

Preparing for the Administrative Review



Resource Guide

SY 2018-19



Region 4 Education Service Center Child Nutrition Program Specialists have compiled this resource document, *Preparing for the Administrative Review Resource Guide* to assist Contracting Entities (CE) in organizing required data to meet program guidelines and prepare for the Administrative Review (AR). Included is an overview of the Administrative Review process, checklists and information required to be maintained by all CEs implementing School Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and Afterschool Care Program. The “Guide” also includes definitions and resources available.

The “Guide” does not cover the entire scope of the program; CEs are responsible for knowing and understanding all handbooks, manuals, alerts, notices and guidance, as well as any other forms of communication that provide further guidance, clarification or instruction on operating the program.

The Administrator’s Reference Manual (ARM) may be found at www.squaremeals.org under Programs > NSLP > NSLP Policy & ARM.

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(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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AR Review Specialist

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Reminders/Tips

- The off-site assessment is an information gathering tool for the AR Specialist. In most cases, there is no right or wrong answer.
- Organize supporting documentation in electronic file folders in a way to be easily identified.
 - File documents within folders with headings that match the series number for the area of review.
 - Maintain hard copies of all documents scanned and submitted for review.
- All attachments should be uploaded in TX-UNPS in the SNP Reviews – Review Dashboard, under Review Tools “Review Attachments”.
- Files for upload should be no larger than 75 MB (per upload) in size.
- Supporting documents uploaded should be sent in batches of no more than 25-50 pages each (i.e. applications).
- Hover over the  (question mark) in TX-UNPS for additional USDA Guidance.
- Print questions from “Review Forms” in TX-UNPS and review and complete by hand before typing/entering into TX-UNPS.
- For an overview of the administrative review process, watch the on-line trainings provided by TDA at www.squaremeals.org > Programs> National School Lunch Program > NSLP Training > Online Education and Self Study.
Information covered includes:
 - *The Reinvented Administrative Review Process* (webinar). Handouts of the presentation slides are also available online.
 - *TX-UNPS – Administrative Review: Corrective Action Document (CAD)*
 - *TX-UNPS – Administrative Review: Review Attachments*
 - *TX-UNPS – Administrative Review: Review Forms*
 - *TX-UNPS – Administrative Review: Viewable Modules*
- Utilize USDA Menu Worksheets to ensure compliance with menu planning and meal pattern requirements for the appropriate age/grade groups.
- Utilize naming conventions for files that are uploaded into TX-UNPS. Include the corresponding number before the file name: *100_Description of file*

Overview of Administrative Review

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Definitions/Terminology

Administrative Review (AR): The comprehensive off-site and on-site evaluation of all CE participating in the Federal school nutrition program.

Corrective Action Documents (CAD): CAD must be submitted in TXUNPS after the AR to demonstrate that the CE has implemented corrective action to adequately address the AR findings

Contracting Entity (CE): The organization with an agreement with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to participate in the Federal school nutrition program. Used interchangeably with the term “SFA” – School Food Authority.

Critical Areas: Two areas of review specified by USDA that includes the following topic areas:

1. **Performance Standard 1 (PS1), Meal Access and Reimbursement:** A Critical Area of Review that includes certification and benefit issuance, verification, and meal counting and claiming.
2. **Performance Standard 2 (PS2), Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality:** A Critical Area of Review that includes meal components and quantities, offer versus serve, dietary specification and nutrient analysis.

Day of Review (DOR): The day(s) on which the on-site review occurs.

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010: Federal statute designed into law on December 13, 2010. The bill is part of the reauthorization of funding for child nutrition.

Local Education Agency (LEA): A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

Month of Review (MOR): The most recent month for, prior to the onsite, which a claim for reimbursement has been submitted which has at least 10 operating days.

Non-Systemic Finding: A finding in which the contributing factors are unusual or not part of the normal operating procedure, and the system does not require changes to achieve accurate results.

Offsite Assessment Tool: A tool used to determine the CE's level of risk related to meal service, program administration and other topics. This assessment is conducted onsite through TXUNPS before the onsite review takes place at the CE and includes:

1. The Meal Compliance Risk Assessment Tool
2. The Dietary Specification Assessment Tool
3. The Resource Management Risk Indicator Tool

Onsite Assessment Tool: A tool used to validate the information collected in the offsite assessment and determine compliance related to meal service, program administration and other topics. This assessment is conducted at the CE (onsite).

Repeat Finding: The same type of critical area finding or general area finding is noted in more than one review in the same review cycle or across multiple review cycles.

School Food Authority (SFA): The organization with an agreement with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to participate in the Federal school nutrition program. Used interchangeably with the term "CE" – Contracting Entity.

Systemic Finding: The finding is based on contributing factors that are inherent to the routine operation of the CE (or site) and is likely to occur again in the same review cycle if operational processes are not changed. Systemic errors are serious in nature. TDA must determine the scope of the error by deciding if the same meal count procedures were in place for the review period and/or previous periods.

