MEAL COUNT/COLLECTION PROCEDURES WORKSHEET FOR LUNCH AND BREAKFAST

All School Food Authorities (SFAs) are required to have detailed written meal count and collection procedures, approved by the Nutrition Services Division (NSD), on file at their central office and at all sites serving lunch and/or breakfast. Revisions must be sent to NSD prior to implementation. This form is an *optional* management tool to assist in describing and evaluating meal count/collection procedures. Meal count procedures may vary by site and may differ for breakfast and lunch. Describe all meal/count/collection procedures.

Eligibility

1. Do you use the State agency prototype of the Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals or Milk? If not, is it compliant with all applicable State and federal regulations?

2. Do you use the State agency prototype of the Letter to Households? If not, is it compliant with all applicable State and federal regulations?

3. Do you use the State agency prototype of the Letter to Households – Direct Certification? If not, is it compliant with all applicable State and federal regulations?

4. Do you use the State agency prototype of the Public Media Release? If not, is it compliant with all applicable State and federal regulations?

5. Are you using the State agency income guidelines (eligibility scale) for the current year for free and reduced-price meals and free milk?

6. How are applications distributed to households? Is overt identification prevented in the distribution process?

7. When are applications distributed to households?

8. How are applications accepted from families applying for free or reduced-price meals or free milk? How is overt identification prevented in the application acceptance process?

9. How does your system change the eligibility category of students who no longer qualify for free or reduced-price to paid on the 31st operating day of the new school year?

Benefit Issuance

In order to have accurate claims and to ensure that students receive the benefits for which they have been approved, a system must be in place to accurately transfer eligibility information from application to medium of exchange (ticket, checklist, etc.). Many SFAs develop a roster from the currently approved free and reduced price applications. This is then used to issue benefits. If you use a roster, begin with question 1. If you issue benefits directly from the approved free and reduced price applications in the computer, skip question 1, a – c, and begin with 2.

1. Codes for each child's eligibility must be non-overt if access to rosters is available to anyone without "need to know". Effective dates of eligibility should be clearly indicated. Attach sample roster to your procedures.

   a. Who creates and maintains rosters?
   b. How are rosters created and coded for eligibility?
   c. How do rosters indicate effective dates of eligibility?

2. Are copies of all benefit issuance documents (rosters) saved for three years plus the current year of operation as required?

3. How is the person who maintains the eligibility applications notified of the effective dates of changes, such as drops, transfers and new students approved for benefits?

4. How and when is site staff responsible for issuing benefits (tickets, tokens, I.D.'s or coding checklists) notified of changes in eligibility?

5. How and when is site staff notified of changes due to verification?

Payment for Meals

1. Describe all the times, locations and methods of payment and prepayment that are accepted. How is prepayment, which helps avoid overt identification, advertised and encouraged?

2. Are charged meals allowed? If so, they must be offered to reduced-price eligible as well as to full price students. Charged meals must be claimed on the day served, not on the day paid. Describe your policy. Is a different meal offered for a charged meal?

Medium of Exchange Used (cash or any ticket, token, I.D., name or number students exchange to obtain a meal). Describe the medium of exchange used. Attach a sample.

1. How is the medium of exchange non-overtly coded for free, reduced price and full price? *Prohibited* – color coding by category or obvious identifiers such as F, R, RP, P or D. *Not Recommended* – single symbols or digits of any kind, e.g., A, B, C or 1, 2, 3. Attach a sample.

2. What safeguards are used to prevent your medium of exchange from being duplicated, used by an unauthorized person, or used twice in one meal service?

3. Who distributes the medium of exchange? Where and when? Common locations and times must be offered and not only in the serving lines.

4. What is your policy for the replacement of lost and/or stolen medium exchange?

5. How is medium of exchange collected at point of service? Include who collects and at what place in the serving line. Who insures that meal tickets, if used, are not used twice?

6. If cash for full price and reduced price meals is accepted in the serving line, how are those meals accounted for at point of service, i.e., with a tally, counter, cash register, or checklist?

7. How is overt identification avoided for reduced price eligible students who choose to pay in line?

Accuracy of Counts

You must accurately count all *reimbursable* meals at the point of service and ensure those counts are used for claiming purposes. All counts must be positive or actual counts. No meal counts claimed may be backed out of another count or be based on a pre-count.

1. Where is the point at which a meal is counted? Who counts the number of meals to claim?

2. What balance point (tray, plate, food item count) is used to compare with number of meals claimed? Claim cannot be based on the balance point.

3. What menu planning method is used? (Traditional Menu Planning, Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning, Nutrient Standard Menu Planning, Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning, SHAPE NSMP, SHAPE RMP)

4. Do you have the mandatory meal service where all components are taken by children, or do you have offer versus serve? If you have offer versus serve, how many components do you require (3 or 4) to claim a reimbursable meal for lunch (also for 3 items for offer vs. serve breakfast if you offer breakfast)?

5. Who monitors the meals to ensure only reimbursable meals are claimed? Where is that person located in relation to the serving line? Explain what occurs when a student does not take a reimbursable meal.

6. Do you use portion adjusting for different age groups?

7. How do you account for adult and a la carte meals and ensure they are not claimed?

8. What is your policy on dropped and second meals? (Only one breakfast and/or one lunch) per student may be claimed for reimbursement each day.

9. How are earned student meals accounted for at point of service? Are the earned student meals claimed in the student's eligibility category?

10. How do you account for field trip meals at point of service?

11. How are visiting students' meals accounted for? There must be supporting documentation such as a roster from the school students are enrolled in if any meals are claimed as free or reduced price.

12. If you use any type of mechanical or automated system (i.e., a cash register or computerized ticket system), what is your plan if that system fails?

13. Is the same system used for breakfast as for lunch? If not, answer all of the questions that apply for breakfast as well.

Reports and Internal Controls

1. How are meal counts compiled by site? Attach a sample daily (sales) report and summary of daily meals summarized to monthly total to your procedures.

2. How do you ensure reports submitted by sites are accurate? How, when and by whom are edit checks of daily meal counts conducted?

3. Who counts the money daily? Who prepares the deposits? Who deposits the money and where is it deposited? Who reconciles the deposited money to the bank statement?

4. Who conducts required site monitoring and how often? To monitor effectively the monitor should be aware of all requirements and stay until the completion of the daily (sales) report.

5. What other methods do you use to ensure sites are in compliance (Staff Training)?