

## Providing Summer Meals: Seamless Summer Option

### What is the Seamless Summer Option?

The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) is a Federal meal program that encourages more School Food Authorities (SFAs) already participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to provide meals in low income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods and during school vacation periods longer than 10 school days for year-round schools. The SSO combines features of the NSLP, SBP and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and reduces paperwork and administrative burdens to make it easier for SFAs to feed children during summer and other school vacation periods. The goal is to ensure that children who rely on the NSLP and SBP continue to have access to nutritious meals when the school year ends or is not in session.

### What organizations can participate?

Only SFAs already administering the NSLP/SBP which have demonstrated administrative capability and financial viability to properly operate during school vacation periods can participate. With IDOE approval, SFAs may be permitted to operate non-school sites, such as camps, churches, community centers, housing complexes, libraries, migrant centers, parks, playgrounds, pools, and other public sites where children are likely to gather.

### When can the SSO be operated?

Schools operating under a traditional school calendar may operate SSO during the months of May-September when school is not in session, and in October-April for non-school sites only that are responding to an unanticipated school closure. Year-round schools may operate SSO during any scheduled break of 10 or more school days.

### What makes a site “eligible”?

Site eligibility requirements are the same as for SFSP. The method that SFAs may use to establish most sites’ eligibility is referred to as “area eligibility”. Sites within the geographical boundaries of a school attendance area with at least 50 percent of its children approved for free or reduced-price meals are “area eligible”.

### What types of sites can operate SSO?

**Open:** Meals are made available to all children in the area on a first-come, first-served basis at an area-eligible site and reimbursed at the free rate.

- On occasion, an open site might need to restrict or limit the meal site’s attendance for reasons of space, security, safety, or control. The site must still be publicized as being open on a first-come, first-served basis to all children in the area, but may limit participation and operate as a **restricted open site**. Meals are still reimbursed at the free rate.

**Closed-Enrolled:** Meals are served only to an identified group of children who are participating in a specific program or activity. These sites usually provide recreational, cultural, religious, or other types of organized activities. **Academic summer school is not a qualifying program under the closed-enrolled site option under the SSO.\*** Meals are reimbursed at the free rate for sites in which at least 50 percent of children enrolled in the program are approved for free or reduced-price meals.

**Camps:** Residential or non-residential (day) camps offering regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children may qualify as an SSO site. “Area eligibility” cannot be used to establish camp site eligibility. Eligibility must be established for each enrolled child using information obtained from their schools, household income applications submitted and approved by the SFA, or Direct Certification conducted by the SFA. Meals are reimbursed at the appropriate NSLP or SBP free rates for eligible children in attendance. Meals served to ineligible children are not reimbursed and camps may charge ineligible children for meals.

### **How many meals are reimbursable under the SSO per day?**

At open, restricted-open, and closed-enrolled sites a maximum of two meals, such as lunch and breakfast, lunch and one snack, breakfast and one snack, or one snack and supper, may be claimed per child per day. Lunch and supper meals served to the same children on the same day cannot be claimed.

At camps (residential and non-residential), only the meals served to children eligible for free or reduced meals may be reimbursed. A maximum of three meals, such as breakfast, lunch, and supper, may be claimed per child per day. Lunch and supper meals served to the same children on the same day at camps may be claimed.

### **What meal pattern requirements are SSO sites required to follow?**

SFAs offering the SSO must follow the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements established in 7 CFR 210.10 and 7 CFR 220.8, respectively. In addition, SSO sites must provide meal accommodations consistent with the policy established in SP 59-2016, policy memorandum on Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/policy-memorandum-modifications-accommodate-disabilities-school-meal-programs> for more information.

With approval from IDOE, SFAs may use a single age/grade grouping meeting the minimum meal pattern requirements for the most common age/grade group attending the site. This accommodation only applies to open and restricted-open sites where meals are served to all children in the community on a first-come, first-served basis. All other sites that serve an identified group of children, including closed-enrolled sites and camps, must follow meal pattern for each age/grade established in 7 CFR 210.10 and 7 CFR 220.8.

### **What are the monitoring requirements?**

Each year, SFAs are required to review each SSO site at least once during its operation. The SFA must review the site’s compliance with meal counting, claiming, menu planning, and food safety requirements. The Sample Site Review Form found on pages 28-30 of USDA’s SFSP Sponsor Monitor’s Guide (<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/sfsp/SFSPSponsorMonitorsGuide2017.pdf>) may be used for this.

IDOE must review at least one SSO site in operation at all SFAs scheduled for an Administrative Review. The review may be conducted in the summer prior to or following the scheduled Administrative Review.

### **How can SFAs apply to participate in SSO?**

The application for the SSO is included as part of your NSLP and SBP application in CNPWeb (the purple puzzle piece). **The CNPWeb site information sheet must be updated and approved before the SFA can begin operating the program.** Please contact your assigned Field Specialist for more information!

\*SFAs that provide academic summer school might be eligible to operate the NSLP. Contact your Field Specialist for more information.