Technical Assistance (TA): Help or advice provided to the CE by TDA or the ESC.

Week of Review (WOR): The week that is selected for review of the meal pattern requirements, production records, standardized recipes, product formulation statements, etc.

Administrative Review Objectives

An Administrative Review (AR) is a standardized review process developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that includes a comprehensive offsite and onsite evaluation of contracting entities (CEs) participating in the following programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Other Federal Programs
 - Afterschool Care Program (ASCP)
 - At Risk Child and Adult Care Food Program (At Risk CACFP).
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
 - Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
 - Special Milk Program (SMP)

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as amended by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, requires the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to conduct an Administrative Review (AR) of School Nutrition Programs (SNP) at least once every three years. USDA provides specific guidance and instructions for the review process so that all CEs administering NSLP and SBP across the nation are evaluated in the same manner. The AR is designed to conduct specified parts of the review off-site and others on-site. TDA will evaluate compliance with the following program requirements in the Critical and General Areas of Review which include: Meal Access and Reimbursement, Meal Pattern & Nutritional Quality, Resource Management, General Program Compliance and the operation of any other applicable SNP federal programs.

USDA provides specific guidance and instructions for the review process so that all CEs administering NSLP and SBP across the nation are evaluated in the same manner.

The scope of the AR has been expanded to include a risk-based review of program operations to address the following objectives:

1. Determine whether the contracting entity (CE) meets program requirements
2. Provide the CE with technical assistance
3. Secure needed corrective action
4. Assess fiscal action, and when applicable, recover improperly paid funds

Additional information pertaining to the Administrative Review can be found in the *Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 23: Administrative Review*.

Administrative Review Areas

Critical Areas of Review

Performance Standard One (PS-1) – areas that are reviewed to determine that each child was provided the proper meal benefits and that meals are properly counted and claimed for reimbursement.

Certification and Benefit Issuance, Verification:

- Applications
- Rosters
- Categorical Eligibility (Direct Certification, Homeless, Migrant, Foster, Head Start, Runaway)

Meal Counting and Claiming:

- Point of Service System, Daily Record/Accuclaim Edit Check, Reimbursement Claims
- Meals claimed for reimbursement are served only to children eligible for free, reduced price, and paid lunches
- Meals are counted, recorded, consolidated, and reported through a system which consistently yields correct claims

Performance Standard Two (PS-2) – areas that are reviewed to determine that meals served to students are prepared, offered, and served according to the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements for the appropriate age/grade groups.

Meal and Quantities Components:

- Lunches claimed for reimbursement by the district contain food items/components as required by program regulations
- Completed and accurate Food Production Records, Child Nutrition (CN) Labels/Product Analysis
- Age/grade groups, meeting minimum portions
- Offer versus Serve

Dietary Specifications:

- Meeting Minimum requirements for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium
- Nutrient Analysis

General Areas of Review

- Implementation of Free and Reduced Price Policy Statement
- Public Announcement
- Overt Identification
- Onsite Monitoring Responsibilities
- Proper Postings and Non-Discrimination Statements on Program Materials
- Complaint Policy
- Reporting and Record Keeping
- Local School Wellness Policy
- Food Safety/Health Inspections
- Civil Rights
- Equipment Grants/Direct Certification (DC) Grant
- Competitive Food (Smart Snacks)
- Professional Standards
- Water
- School Breakfast Program (SBP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Resource Management

A *Resource Management Tool* assesses potential risks for the Resource Management portion of the Administrative Review. The tool must be completed and submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to the On-site Review. If risk is identified, a Comprehensive Resource Management review will be conducted.

- Maintenance of the nonprofit School Food Service Account
- Paid Lunch Equity
- Revenue from Nonprogram Foods
- Indirect Costs (IDC)

Other Federal Programs (Critical and General Areas)

- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- After School Snack Program (ASSP)
- Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)
- At Risk Child and Adult Care Food Program (At Risk CACFP)

**Please note: Not all areas will apply to all Contracting Entities.*

Review Timeline

Even though TDA has the discretion to review any CE at any given time, TDA will implement the following schedule in setting up administrative reviews in most cases:

