



VENDED or SELF-OP:

A MEAL PREPARATION PLANNING & SERVICE GUIDE



Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services

This is an equal opportunity provider.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Pros and Cons Breakdown	4
Key Terms/Definitions	5
Kitchen Capacity and Equipment	5
MENU PLANNING	7
CHILD NUTRITION LABELS	8
PURCHASING METHODS	9
Informal Procurement	9
Formal Procurement	10
Noncompetitive Procurement	10
THE MENU	11
NSLP/SBP Meal Patterns and Nutrition Standards	12
Afterschool Snack Meal Pattern	13
FNW TEAM	14
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	15



INTRODUCTION

The USDA Child Nutrition Programs play a crucial role in promoting the health and well-being of children across the United States by providing nutritious meals in educational settings. These programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), aim to ensure that children receive balanced and wholesome meals that contribute to their growth, development, and academic success. The USDA sets nutritional standards for these meals, emphasizing the importance of offering a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat milk and dairy products, and lean proteins to meet the dietary needs of growing children. As schools participate in these programs, they must choose between two primary approaches for meal services: self-operation (self-op) or vended operations (either with a Food Service Management Company [FSMC] or a caterer).

Self-Operations or Self-Preparations involve schools preparing meals on-site in their own kitchens with their own staff. This approach allows for greater control over menu customization, local sourcing, and more flexibility and ease to accommodate meal modification needs. On the other hand, **vended** operations involve schools contracting with external vendors to either provide pre-packaged meals that are then delivered to the schools for distribution, or in the case of a FSMC food preparation and meal service is all handled by an external company/vendor that oversees all aspects of the food service with no school staff employed by the FSMC. Vended operations can offer cost savings, convenience, and efficiency, but may limit the ability to tailor menus to local preferences and nutritional standards. Understanding the distinctions between self-op and vended operations is essential for schools navigating the decision-making process to best meet the nutritional needs of their students while adhering to USDA guidelines.

Financial considerations:

- Costs are similar in both approaches.
- Self-op has additional duties related to purchasing food, paper goods, staff supervisory, and payroll responsibilities.
- Utilities are similar, but self-op will likely have higher utilities with more water, sewer, gas, and electric use.

VENDED OR SELF-OP

Handling meal counts and submitting claims, accepting payments for program meals (state agency, students, households, etc.), kitchen/service area cleanup and maintenance, trash collection, and waste disposal costs, water and utilities, paper goods/serving trays costs (may be included in vended contract), bank deposits/SFS accounting, filing claims, paying SFS bills, etc., must be considered no matter your meal service approach. Other considerations by approach include:

PROS

CONS

VENDED

PROS OF VENDED, PREPARED MEALS:

- Use external skilled staff
- Reduce labor and benefits costs
- Save on equipment and electricity
- Simplify food ordering and storage
- Manage a single contract
- Offer consistent meals and portions
- Fixed menu and pricing

CONS OF VENDED, PREPARED MEALS:

- Potentially untrained vendor staff
- Limited menu flexibility
- Limited service options
- Risk of late or missing deliveries
- Missing menu items or incomplete meals
- Limited à la carte options
- Limited OVS implementation

SELF-OP

PROS OF SELF-OPERATION:

- Set own menu
- Greater flexibility
- Offer more menu choices
- Discounts and special buys
- Plan themed events/special meals
- Implement OVS
- Adjust inventory to address menu changes/vice versa
- Offer à la carte options for extra revenue

CONS OF SELF-OPERATION:

- Set/monitor job duties/expectations
- Hire, train, and manage staff
- Pay salaries and benefits/payroll duties
- Manage kitchen equipment and supplies
- Time commitment to purchase food/ supplies
- Missing items in deliveries/out of stock items
- Manage meals per labor hour (MPLH)

KEY TERMS/DEFINITIONS

Meal pattern - a set plan used to guide program menu planners in providing a balanced meal designed to meet a part of the daily nutritional needs of program participants.

Food Component - one of five food groups that comprise reimbursable lunches. These are meats/meat alternates; grains; fruits; vegetables; and fluid milk. Schools must always offer all five food components in at least the minimum required quantities.

