nutritious, 100 percent domestic foods known as USDA Foods for each reimbursable meal they serve. In exchange, schools and institutions must serve lunches that meet the Federal meal pattern requirements and offer them at a free or reduced price to all eligible children. School food authorities can also be reimbursed through NSLP for snacks served to children who participate in an approved afterschool program.

How Can Children Participate in Free or Reduced-Price School Lunch?

Children may be determined “categorically eligible” for free meals through participation in certain Federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally funded Head Start Program or a comparable State-funded pre-kindergarten program are also categorically eligible for free meals.

Children can also qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on their household income and family size. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. Schools may not charge children more than 40 cents for a reduced-price lunch. To see the current Income Eligibility Guidelines, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Where Can I Go To Learn More About NSLP?

For more information, please contact the State agency responsible for administering NSLP in your State: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss NSLP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at fns.govaffairs@usda.gov.

Key National School Lunch Program Data

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Average participation (in millions)	30.5	30.4	30.0	29.6	29.6
Lunches served (in millions)	5,005.4	5,052.9	4,891.5	4,865.7	4,866.4

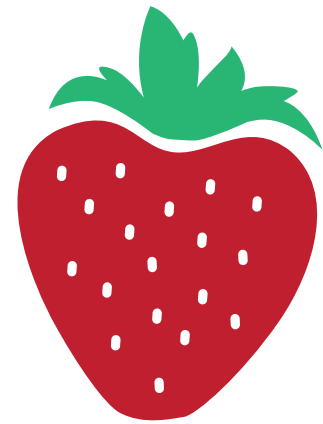
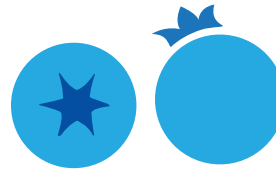
FY = Fiscal Year

January 2021, FNS-801
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THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM



1. What is the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP started in 1966 as a pilot project, and was made a permanent entitlement program by Congress in 1975.

Participation in the SBP has slowly but steadily grown over the years: 1970: 0.5 million children; 1980: 3.6 million children; 1990: 4.0 million children; 2000: 7.5 million children; 2010: 11.67 million children; and 2016: 14.57 million children.

2. Who administers the SBP?

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Program at the Federal level. At the State level, the Program is administered by State agencies, which operate the SBP through agreements with local school food authorities. State agency contact information is available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meals-contacts>.

3. How does the Program work?

The SBP is generally operated by public or non-profit private schools of high school grade or below. Public or non-profit private residential child care institutions may also participate in the SBP, and charter schools may participate in the SBP as public schools. School districts and independent schools that choose to participate in the Program must serve breakfast meals meeting Federal nutrition requirements, and offer free or reduced

price breakfasts to all eligible children. In exchange, participating institutions receive cash subsidies from the USDA for each reimbursable meal served.

4. What are the nutrition requirements for school breakfasts?

All school breakfasts must meet Federal nutrition requirements, though decisions about the specific foods to serve and how the foods are prepared are made by local school food authorities. Information about the SBP meal pattern requirements may be found on the School Meals website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>.

5. How can children qualify for free or reduced price school breakfast?

Children may be determined "categorically eligible" for free meals through participation in certain Federal Assistance Programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally-funded Head Start Program, or a comparable State-funded pre-kindergarten program, are also categorically eligible for free meals. Children can also qualify for free or reduced price school meals based on household income and family size. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST
PROGRAM



United States Department of Agriculture

Those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced price meals. Schools may not charge children more than 30 cents for a reduced price breakfast. To see the current Income Eligibility Guidelines, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines>.

6. What are the current reimbursement rates for participating schools?

School food authorities are reimbursed for meals based on children's free, reduced price, or paid eligibility status. For current SBP reimbursement rates, please see: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/rates-reimbursement>. Schools serving a higher percentage of low-income students (at least 40 percent of children receive free or reduced price lunch) are considered "severe need" schools and are eligible for a higher reimbursement rate. Schools in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico also receive a higher reimbursement rate, due to the higher cost of food in those areas.