Review Timeline Chart	
<i>June, SY Prior to Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA selects CEs for AR for the following SY.
<i>July, SY of Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA notifies CEs selected for AR. - TDA notifies the CEs to be reviewed of the date of the review. - TDA begins offsite review process.
<i>8 to 12 weeks prior to onsite review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA begins the offsite review process which includes an initial call and ongoing communication with the offsite monitor. - CE provides requested documentation. - CE completes web-based assessments in TX-UNPS. - TDA provides technical assistance as appropriate.
<i>2 to 4 weeks prior to the review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA reviews documentation that is submitted. - TDA reviews information submitted in web-based questionnaires in TX-UNPS. - TDA calls the CE to establish the onsite process and to request any additional documentation. - CE provides month of review benefit issuance list and list of verified students.² - CE provides applications for the selected sample.³ - CE provides meal counts for month of review. - CE provides the completed Accuclaim/Daily Record for month of review. - CE provides requested week of food production records, menus, and menu worksheets. - TDA works with CE to establish onsite schedule. - TDA provides technical assistance as appropriate.
<i>Day of review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA conducts onsite review. - TDA requests documentation as appropriate. - TDA provides technical assistance as appropriate.
<i>Final day of review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA holds exit review conference. - TDA provides a summary of AR results. - TDA provides technical assistance as appropriate.
<i>4 to 6 weeks after review if there is a CAD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA sends CE request for CAD. - ESC provides technical assistance if appropriate. - CE completes and submits the CAD (and second CAD if appropriate).
<i>Summer after onsite AR</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDA conducts onsite summer program AR if appropriate.⁴

² If the AR is conducted early in the school year, the CE may be asked to provide verification documentation from the previous school year.

³ While the CE's submission of applications for the selected sample is listed as action during the 2 to 4 weeks prior to the review, TDA may move this action to the 8 to 12 weeks prior to the review if warranted.

⁴ TDA has the option to conduct an SSO review the summer before the onsite review.

Technology and Skills

Access to:

- Computer
- E-mail
- Internet (high speed internet for uploading documents)
- Scanner (dedicated scanner for uploading documents)
- TX-UNPS (user must have **SNP CE Admin** rights)

Knowledge of:

- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Word

Resources

- Additional information pertaining to the Administrative Review can be found in the *Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 23: Administrative Review*, which is available at SquareMeals.org/Publications/Handbooks.
- The TDA NSLP compliance page on the Administrative Review can be found at <http://www.squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram/NationalSchoolLunchProgramCompliance.aspx>
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) publishes its *Administrative Review Guidance Manual*, administrative review categories and questions, and fiscal action worksheets which are available on the USDA website at www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/administrative-review-manual-forms-and-tools

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Off-site Review Summary

Eight to twelve weeks prior to the onsite review, TDA will begin to guide the CE through a series of actions that include submitting documentation to TDA and completing web-based assessments. CEs will also be expected to provide information or complete actions for the offsite process in a specified timeframe as described in AR notifications and phone calls with TDA staff members assigned to the CE's AR.

- Tasks are completed in the TX-UNPS Compliance Module.
- Assessments provide information to TDA on the CE's processes, operational procedures, internal controls, and day to day tasks. Some questions require supporting documentation.
- AR Specialist will communicate with the CE regarding due dates and required information.

Procedures and Processes

The CE will be asked to submit (through TX-UNPS) detailed information regarding procedures and processes on the following topics:

- A la carte
- Accommodating students with special dietary needs
- Adult, visitor, and non-student meals
- Backup system for counting and claiming (if electronic)
- Charge policy
- Field trips
- How often cashiers are trained on meal counting and claiming system and backup systems
- Incomplete or non-reimbursable meals
- Internal control measures to ensure meal counts do not exceed enrollment
- Local Wellness Policy
- Lost, stolen, misused, forgotten – tickets, tokens, pins
- New students without an approved free or reduced price meal application
- Offer versus Serve
- Procedure for consolidating meal counts by category for each site
- Procedure for extending free meal eligibility to students who are members of household when one student receives DC benefits
- Procedure for handling Civil Rights complaints
- Second meals
- Student worker meals
- Training for civil rights
- Training to meet Professional Standards requirements
- Verification process
- Visiting student meals
- When and how on-site monitoring is conducted

Off-site Review Assessments

Consists of a series of questions (see numbers below), tools, and information requests with regards to several monitoring areas of the Administrative Review. Assessments are to be completed off-site through the Compliance Module in TX-UNPS, prior to the on-site portion of the review. Some information may be requested from the AR Specialist by e-mail.

Series Number	Monitoring Area	# Questions and/or Action
Meal Access and Reimbursement (Critical Area – Performance Standard 1)		
100	Certification and Benefit Issuance	22 Uploads
200	Verification	5 Uploads
300	Meal Counting and Claiming	12 Uploads
Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality (Critical Area – Performance Standard 2)		
400	Meal Components and Quantities	Uploads
600	Dietary Specifications	Submission
Resource Management (General Area)		
700	Resource Management	Uploads
General Program Compliance (General Areas)		
800	Civil Rights	8 Uploads
900	SFA On-site Monitoring	1
1000	Local School Wellness Policy	7 Uploads
1100	Smart Snacks	4
1200	Professional Standards	10
1600	School Breakfast and SFSP Outreach	2
Other Federal Program Reviews (Critical and General Areas)		
	Afterschool Snacks	Uploads
	At-Risk Snack and Supper Program	Uploads
	Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP)	
2100	Special Provision Option (CEP)	6 Uploads

100 SERIES – Certification and Benefit Issuance

(Off-site Assessment consists of 22 questions)

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- Application Sample Letters
 - Letter of Predetermined Eligibility
 - Letter to Household
 - Letter to Household of Approval/Denial of Benefits
 - Benefit Issuance Documents
 - List of all Free/Reduced Students CE wide from the 1st operating day of the month of review (excel format, template provided by the AR Specialist)
 - List of all Denied students with an application on file
 - Applications and Categorically Eligible Lists (Direct Certification, Homeless, Migrant, Pre-K, Head Start, Foster) of students chosen by the AR Specialist
 - Denied Applications of students chosen by the AR Specialist
-

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

Benefit Issuance: The link in the accountability system between the eligibility determination and the benefit delivery.