Food Item - a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, a hamburger patty on a bun is one food item with two of the five food components (meats/meat alternates and grains). Separate ½ cup servings of peaches, applesauce and pears are three food items that represent one component (fruits).

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) - a concept that applies to menu planning and the meal service. OVS allows students to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable lunch or breakfast. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste and to permit students to choose the foods they want to eat. Due to the fact that students may choose fewer selections under OVS, guidance is provided on what constitutes a reimbursable lunch and breakfast.

Under OVS at lunch, a student must take at least three components in the required quantities. One selection must be at least ½ cup (total) from fruits and/or vegetables components. Depending on the planned menu, the student may need to select more than one food item to have the minimum quantity needed for a component to be credited.

Food Service Management Company (FSMC) - is a contracted meal and staff management service provided on-site where the majority of the daily operations is managed by the FSMC but final oversight and program compliance falls to the sponsor.



KITCHEN CAPACITY AND EQUIPMENT

Layout – Equipment

- The layout of kitchen equipment should establish a workflow that will minimize the time food spends in the temperature danger zone, as well as the number of times food is handled.
- Equipment should be placed in a way that will prevent splashing or spilling from one piece of equipment to another.
- Equipment should be accessible for cleaning.
- Equipment is smooth, durable, and resistant to damage.
- Stainless steel is also recommended for durability and ease of cleaning.
- Using certified equipment from organizations such as NSF International.
- Tabletop mounted equipment should be mounted on legs four inches from the tabletop or should be sealed to the tabletop.
- Ice machines should be placed in a clean, accessible area with regular maintenance to ensure hygiene and efficiency.
- Reach-in coolers should be positioned away from heat sources to maintain temperature control and allow easy access.

Storage – Dry Foods

- Dry storage - 50° F-70° F
- Dry storage areas with windows should have frosted glass or shades to prevent direct sunlight and an increase in the storage area temperature. Direct sunlight can also affect the quality of the food.

Storage – Refrigerator and Freezer

- Refrigerator temperature - 40° F or below
- Freezer temperature - 0° F
- Reach-in coolers and freezers should have legs that are elevated at least six inches off the floor or mounted and sealed on a masonry base.

Flooring and Walls

- Flooring should be nonabsorbent and resilient/not easy to crack or break.
- Ceramic tile is the recommended wall finish in cooking areas because it's smooth, nonabsorbent, durable, and easy to clean.

Sinks

- Food service operations should have the appropriate sink for the appropriate job:
 - *Handwashing sink*: Must be well stocked and maintained since every person working in the operation will use it. Multiple sinks should be available and placed in areas convenient to restrooms, food prep areas, and food service areas. Stations should come equipped with hot and cold running water, soap, disposable paper towels, a garbage container, and handwashing signage.
 - *Prep sink*: Used only for food preparation such as washing fresh fruits and vegetables.
 - *Three-compartment sink*: Used for cleaning and sanitizing items, such as pots and pans and warewashing.
 - *Service sink*: Used for non-food related tasks such as cleaning mops or disposing of mop water.
 - *Curbed-floor drain*: Used to easily dispose of wastewater and avoids lifting full mop buckets.
- If applicable, dish machines should have a high temperature (sanitize with extremely hot water) or uses a chemical-sanitizing process using an approved chemical solution.

SELF-OP STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPS)

Checklist of Self-Op SOPs to have on file for employee trainings and daily reference should include:

- Proper food handling and storage procedures
- Equipment cleaning and maintenance schedules
- Temperature monitoring and recording
- Personal hygiene standards for staff
- Emergency procedures for food safety incidents
- Waste management and disposal practices
- Allergen management protocols

VENDED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPS)

Checklist of Vended SOPs to have on file for employee trainings and daily reference should include:

- Procedures for receiving and inspecting deliveries
- Guidelines for safe storage of delivered food
- Instructions for handling, reheating, and serving pre-prepared food
- Cleaning and maintenance schedules for storage and serving equipment
- Temperature monitoring and recording protocols for transportation and storage
- Emergency procedures for food safety incidents related to vended food
- Waste management practices for packaging and food waste disposal



MENU PLANNING

Whether self-op or vended, menu planning with the student customer in mind is key to successful school meal programs. Menu planning templates have been created to guide program sponsors in completing menu plans that meet minimum meal component and portion requirements. To aid in the completion of the templates, sponsor staff will want to have any recipes, food product label information, such as a Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statements for combination foods, readily available, from their own in-house resources or by working closely with their approved vendors.