7. What breakfast service options are available to schools?

In addition to the traditional, cafeteria-based breakfast model, schools may also consider an alternative breakfast model. For example, "Breakfast in the Classroom" involves serving the breakfast meal to children during a morning class, often while the teacher is taking attendance or giving classroom announcements. Schools operating "Grab & Go Breakfast" serve children a breakfast "to go," often in a paper or plastic bag, before school or during a morning break. To learn more about these and other breakfast service options, please see the School Breakfast Program webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp>.

8. What additional support do schools receive from FNS?

Through its Team Nutrition initiative, FNS provides training and technical assistance to school nutrition professionals to enable them to prepare and serve nutritious meals that meet the Program meal pattern requirements and appeal to children. The Team Nutrition Resource Library has web-based resources available to help children and school nutrition professionals understand the link between diet and health. State and local agencies may request free printed copies of certain Team Nutrition materials. To learn more, visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>.

9. Where can I go to learn more about the SBP?

For more information about the SBP, please contact the State agency responsible for the administration of the Program in your State: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meals-contacts>.



USDA's Food and Nutrition Service <https://www.fns.usda.gov/>
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SCHOOL BREAKFAST
 PROGRAM



United States Department of Agriculture

National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Components	Amount of Food ¹ per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ²	2 ½ (½)	2 ½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ²	3 ¾ (¾)	3 ¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark Green Subgroup ³	½	½	½
Red/Orange Subgroup ³	¾	¾	1 ¼
Beans, Peas, and Lentils Subgroup ³	½	½	½
Starchy Subgroup ³	½	½	½
Other Vegetables Subgroup ^{3,4}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables from Any Subgroup to Reach Total	1	1	1 ½
Grains (oz. eq.) ⁵	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz. eq.) ⁶	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid Milk (cups) ⁷	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Dietary Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week⁸			
Minimum-Maximum Calories (kcal)	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated Fat (% of total calories)	<10	<10	<10
Added Sugars (% of total calories)	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Limit: In place through June 30, 2027	≤1,110 mg	≤1,225 mg	≤1,280 mg
Sodium Limit: Must be implemented by July 1, 2027	≤935 mg	≤1,035 mg	≤1,080 mg

¹ Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents.

² Minimum creditable serving is 1/8 cup. 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 percent full-strength.

³ Larger amounts of these vegetables may be served.

⁴ This subgroup consists of “Other vegetables” as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(ii)(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 bean, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroups as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(ii) of this section.

⁵ Minimum creditable serving is 0.25 oz. eq. At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly (by ounce equivalents) must be whole grain-rich as defined in § 210.2 of this chapter, and the remaining grains items offered must be enriched.

⁶ Minimum creditable serving is 0.25 oz. eq.

⁷ Minimum creditable serving is 8 fluid ounces. All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less) and must meet the requirements in paragraph (d) of this section.

⁸ By July 1, 2027, schools must meet the dietary specification for added sugars. Schools must meet the sodium limits by the dates specified in this chart. Discretionary sources of calories may be added to the meal pattern if within the dietary specifications.



School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Components	Amount of Food¹ per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ²	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ²	0	0	0
Dark Green Subgroup	0	0	0
Red/Orange Subgroup	0	0	0
Beans, Peas, and Lentils Subgroup	0	0	0
Starchy Subgroup	0	0	0
Other Vegetables Subgroup	0	0	0
Grains or Meats/Meat Alternates (oz. eq) ³	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)
Fluid Milk (cups) ⁴	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Dietary Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week⁵			
Minimum-Maximum Calories (kcal)	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated Fat (% of total calories)	<10	<10	<10
Added Sugars (% of total calories)	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Limit: In place through June 30, 2027	≤540 mg	≤600 mg	≤640 mg
Sodium Limit: Must be implemented by July 1, 2027	≤485 mg	≤535 mg	≤570 mg

¹ Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents.