Benefit Issuance Document: Also known as roster or master list. The benefit issuance document must:

- Contain the name and benefit status for all free and reduced-price eligible students in the CE.
- Be generated from the point of service system used in each of the schools. For schools that use different points of service at breakfast and lunch, it is NOT necessary to send duplicative lists (from both meal services). Point-of-service benefit issuance documents are those documents directly used in the meal count system to deliver the benefits to children (e.g., rosters, master lists).
- Not have duplicate names on the list — each eligible student should only be listed one time.

Determining Official (*also known as **Reviewing Official***): Person who reviews all household applications, direct certification lists, and other documentation for categorical eligibility in order to make decisions related to eligibility. Cannot be the same person as the Confirming or Hearing Official.

Direct Certification: The electronic match process under which CEs certify children who are members of households receiving assistance under the Assistance programs (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid Free, Medicaid Reduced) as eligible for free or reduced school

meals without further application, based on information provided by the state/local agency administering those programs.

Electronic application system: Household applications are submitted by the household through a web-based or scanned application system. The system has limited to virtually no manual data entry by the CE. Records are kept at the CE electronically. All direct certification matches at the CE level are completed with a computer match.

Electronic benefit issuance system: The transfer of a student's benefits to the Point of Service document is completed through a computerized system. The system has limited to virtually no manual data entry by the CE; however, updates to benefits may be made manually in electronic system. Benefit issuance identification and rosters are kept electronically.

FDPIR: Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

Independent Review of Applications: A second review of applications conducted by LEAs (local education agencies) that demonstrate high levels of, or a high risk for administrative error associated with certification and benefit issuance.

Manual application system: Household applications are submitted by the household to the SFA. SFA completes eligibility determination and direct certification matches and enters data manually into a system and/or keeps written records. Hard copy records are kept on file at the SFA.

Manual benefit issuance system: The transfer of a student's benefits to the POS document is completed manually by the SFA. All updates to benefits are made manually by the SFA. Benefit issuance identification and rosters are manually developed. Hard copy records are kept on file at the SFA.

Manual/Combination application system: If the SFA has implemented an electronic system, but one or more aspect of the application processing is conducted manually (i.e., applications are submitted online, and also on paper – SFA staff processes paper applications). This would include instances where SFA staff enters paper applications into the online electronic system for determinations.

Manual/Combination benefit issuance system: If the SFA has implemented an electronic system, but one or more aspect of the benefit issuance process is conducted manually (i.e. the SFA has an electronic benefit issuance system at most sites, but utilizes rosters/ tickets/ tokens or any other benefit issuance method at some sites and SFA staff must make manually make updates to those alternate systems).

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

• *Reminders* •

- Each year, at the beginning of school, information letters must be distributed to the households of children attending the school. This letter tells families which Child Nutrition Programs are available and notifies households that meals may be available free or at a reduced price. The information letter and instructions must be sent to households of all school children either before the beginning of the school year (***no sooner than July 1***) or very early in the school year so eligibility determinations can be made and free and reduced price benefits provided as soon as possible.
- The application materials and other communications with households concerning eligibility determinations must be in a language that parents and guardians can understand in order to diminish any language barriers to participation for Limited English Proficient (LEP) families. Where households need information in a language other than English, CEs must make reasonable efforts, considering the number of such households, to provide household letters and application forms to them in the appropriate languages. TDA provides prototype materials in both English and Spanish.
- TDA requires all CEs to perform a Direct Certification match at least once a month through the Texas ELMS system.
- CEs need to maintain the status “type” (ex. SNAP/TANF/Medicaid Free, Medicaid Reduced) in their system for annual verification data and the Administrative Review. CEs must keep documentation retrievable by site to ensure proper delivery of benefits and to allow substantiation of the number of children eligible for free meal benefits.
- Materials and other communication with households must include USDA’s current Non-Discrimination Statement.
- Carryover of previous year’s eligibility applies to direct certification, categorical eligibility determinations and income applications. Carryover is for up to 30 operating days (beginning with the first operating day of school) into the current school year or until a new eligibility determination is made, either approved or denied. The new eligibility determination supersedes the carryover eligibility.