There are several menu templates available to choose from at the following web page, including five-day pre-K breakfast and lunch templates, five-day and seven-day breakfast, lunch, and snack templates for K-5, K-8, K-12, 6-8, and 9-12. These templates come with instructions and guidance. To download menu templates for your school, please visit: <https://www.fdac.gov/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Menu-Planning-and-Meal-Service/Menu-Planning-Templates>

STANDARDIZED RECIPES

If making or assembling a menu item from two or more ingredients, then standardized recipes or procedures must be created, on file, and followed. A standardized recipe is one that has been tried, tested, evaluated and adapted for use by a specific food service operation. It produces a consistent quality and yield each time when the exact procedures, equipment and ingredients are used.

BENEFITS OF STANDARDIZED RECIPES

- Consistent food quality
- Predictable yield
- Customer satisfaction
- Consistent nutrient content
- Efficient purchasing procedures
- Successful completion of State reviews

INGREDIENT CONSIDERATIONS

School food leaders and manufacturers can demonstrate a commitment to improving the overall quality, nutritional value, and safety of school meals by providing foods that are lower in sodium, fat, and added sugar. Consideration should be given to planning menus with a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain or whole grain rich foods. Selecting low-sodium canned vegetables, and canned fruits packed in water, juice, or light syrup (heavy syrup is prohibited) is another way to improve the nutrient profile of meals. Additionally, condiments that contribute to the overall sodium, fat, and sugar content of a meal should be taken into account.



CHILD NUTRITION LABELS

Menu plans are built from food items that are created from food ingredients. Food ingredients for main dish and entree items can come from pre-made, manufactured products (e.g. chicken nuggets), made in-house from standardized recipes (e.g. lasagna), or assembled from standard procedures (e.g. turkey and cheese sandwich).

WHAT ARE CHILD NUTRITION (CN) LABELS?

CN labels tell us how a product contributes to the meal pattern. The manufacturer voluntarily submits their product to the USDA to get a CN label. As a CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a product toward the meal pattern requirements, it protects programs from exaggerated claims about a product. CN labeling makes menu writing easier and gives peace of mind during audits.

WHICH FOODS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A CN LABEL?

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that provide at least ½ ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions.

CN labels also typically indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For example, CN-labeled pizza may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates, grains, and vegetables components; and CN-labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates and grains components.

WHERE DO I FIND CN LABELS?

You will find CN labels on the product's package and, most often, on foods purchased through a large food distributor. You can also find CN labels through K-12 Channel or product lines. Items purchased in grocery stores generally do not include a CN label, and not all commercially prepared combination food items will have one.