² Minimum creditable serving is 1/8 cup. Schools must offer 1 cup of fruit daily and 5 cups of fruit weekly. Schools may substitute vegetables for fruit at breakfast as described in paragraphs (c)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section.

³ Minimum creditable serving is 0.25 oz. eq. School may offer grains, meats/meat alternates, or a combination of both to meet the daily and weekly ounce equivalents for this combined component. At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly at breakfast must be whole grain-rich as defined in § 210.2 of this chapter, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched.

⁴ Minimum creditable serving is 8 fluid ounces. All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less) and must meet the requirements in paragraph (d) of this section.

⁵ By July 1, 2027, schools must meet the dietary specification for added sugars. Schools must meet the sodium limits by the dates specified in this chart. Discretionary sources of calories may be added to the meal pattern if within the dietary specifications.



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

OFFER VERSUS SERVE (OVS)

Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers



National School Lunch Program

What is OVS?

The goal of OVS is to reduce food waste and allow students to choose the foods they want to eat. Everyone plays a role. When students and cafeteria staff understand OVS, lunch lines move smoothly, allowing students to make the most of the lunch break and enjoy the wholesome and appealing foods they are served. It also helps reduce overall food costs.

Schools must offer all five food components in at least the minimum required quantities:

- A **food component** is one of five required food groups in reimbursable lunches. These are meats/meat alternates, grains, fruits, vegetables, and fluid milk*.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, spaghetti (whole grain-rich pasta with tomato sauce) is one food item that contains a grain and a vegetable component.

Under OVS, students must select *three meal components* to ensure they get the nutritional benefits of a meal. OVS is required for lunches served in high schools, but is optional in middle and elementary schools. OVS is not required for meals offered as part of field trips or for any other meals served away from the school campus.

The required five food components must be offered for school lunch. Students must select at least three of the five required food components, including at least ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable, to have a reimbursable lunch. See the **Required Food Components** table for a listing of required food components and their minimum quantities that must be offered. Meats/meat alternates and grains are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq is considered the amount of food product that is equal to 1 ounce).

Required Food Components

Required Food Component	Daily Minimum Requirements for Each Grade Level			
	K-5	6-8	K-8	9-12
Vegetables	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Grains	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq
Meats/Meat Alternates	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq
Fluid Milk*	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

Is it Reimbursable?

Use this simple checklist to determine if student lunches are reimbursable under OVS:

- Does the meal offered to students include the minimum required amounts of vegetables, fruits, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk?
- Does the meal selected by the student contain at least three components, including at least ½ cup fruit and/or vegetable?

If the answer to each of these questions is yes, then the school lunch is reimbursable under OVS.

*Water does not count as one of the three required food components and cannot be served as a substitute for milk.

Test Your OVS Skills!

Which combination of food items from the following offered lunch menu would make a reimbursable school lunch under OVS for Grades 9-12?

Offered Lunch Menu

Food Item	Food Components
Hamburger on a whole grain-rich bun	2 oz eq grain 2 oz eq meat
½ cup corn	½ cup starchy vegetable
½ cup green beans	½ cup other vegetable
1 cup grapes	1 cup fruit
Variety of Low Fat/ Fat-Free Milk	1 cup fluid milk*

oz eq = ounce equivalent



Which of the following student meals are reimbursable?

Meal 1:

½ cup of corn
½ cup of green beans
½ cup of grapes
1 cup of milk*



Reimbursable

Not Reimbursable

Meal 2:

Hamburger on whole grain-rich bun
1 cup of milk*



Reimbursable

Not Reimbursable

Meal 3:

Hamburger on whole grain-rich bun
½ cup corn



Reimbursable

Not Reimbursable

Answers: Meals 1 and 3 are reimbursable meals under OVS. Meal 2 is not reimbursable because it does not include ½ cup fruit and/or vegetable.