- Students transferring from a CEP site to a non-CEP anytime during or between school years receive 30 operating day carryover or until eligibility is established through DC or an application.
- Applications must be reviewed in a timely manner. An eligibility determination must be made, the family notified of its status, and the status implemented within 10 operating days of the receipt of the application.
- When reviewing the number of household members on the application the total number the applicant wrote on the application must match the total child and adult names combined. Adult applicant may have forgotten to include a name, so the household should be contacted to confirm total members in the household before approving.
- Effective Date of Eligibility Options for Household Meal Applications and Categorical Eligibility:

Household Meal Applications

- CEs must select one of the following options:
 - All sites and all school nutrition programs assign the effective date for eligibility based on household applications as the date the completed application is **approved by the Reviewing Official**.
 - All sites and all school nutrition programs assign the effective date for eligibility based on household applications as the date the completed application is **recorded as received by the CE**.

Categorical Eligibility

- CEs must select one of the following options:
 - All sites and all school nutrition programs assign the effective date for eligibility based on participation in a categorical program without household application as the date the categorical program participation list is **reviewed and approved by the Reviewing Official**.
 - All sites and all school nutrition programs assign the effective date for eligibility based on participation in a categorical program without household application as the **date recorded** on the categorical program eligibility documentation, i.e., the date the originating agency or organization recorded as the date the information was in effect.
- Benefit Issuance Document (roster or master list) should be organized alphabetically by LAST NAME for all students in the CE (all sites).
- List of Identified Students from March of school year when Identified Student Percentage (ISP) was established (Year 0). - **CEP Only**

- Students enrolled in state-funded pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) programs will be directly certified categorically free for school year 2018-19. Free meals will be available to otherwise non-eligible prekindergarten students in a public prekindergarten program (whether locally funded or tuition-based), three-to-five-year-old students receiving Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) services, and three-to-five-year-old students enrolled but not in membership. A roster of enrolled Pre-K students should be maintained for documentation of eligibility.
-

• **Resources** •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 4: Determining Eligibility

Direct Certification Resources

www.squaremeals.org Click on the Texas ELMS logo on the home page

USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals

www.fns.usda.gov > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Guidance and Resources

TDA Prototype Forms

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Administration and Forms > School Meal Applications and Verification

200 Series – Verification

(Off-site Assessment consists of 5 questions)

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- “Alpha” list of verified students from most recent completed verification
 - Include names of students from all verified applications
- One set of sample Verification Letters sent to households
 - Letter to Households Selected for Verification of Eligibility
 - Verification Information for Free and Reduced-Price Meal Sheet
 - Notification of Verification Results
 - Notification Verification Continuation of Benefits
- Verification documentation for selected student names from verified student list
 - Application Verified
 - Notification letters
 - Verification Individual Household Report Form

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

Verification: Confirmation of eligibility for free and reduced price meals under the NSLP and SBP. Verification is only required when eligibility is determined through the application process, not through direct certification or Other Source Categorical Eligibility. Verification must include either confirmation of income eligibility or confirmation that the child or any member of the household is receiving assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Confirmation Official (Optional Designation, Required Action): Person who confirms that the initial determination made by the determining or reviewing official was accurate; cannot be the same persons as the determining or reviewing official that initially determined eligibility or the hearing official.

Confirmation Review: Process used to ensure that the initial eligibility determination was accurate for all applications selected for verification. After household selection and prior to notification of verification selection, a determining official, other than the official who made the initial eligibility determination, must review each approved application selected for verification to ensure that the initial determination was accurate.

Error-Prone Household Application: Application that includes an income amount within \$100 per month (\$1,200 per year) of the applicable Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG).

Follow-Up Official (Optional Designation, Required Action): Person who conducts follow-up with any household or agency that has not submitted requested or adequate information. May be the Confirming or Verification Official.

Hearing Official (Required): Person who ensures that all required provisions are followed correctly and makes a determination any time there is an appeal of decisions related to eligibility determinations. Cannot be the same person as the Determining, Reviewing, Confirming, or Verification Official and must attend annual civil rights training.

Verifying Official (Required for Verification): Person who verifies the eligibility of applicant households. May be the same person as Determining, Reviewing, Confirming or Follow-Up Official.

• **Reminders** •

- Annually, each CE must verify eligibility of children from a sample of household applications approved for free and reduced price meal benefits for that school year.
- Approved Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) sites are excluded from the verification process because applications are not processed for those sites.
- The verification process must begin on October 1 and end no later than November 15 each school year.
 - **October 1:** CEs must select a sample size based on a count of approved applications on October 1 or the next operating day and begin the verification process
 - **Last operating day in October:** CE must determine the total number of students enrolled by category for the current SY as of this date. A mid-October upload in Texas ELMS will be utilized to identify DC students for reporting.
 - **November 15:** CEs must complete verification activities, whether the date falls on a weekend or holiday. DC Medicaid Report due in TX-UNPS, SNP-135.
 - **February 1:** CEs must report verification results to TDA through TX-UNPS via the Verification Collection Report (FNS 742)
- A confirmation review may be waived if the CE has a technology-based system that demonstrates a high-degree of accuracy. A waiver request must be submitted to TDA to determine if your CE qualifies for this waiver.
- Review the School Food Authority (SFA) Verification Collection Report FNS 742 instructions under forms on www.squaremeals.org to ensure accurate data

collection from applications on October 1 and students on the last operating day of October.

