

Comparison of Food Programs: Summer Food Service Program/Seamless Summer Option/ National School Lunch Program

The purpose of the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) is to encourage more school food authorities (SFAs) to provide meals in the summer and other times when school is not in session. The SSO combines features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). By replacing most of the SFSP rules, the SSO reduces paperwork and administrative burden, making it easier for SFAs to feed children in low-income areas during the summer months or during the extended breaks of a year-round school schedule.

This side-by-side comparison of the Programs serves to highlight the similarities between the SSO, the SFSP, and the NSLP/SBP.

TOPIC	SFSP	SSO	NSLP/SBP
Times of Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May-September for traditional school calendar areas • October-April during unanticipated school closures (i.e. emergencies) • During student vacations for schools on a continuous year calendar 	Same as the SFSP	When school is in session as established by the school district, including academic summer school (is attendance required?)
Meal Service Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camps • Churches • Community centers • Housing projects • Migrant centers • Pools • Schools • Parks • Playgrounds • Libraries 	Same as the SFSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Residential child care institutions (RCCIs)
Meal Cost for Children	<p>All meals are free*</p> <p>*Although camps are only reimbursed for children who qualify for free/reduced-price meals, camp sponsors may, and usually do, provide meals free of charge to all children.</p>	Same as the SFSP	Meal cost (F, R, P) for children is based on their income eligibility. After-school snacks at area-eligible sites are free for all children.
Establishing Site Eligibility	<p><u>Open sites</u>: 50% or more of the children in an area qualify for free or reduced-price school meals, based on school or census data.</p> <p><u>Enrolled sites</u>: 50% of household income applications that families submitted are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.</p> <p><u>Migrant sites</u>: Certification by a migrant organization that the site(s) serves children of migrant farm workers.</p> <p><u>Camps</u>: Offer a regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children.</p>	Same as the SFSP	<p><u>Schools</u>: Public and private non-profit schools of high school grade and under that are part of State's education system.</p> <p><u>After-school snack</u>: District must run the NSLP and sponsor or operate an after-school care program with educational/enrichment activities.</p> <p><u>After-school snack sites in eligible areas</u>: 50% or more of the children in the attendance area of a school qualify for F/R school meals, based on school data.</p> <p><u>RCCIs</u>: Public and licensed, non-profit, private.</p>
Type of Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast • Snack (AM or PM) • Lunch • Supper <p>Except for camp and migrant sites, lunch and supper cannot be reimbursed for the same day by the same site.</p>	Same as the SFSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast • Lunch • Snack (After-school only)

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Maximum Number of Meals	Two for most sites Three for migrant sites and camps	Same as the SFSP	Three
Meals-Seconds	Reimbursed up to 2% of the first meals served	Not reimbursable	Not reimbursable
Commodities	\$0.015 per meal for public sponsors and self-prep sites (fiscal year 2009) May receive bonus commodities	Same as the NSLP	\$0.2075 per lunch (school year 2008-2009) May receive bonus commodities
Reimbursement Rates	SFSP rates	NSLP and SBP free rates	NSLP and SBP rates
Reimbursement Method	Maximum level for all sites except camps = total meals by type of meal X rates. Maximum level for camps = total meals by type for eligible children X rates. Reimbursement can be applied towards both operating and administrative expenses. NOTE: The Simplified Summer Program has removed the comparison to cost for reimbursement.	Total meals by type X NSLP/SBP free rate Enhanced NSLP funding including: * Extra \$0.02 per lunch if 60% of lunches in second preceding year were F/R * Severe need breakfast rate Total after-school snacks X free rate in eligible areas	Total meals by type X free, reduced, or paid rate for each type of meal. Extra \$0.02 per lunch if 60% of lunches in second preceding year were F/R Additional payments for F/R breakfasts in severe need schools Total after-school snacks X free rate in eligible areas.
Monitoring Required By SFA	Preoperational visits before a new or problem site operates the summer program. Site visit during the first week of operation (waived for experienced SFA sponsors). Site review during first four weeks of operation, followed by continued monitoring if problems are found.	Each year SFAs are required to review sites at least once during the site's first three weeks of operation. The SFA must review the site's compliance with meal counting, claiming and meal pattern requirements.	On-site review of lunch counting and claiming system for each school by February 1 each year.
Monitoring Required By State	Review every three years; more frequently based on program size and prior problems identified by the State Agency (SA).	Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) every five years. Must include one SSO site in a CRE Review of a SFA participating in the option.	CRE every five years. School Meal Initiative (SMI) Review every five years to determine how well SFA is meeting the nutrition standards.
Meal Pattern	Meal pattern must meet 7 CFR 225.16(d) standards. However, SFAs may substitute NSLP/SBP meal patterns	Same as the NSLP/SBP	Must meet requirement for NSLP menu planning approaches in 7 CFR 210.10; or SBP approaches in 7 CFR 220.8; including those based on meal patterns.

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Eligible Participants	Persons 18 years or younger and persons 19 or older with a physical or mental disability, as defined by the SA.	Same as the SFSP	Students enrolled in a school of high school grade and under determined by the SA; including persons enrolled in a school program for the mentally or physically disabled; and persons under 21 enrolled in a residential child care institution (RCCI).
Public Notification	Sponsor must send public media notice regarding program and eligibility.	Public media notice may be done but is not required. SFA must state in application how each site (excluding closed-enrolled sites) will advertise availability of meals to the community.	SFA must send public media notice regarding program and letter or notice with an application to parents for all children in attendance at the school at the beginning of each school year.
Budget	Sponsors must submit a budget online each year Waived for SFAs after the first year as a sponsor, unless problems found in last review.	Same as the NSLP	A budget is not required.