CN

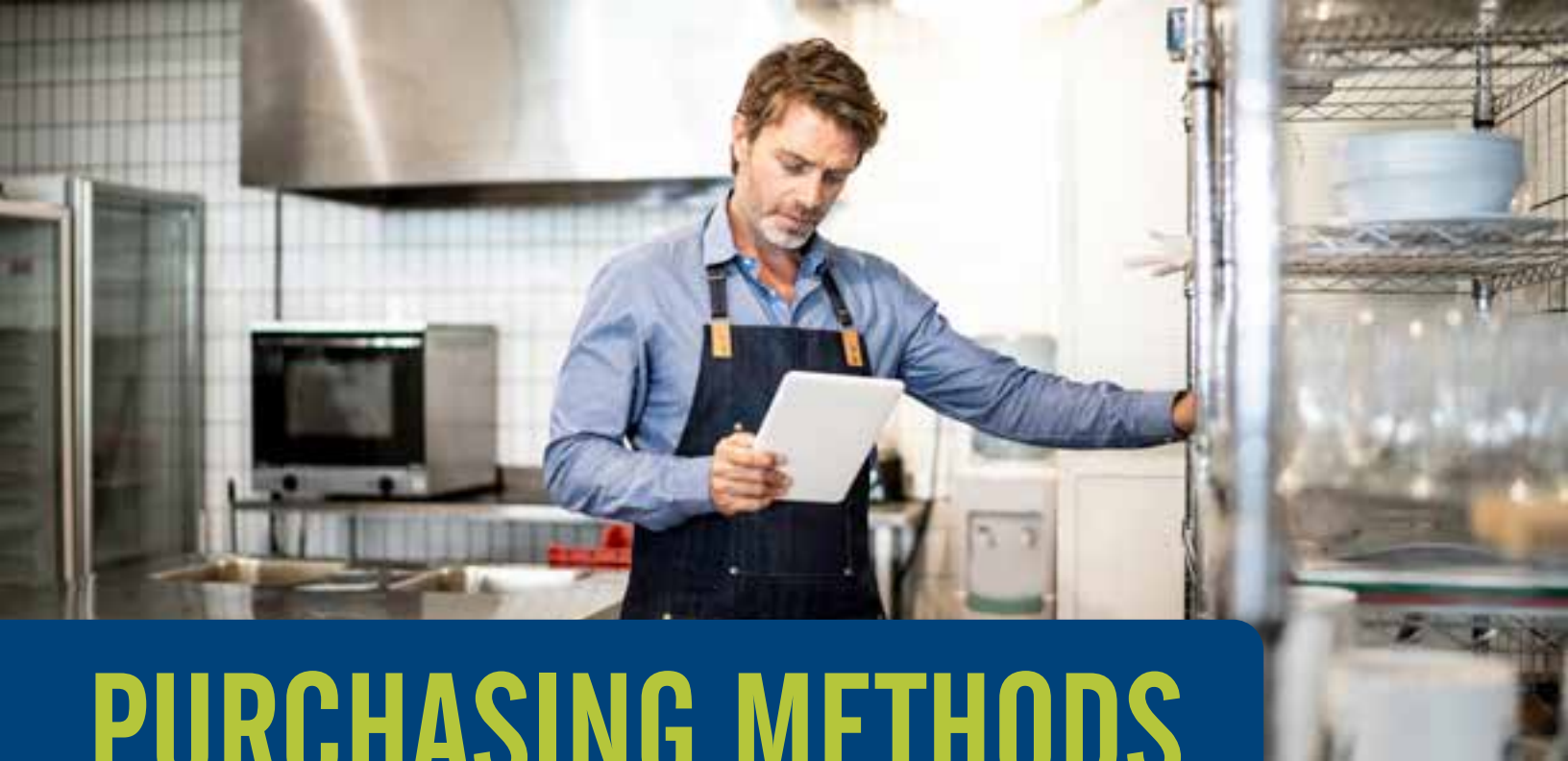
CN

XXXXXX

Four precooked breaded fish sticks (1.00 oz. each) provide 2.00 oz. equivalent meat/meal alternate and 1.00 oz. equivalent grains for Child Nutrition Meal Pattern Requirements. (Use of this logo and statement authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA mm/yy).

CN

CN



PURCHASING METHODS

FOR CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

This document provides information to help Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Sponsors make sure their purchasing practices align with Federal and State purchasing rules. It is important to remember that a Sponsor may have more restrictive policies at the local level, and the most restrictive requirement should always be used when purchasing for CNPs.

INFORMAL PROCUREMENT

MICRO-PURCHASES

[2 CFR 200.320(a)(1)]

Micro-purchases are single purchases, or the aggregate purchase of like items, estimated at \$15,000 or less. Routine purchases cannot be broken into smaller purchase amounts to qualify for micro-purchasing.

Micro-purchases may be awarded without soliciting competitive price or rate quotes if the sponsor considers the price to be reasonable based on:

- research,
- experience,
- purchase history, or
- other information and documents it finds appropriate.

To the maximum extent practicable, sponsor should distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers.

The federal regulations set the micro-purchase threshold at \$15,000. However, the sponsor is responsible for determining and documenting an appropriate micro-purchase threshold based on internal controls, an evaluation of risk, and its documented procurement procedures.

Sponsors may self-certify a threshold higher than the \$10,000 limit, up to \$50,000, on an annual basis and must maintain documentation justifying their self-certification.