- All CEs, including those operating CEP, must report SNAP data by February 1 each year as requested by TDA. CEs should utilize the mid-October DC list, extended eligible list and local certified lists to accurately count DC students as of October 31st.

• Resources •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 6: Verification

USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals

www.fns.usda.gov > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Guidance and Resources > Determining and Verifying Eligibility (under *Guidance and Handbooks*)

USDA School Food Authority (SFA) Verification Collection Report (FNS-742) sample
www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Administration & Forms > Search for "742" under Form Number

Verification Forms and Letters

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Administration & Forms > School Meal Applications and Verification

Verification Report Practice Templates

www.squaremeals.org > Texas ELMS Forms and Tools

Verification Sample Calculator

www.squaremeals.org > Texas ELMS Forms and Tools

300 Series – Meal Counting and Claiming

(Off-site Assessment consists of 12 questions)

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- Daily Record/Accuclaim Form
 - Daily Record/Accuclaim Form to correspond with meal count sample
 - Daily Record/Accuclaim Form for entire Month of Review
 - Meal Count Sample (transaction detail) by student name and category from the review period
 - AR Specialist will specify the sample for all selected sites
-

• **Definitions/Terminology** •

Accuclaim: A process developed to improve the accuracy and accountability of reimbursement claims. Proper implementation of the Accuclaim regulations, which include edit checks and onsite reviews, will ensure that the CE has an accurate system of counting and claiming and help to prevent the necessity for an upward adjustment for an underclaim or a downward adjustment for an overclaim.

Attendance Factor: Monthly average of students in attendance at the site divided by the highest daily total enrollment for the claim month. This number is compared to ADP to help identify possible errors in reporting.

Average Daily Participation (ADP): Monthly average of students participating in the meal program that were served a reimbursable meal by meal type (breakfast, lunch or snack) and category (free, reduced-price or paid). This number is compared to the attendance factor to help identify possible errors in reporting.

Daily Record/Accuclaim Form: Must be performed by the CE daily using the TDA prototype Daily Record/Accuclaim Form or a similar locally-developed form for each feeding location. This information allows the CE to compare the percentage of free and reduced-price meals claimed at each site to the number of students eligible to participate in the program at each site (edit check).

Electronic System: Meal counts are generated by an automated Point of Service (POS) system that may connect to the claim for reimbursement. Electronic systems have the ability to identify a student's benefit category, tally daily meal counts, transfer daily meal counts to the SFA, consolidate meal counts for the SFA and/or submit the claim for reimbursement. This system is limited to virtually no manual data entry at the POS. Meal counts are kept electronically.

Equal Access: A requirement that every student, no matter the eligibility, have equal access to reimbursable meals in a line that does not overtly identify the student's

eligibility status. If any line is not made available to all students, meals may not be claimed for reimbursement.

Manual/Combination System: If the SFA has an electronic system, but one or more aspect of the benefit issuance process is conducted manually (i.e., the SFA has an electronic POS, but utilizes a roster at an alternate service location and the SFA manually enters meal counts from the alternate service location), the reviewer will consider this a manual/combination system.

Manual System: Meal counts are generated by a manual Point of Service system. Meal counts are manually tallied, consolidated and transferred to the SFA. Consolidation of the meal counts by SFA is completed manually. Hard copy records are kept on file.

Medium of Exchange: The way or method students pay for meals during meal service - the medium of exchange must also ensure that there is no overt identification of a student's eligibility status.

Overt Identification: Any action the CE takes that may result in a student being recognized as eligible to receive or certified for free or reduced-price meals including at the point of service.

Point of Service: The point in a food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible student.

Reimbursable Meal: A meal that offers all the required meal pattern food items in the required serving sizes for the student's age/grade group.

• **Reminders** •

- If an electronic system is used, the CE must have a manual back-up counting system in place in case of mechanical failure.
- All cashiers and substitute cashiers are to be trained on the meal counting and claiming process and procedures, including the back-up system.
- CEs should establish meal counting and claiming policies and procedures for the following situations (as applicable): offer versus serve, incomplete/non-reimbursable meals, second meals, visiting student meals, adult and non-student meals, student worker meals, a la carte, field trips, charged and/or pre-billed/prepaid meals, students without funds to pay for meals, and new students without approved certification of free or reduced-price benefits.