*Water does not count as one of the three required food components and cannot be served as a substitute for milk.

Additional Tips for OVS Success

- Post signage with pictures to help students identify how to build a reimbursable meal near the beginning of each serving line and wherever student choices are made.
- Have cashiers review the reimbursable meal signage before each meal service for greater success.
- Keep fruit near the cashier stand so students can easily complete their reimbursable meal.
- Encourage teachers to review the day’s menu with students and explain how students can select a reimbursable meal.
- Post menus that highlight required meal components on your school’s website and/or on flyers that children can take home to discuss with their parents and caregivers.

For more information on OVS requirements, visit:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/updated-offer-vs-serve-guidance-nslp-and-sbp-beginning-sy2015-16>



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

OFFER VERSUS SERVE (OVS)

Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers



School Breakfast Program

What is OVS?

The goal of OVS is to reduce food waste while allowing students to choose the foods they want to eat. Everyone plays a role. When students and cafeteria staff understand OVS, breakfast lines move smoothly, allowing students to make the most of meal time and enjoy the wholesome and appealing foods they are served. It also helps reduce overall food costs.

Under OVS at breakfast, schools must offer at least four food items from the three required food components (fruit, grains, and fluid milk*).

- A **food component** is one of three required food groups in a reimbursable breakfast. These are fruits, grains, and fluid milk*.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the three food components, for example, 2 slices of whole grain-rich bread, 1 cup of grapes, and 1 cup of milk. This meal meets OVS breakfast requirements because three food components and four food items are offered.

Students must select at least three of the four offered food items under OVS at breakfast, including at least ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable. Please note, OVS is optional at breakfast for all grade levels.

Required Components at Breakfast

**Fruit**

1 cup

**Grains**1 ounce equivalent
(oz eq)**Fluid Milk***

1 cup

Sample OVS breakfast menu:

Variety of milk*: fat free or low-fat (1 cup milk)
 Slice of whole grain-rich toast (1 oz eq grain)
 Whole grain-rich cereal (1 oz eq grain)
 Orange slices (1 cup fruit)

Optional Components at Breakfast

Vegetables

- Vegetables may be offered as a substitute for fruits.

Meats/Meat Alternates

- A meat/meat alternate may be served to meet the weekly grain requirement, as long as a 1 oz eq minimum of grains is offered daily.
- A meat/meat alternate may also be offered as an “extra” food (not credited toward meal pattern requirements) if a reimbursable meal is selected.

*Water does not count as one of the three required food components and cannot be served as a substitute for milk.

Is it Reimbursable?

For a breakfast to be reimbursable, at least four food items must be offered. Students must select three food items including ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable for the meal to be reimbursable under OVS.

Use this simple checklist to determine if breakfasts are reimbursable under OVS:

- Does the meal offered consist of at least four food items?
- Does the meal offered include the minimum required amounts of fruits, grains, and milk*?
- Does the meal selected by the student contain at least three food items, including at least ½ cup fruit and/or vegetable?



If the answer to each of these questions is yes, the breakfast meal is reimbursable under OVS.

*Water does not count as one of the three required food components and cannot be served as a substitute for milk.

Additional Tips for OVS Success

- Post signage (with pictures or graphics) near the beginning of each serving line to help students identify how to build a reimbursable meal and wherever student choices are made.
- Ask cashiers to review the reimbursable meal signage before each meal service.
- Keep fruit near the cashier stand so students can easily complete their reimbursable meal.
- Encourage teachers to review the day's menu with students and explain how students can select a reimbursable meal.
- Post menus that highlight required meal components on your school's website and/or on flyers that children can take home to discuss with their parents and caregivers.

For more information on OVS requirements, visit:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/updated-offer-vs-serve-guidance-nslp-and-sbp-beginning-sy2015-16>

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References

Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 7 C.F.R § 210, 215, 220, 225, 226 (2024).

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