The self-certification must include a justification, clear identification of the threshold, and supporting documentation of any of the following:

- A qualification as a low-risk auditee, in accordance with the criteria in § 200.520 for the most recent audit;
- An annual internal institutional risk assessment to identify, mitigate, and manage financial risks; or,
- For public institutions, a higher threshold consistent with state law.

All documents, justifications, and receipts or invoices must be kept on file and made available for inspection when requested.

SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION

[2 CFR 200.320(a)(2)]

Simplified Acquisitions are single purchases, or the aggregate purchase of like items, estimated to be between the sponsor's micro-purchase threshold and either \$50,000 for public and charter school sponsors or \$350,000 for all other sponsors.

When small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotes must be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources as determined appropriate by the sponsor. FDACS recommends at least **three**.

When obtaining quotes through a Request for Quotes (RFQ), each potential vendor must receive the same set of criteria on which to base their quote. These requests must be documented, and this documentation kept with your files on the purchase.

The vendor with the lowest quote is used for the purchase or awarded a contract.

All RFQs, all responses received, all resulting contracts, and all invoices or receipts must be kept on file and made available for inspection when requested.

FORMAL PROCUREMENT

A formal purchase is a single purchase, or the aggregate purchase of like items, estimated to be over \$50,000 for public and charter school sponsors and over \$350,000 for all other sponsors.

The primary difference between formal and informal is in the notice to the public. Formal procurement must be publicly posted for a minimum of 14 days. This public announcement can be made in the local paper (print or online), on the radio, or posted on the schools website and/or social media. All formal procurements must be reviewed by FDACS before publicly posting.

INVITATIONS TO BID (ITB)

[2 CFR 200.320(b)(1)]

An ITB is used when the primary consideration of award is cost. The expectation is that competitive bids will be received, opened publicly and an acceptance (award) will be made to the most responsive and responsible vendor, whose bid has the lowest price.

An ITB is used when there is no substantive difference among the products or services requested and the key difference among responses is price.

Bids must be solicited from an adequate number of known suppliers, providing them with sufficient time to respond prior to the date set for opening the bids.

The most responsive and responsible vendor with the lowest bid wins the award.

All ITBs, all responses received, all resulting contracts, and all invoices or receipts must be kept on file and made available for inspection when requested.

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

[2 CFR 200.320(b)(2)]

A RFP is used when the sponsor wants to solicit a technical proposal that explains how the prospective vendor will meet the objectives of the solicitation. While price is still the highest score criteria, in a RFP, it is only one of the criteria considered. Other evaluation criteria could be references, taste test, company experience, menu creativity, delivery options, geographic preference/local specifications and so many more. The sponsor choose which criteria are the most important to evaluate to determine which vendor will fit their food service best.

RFPs must be publicly advertised for a minimum of 14 days, and they can allow for negotiations to obtain the best value for the cost.

The most responsive and responsible vendor with the highest score wins the award.

All RFPs, all responses received, all resulting contracts, and all invoices or receipts must be kept on file and made available for inspection when requested.

Sample ITBs and RFPs are available in the Download Forms section of FANS.

NONCOMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT

[2 CFR 200.320(c)]

There are specific circumstances in which noncompetitive procurement can be used. Noncompetitive procurement can only be awarded if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- The aggregate dollar amount of like items does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold;
- The item is available only from a single provider and is necessary for the Child Nutrition Program's operations;
- The need for the goods or services is imminent, and due to a public exigency or emergency publicizing a competitive solicitation would result in a delay of Child Nutrition Programs operations;
- The USDA or FDACS expressly authorizes a noncompetitive procurement in response to a written request from the Sponsor; or
- After public solicitation, competition is determined inadequate.

With planned menu changes and changing how program meals are provided (vended to self-op), Menu Certification and the "Attestation for Compliance with Meal Pattern Requirements" statement completed to ensure NSLP Program Sponsors qualify for the additional 9 cents per lunch meal performance reimbursement.



THE MENU

The sponsor is ultimately responsible to ensure compliance to all the meal pattern and School Meal requirements, whether vended or self-op.