- CEs should establish procedures to address the handling of lost, stolen, misused, forgotten or destroyed free, reduced-price, or paid meal tickets, tokens, IDs and PINS.
- Review the current *Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, Attachment B: Meal Count/Collection Procedure(s)* to ensure that no changes need to be made prior to your review. This document should be submitted through the web-based form in TX-UNPS under Applications > Attachment B. Refer to *SNP-131, Attachment B, Web-based Directions* under Download Forms in TX-UNPS for additional instructions.
- Counting and claiming procedures for alternate points of service should be outlined in the CE's *Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, Attachment B: Meal Count/Collection Procedure(s)*.
- CEs should establish procedures to address visiting students that are claimed at either the serving site or the enrolled site (home).

• Resources •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 7: Counting and Claiming

Policy Statement for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, Attachment B: Meal Count/Collection Procedure(s)

TX-UNPS > Download Forms > SNP-131 Attachment B, Web-based Directions

TX-UNPS > Applications > Attachment B

Daily Record/Accuclaim Form

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Administration and Forms > Search "Daily Record" under Form Name

400 Series – Meal Components and Quantities

No off-site assessment questions.

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

Uploaded during offsite review:

- Menu(s) for day of review (for each site selected)
- Planned Food Production Records for week of onsite review (for each site selected by meal service)
- Menu(s) and Completed Food Production Records for a selected week (5-7 days) during the month of review (for each site selected by meal service)
- ***Available during onsite review:***
Product documentation: CN labels, manufacturer certified product formulation statements, recipes, nutritional information, etc.

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

Food Production Record: A required document that requires specific information to document menu planning, production and service. All reimbursable meals planned, prepared and served daily must be documented on a food production record.

Food Component (Breakfast): One of the three food groups that make up a reimbursable breakfast. These are: fruits (or vegetables as substitute); grains (with optional meat/meat alternate); and fluid milk. Schools must always offer all three food components in at least the minimum daily required quantities.

Food Component (Lunch): One of the five food groups that make up a reimbursable lunch. These are meats/meat alternates; grains; fruits; vegetables; and fluid milk. Schools must always offer all five food components prior to the point of service (POS) in at least the minimum required quantities.

Food Items: A specific food offered that contains one or more of the food components.

Point of Service: The point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced or paid price meal has been served to an eligible student.

Product Documentation: Documentation that supports that the meals served met the meal pattern requirements (e.g., CN labels, manufacturer certified product information statements, etc.) (Reviewed onsite)

Reimbursable Meal: A meal that offers all the required meal pattern food items in the required serving size for the student's age/grade group.

• Reminders •

- Meals served must meet the minimum daily and weekly meal pattern requirements for the appropriate age/grade groups.
- Review planned menu and compare to food production records to ensure meal pattern was met.
- The CE's menu planner determines whether or not duplicate items are allowable.
- CEs that regularly and consistently serve lunch more than five days per week must increase the weekly component quantities by 20 percent for each additional day.
- CEs with occasional decreases in the week length because of holidays, early release, etc, do not have to adjust the planned menus.
- CEs with enrolled pre-kindergarten students must follow the pre-K meal pattern for breakfast and lunch menu planning.
 - CEs that are serving meals to pre-K students in the same service area at the same time as older age/grade groups, may serve the pre-K students the same meal pattern as the kindergarten students at the meal service. The flexibility to use comingle is based on the CE's ability to identify the age/grade groups of the students and the amount of time to serve the meals.
 - The presence of pre-K students in the dining area at the same time as older students does not mean that the meal service is comingled.

• Resources •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 8: Breakfast

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 9: Lunch

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 11: Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Meal Pattern For School Nutrition Program (SNP) Operators

Q&As on the Final Rule - Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (SP10-2012 (version 9 - Issued Aug. 3, 2015)

TDA Prototype Daily Food Production Record for Food-Based – Central Kitchen, Receiving Kitchen, and On-site Production
www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Search for “Food Production” under Form Name

TDA Food-Based Menu Portion Planning Template
www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Search for “Template” under Form Name
USDA Menu Certification Worksheets
www.fns.usda.gov > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Guidance and Resources > Certification of Compliance with New Meal Patterns (under *Websites*)

600 Series – Dietary Specifications and Nutrient Analysis

The following document will be submitted to the AR Specialist:

- *Dietary Specifications Summary Form* (completed by the CE for the site designated with the highest Meal Compliance Risk Assessment score)
-

• *Definitions/Terminology* •

Dietary Specifications: Targeted standards for calories, sodium, saturated and trans fat that must be met for each age/grade group. If the average daily amount for the nutrient standard falls within the range for the dietary specification, the CE has met the requirements for that dietary specification.

Dietary Specifications Summary Form: Assesses lunch and breakfast food service practices to determine the risk for violations related to calories, saturated fat, sodium, and *trans* fat. Completed by the menu planner during the off-site assessment.

Meal Compliance Risk Assessment Tool: Assesses error-prone areas and scores the reviewed site's risk for nutrition-related violations. Completed by the CE during the off-site assessment.