KEY RESOURCES:

- The FDACS Menu Planning Packet is a useful resource regarding a variety of menu planning topics. Find it here: <https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/114015/file/5-NSLP-SBP-ASP-Menu-Planner.pdf>
- Offer Versus Serve guidance ([decreasing food waste](#))
- Child Nutrition Labels information: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Menu-Planning-and-Meal-Service/Child-Nutrition-CN-Label-Product-Formulation-Statements>
- [FDACS menu planning templates](#) (strongly encourage the use of these easy-to-read format, contains most/all of the meal pattern requirements for the grade group and helps identify whether all meal pattern requirements are met)

NSLP/SBP MEAL PATTERNS AND NUTRITION STANDARDS

	BREAKFAST MEAL PATTERN		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^a Per Week (Minimum Per Day)		
Fruits and/or Vegetables (cups) ^{b,c}	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Grains and/or Meat/Meat Alternates (oz. eq.)	7 (1) ^{g,h}	8 (1) ^{g,h}	9 (1) ^{g,h}
Fluid Milk (cups) ^j	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^{i,j}	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^j	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (mg) ^j (Target 1 effective through SY 2026-27)	< 540	< 600	< 640

	LUNCH MEAL PATTERN		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^a Per Week (Minimum Per Day)		
Fruits (cups) ^{b,c}	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^{b,c}	3 ¾ (¾)	3 ¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark Green ^d	½	½	½
Red/Orange ^d	¾	¾	1 ¼
Beans, Peas, and Lentils ^d	½	½	½
Starchy ^d	½	½	½
Other ^{d,e}	½	½	¾
Additional Veg to Reach Total ^f	1	1	1 ½
Grains (oz. eq.)	8 (1) ^g	8 (1) ^g	10 (2) ^g
Meat/Meat Alternates (oz. eq.)	8 (1)	9 (1)	10 (2)
Fluid Milk (cups) ^j	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^{i,j}	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^j	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (mg) ^j (Target 1A effective through SY 2026-27)	< 1,110	< 1,225	< 1,280

As of July 1, 2024.

a Food items included in each food group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is ½ cup.

b One quarter-cup of dried fruit counts as ½ cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as ½ cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

c For breakfast, vegetables may be substituted for fruits. Schools choosing to offer vegetables at breakfast one day per school week have the option to offer a vegetable from any of the vegetable subgroups. Schools choosing to substitute vegetables for fruits at breakfast on two or more days per school week are required to offer vegetables from at least two different subgroups.

d Larger amounts of these vegetables may be served.

e This category consists of “Other vegetables” as defined in §210.10(c)(2)(iii)(E). For the purposes of the NSLP, “Other vegetables” requirement may be met with any additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroups as defined in § 210.10(c)(2)(iii).

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

g At least eighty percent (80%) of the grains offered in the SBP & NSLP must be whole grain rich. All remaining grains served must be at least enriched.

h Schools may offer grains, meat/meat alternates, or a combination of both to meet the minimum ounce equivalent in this combined meal component requirement.

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

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

AFTERSCHOOL SNACK MEAL PATTERN

SELECT TWO OF THE FOUR COMPONENTS FOR A REIMBUSABLE SNACK			
FOOD COMPONENTS AND FOOD ITEMS ¹	PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AGES 1 and 2	PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AGES 3-5	K-12 CHILDREN AGES 6-18
	Minimum Quantities	Minimum Quantities	Minimum Quantities ²
Fluid Milk³	4 fl oz (1/2 cup)	4 fl oz (1/2 cup)	8 fl oz (1 cup)
MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE^{4,5,6,7}			
Lean meat or poultry or fish ⁴ <i>or</i>	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Alternate protein products ⁵ <i>or</i>	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Cheese <i>or</i>	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Egg (large) <i>or</i>	1/2 large egg	1/2 large egg	1/2 large egg
Cooked dry beans or peas <i>or</i>	1/8 cup	1/8 cup	1/4 cup
Peanut or other nut or seed butters <i>or</i>	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Nuts and/or seeds ⁶ <i>or</i>	1/2 oz ⁶	1/2 oz ⁶	1 oz
Yogurt ⁷	2 oz or 1/4 cup	2 oz or 1/4 cup	4 oz or 1/2 cup
VEGETABLES			
And/or pasteurized, full-strength juice ^{1, 8}	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
FRUITS			
And/or pasteurized, full-strength juice ^{1, 8}	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
GRAINS/BREADS^{9, 10, 11, 12, 13}			
Bread <i>or</i>	1/2 oz eq ¹¹	1/2 oz eq ¹¹	1 oz eq¹¹
Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin <i>or</i>	1/2 oz eq ¹¹	1/2 oz eq ¹¹	1 oz eq¹¹
Cold dry cereal ¹² <i>or</i>	1/4 cup or 1/3 oz ¹³	1/3 cup or 1/2 oz ¹³	3/4 cup or 1 oz¹³
Cooked cereal grains <i>or</i>	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Cooked pasta or noodles	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup

1 Must serve two of the five components. Only one of the two components may be a beverage.

2 Children aged 12 and older may be served larger portions based on their greater food needs. They may not be served less than the minimum quantities listed in this column.

3 Must be unflavored whole milk for children aged one. Must be unflavored low-fat (1% or less) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk for children two through five years old. For K-12, must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1% or less). Milk may be unflavored or flavored.

4 A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry or fish.

5 Alternate protein products must meet requirements in Appendix A of 7 CFR Part 210.

6 Nuts and seeds are generally not recommended to be served to children ages 1-3 since they present a choking hazard. If served, nuts and seeds should be finely minced.

7 Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

8 Juice must be pasteurized, full-strength juice. No more than half of the weekly fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice.

9 At least 80% of grains offered weekly (by ounce equivalents) must be whole grain-rich, as defined in 7 CFR 210.2, and the remaining grains items offered must be enriched.

10 Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement.

11 Refer to [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements For Child Nutrition Programs](#) for information on ounce equivalents.

12 Breakfast cereal must have no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Information on crediting grain items may be found in FNS guidance.

13 Either volume (cup) or weight (oz), whichever is less.



FNW TEAM



PROGRAM SPECIALIST: General program and application questions, FANS, Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), and Florida Direct Certification



PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST: How to source goods and services, requirements of compliant procurement, Buy American



TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST: More detailed program questions on meal service documentation and data collection, production records, on-site support



NUTRITION SPECIALIST: Menus, menu cycles, wellness policies, meal patterns, productions records, meal component contributions



POINT SYSTEM SPECIALIST: Technology-based process for meal counting and claiming, free and reduced meal application, menu planning and analysis, and production records.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **USDA MENU PLANNING GUIDE**
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner-school-meals>
- **FNW MENU PLANNING PACKET**
<https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/114015/file/5-NSLP-SBP-ASP-Menu-Planner.pdf>
- **OFFER VERSUS SERVE GUIDANCE**
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP41-2015av2.pdf>
- **USDA FOOD BUYING GUIDE** - helps plan how much food to purchase and cook.
<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/MasGuestUsers/GuestUserLogin?ReturnUrl=%2FHome%2FHome>
- **FDACS MENU PLANNING TEMPLATES** - Easy-to-read format, contain most/all of the meal pattern requirements for the grade group, and help identify whether all meal pattern requirements are met. Must be used.
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Menu-Planning-and-Meal-Service/Menu-Planning-Templates>
- **FDACS RECIPES AND CULINARY TECHNIQUES WEBPAGE** - sources for standardized recipes, information on cycle menus, resources and tool kits.
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Menu-Planning-and-Meal-Service/Recipes-and-Culinary-Techniques>
- **FDACS MENU PLANNING IDEAS AND SAMPLES**
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Menu-Planning-and-Meal-Service/Menu-Planning-Ideas-and-Samples>
- **FDACS MENU PLANNING AND MEAL SERVICE HOMEPAGE**
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Food-Nutrition/Nutrition-Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program/Menu-Planning-and-Meal-Service>

For the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), OVS is established under section 9(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. OVS was extended to the School Breakfast Program (SBP) in 1985 under section 4(e) (2) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. The regulations on OVS for the NSLP are found at 7 CFR 210.10 (e) and for the SBP at 7 CFR 220.8 (e).

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at <https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/115493/file/Complaint-Form-English-ad-3027.pdf>, <https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/115494/file/Complaint-Form-Spanish-ad-3027s.pdf> and, <https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/115495/file/ad3027-haitian-creole.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** Program.Intake@usda.gov

June 2026



**Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.