Nutrient Analysis: A menu analysis to ensure compliance with the meal pattern requirements and dietary standards.

• *Reminders* •

- If more than one site is selected for review, the *Meal Compliance Risk Assessment Tool* will need to be completed for each site identified when the off-site assessments are released in TX-UNPS (found under the Site Forms for each school).
 - The *Dietary Specifications Summary* form will be completed for the school site with the highest Meal Compliance Risk Assessment score.
 - If only one site is selected for review, the *Meal Compliance Risk Assessment Tool* is **not required**, and the *Dietary Specifications Summary* form is submitted for the selected site.
- Responses for the *Dietary Specifications Summary* form should be based on the Food Production Records submitted for the week selected from the month of review.

- Personnel familiar with meal preparation methods, products used on the menu, standardized recipes, etc. (e.g. Menu Planner, Kitchen Manager, etc.) should be available to complete the *Dietary Specifications Summary* form.
 - USDA's Certification Worksheets may be used to assist with menu planning and to verify that meals planned meet meal pattern requirements.
 - A targeted menu review is required for the site with the highest risk score based on the results of the *Meal Compliance Risk Assessment Tool*.
 - If the school selected for a targeted menu review is low-risk based on the responses to the off-site portion of the *Dietary Specifications Summary* form, then TDA must verify compliance during the on-site review; and a nutrient analysis **may not** be required.
 - If the targeted menu review school is high-risk based on the responses to the off-site portion of the Dietary Specifications Summary form, then **TDA must complete** a nutrient analysis for both breakfast and lunch (if applicable).
 - CEs are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis to ensure that they are meeting the nutrient standards. The CE may choose to do so, but the AR Review Specialist will **not review** the CE's nutrient analysis.
-

• Resources •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 9: Lunch

USDA Menu Certification Worksheets

www.fns.usda.gov > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Guidance and Resources > Certification of Compliance with New Meal Patterns (under *Websites*)

700 Series – Resource Management

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- Resource Management Summary (sent via e-mail)
 - Chart of Accounts
 - Detailed General Ledger showing total revenues and expenditures for the nonprofit school food service account
 - Adult Meal Price Calculation Method
 - Approved plan to use excess funds or corrective action plan if on file
-

• *Definitions/Terminology* •

Average Monthly Operating Expenses: Prior year's expenses divided by the number of months in operation in the prior year.

Excessive Fund Balance: A fund balance that exceeds three months of operating expenses. For NSLP and SBP an excessive fund balance refers to net cash resources.

General Ledger: The Central Accounting record of a company or organization, showing individual transactions using double-entry bookkeeping.

Indirect Costs: Incurred for the benefit of multiple programs, functions, or other cost objectives, and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular program or other cost objective. Typically support administrative overhead functions, such as fringe benefits, accounting, payroll, purchasing, facilities management, and utilities. Charges are based on two factors: (1) the indirect cost rate established for a specific fiscal year, and the corresponding direct cost base and (2) a documented methodology that accurately allocated indirect costs.

Non-Program Food Revenue Tool: USDA provided tool to assist CEs to ensure that *revenues from the sale of non-program foods* generate at least the same proportion of total school food service account revenues that *expenditures from the purchase of non-program foods* contribute to the total school food service account food costs.

Number of Months in Operation Prior Year: Includes any month when the CE was operating any meal program, including summer feeding programs.

Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool: USDA provided tool to assist CEs to ensure sufficient funds are provided to the non-profit school food service account for meals served to students not eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Resource Management: General Area of Review that includes maintenance of the nonprofit school food service account, paid lunch equity, revenue from non-program foods, indirect costs, and USDA foods.

USDA Foods: Domestically grown foods from farms across the United States that are procured by the USDA and then donated to CEs for their use in food service operations.

• **Reminders** •

- The operating fund balance or net cash resources of the SNP account must not exceed three month's average expenditures at any time. If an excessive balance occurs, the CE must immediately take steps to reduce the balance or have an acceptable plan for using surplus revenues. CEs with an excess fund balance must submit a *Plan for Reducing Excessive Operating Food Service Fund Balance* to TDA.
- CEs are required to use USDA's *Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool* annually to determine if a paid lunch price increase is required.
- CEs are required to use the USDA's *Non-Program Food Revenue Tool* or TDA's *Program/Non Program Cost and Revenue Proportion Calculation Worksheet* annually to calculate its non-program food costs and non-program food revenue. If the non-program revenue percentage is less than the non-program food cost percentage, the CE must take action to eliminate the disproportion.
- Adult meal prices must, at a minimum, be greater than the amount of total reimbursement received for a free meal **plus** any other supplemental payments received by the CE **plus** per-meal value of USDA Foods (Commodities) used for meal service.
- CEs must develop and implement a CE-level meal charge policy. The meal charge policy must be communicated in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households transferring to the school during the school year. While posting the policy online or sending it to families by email is helpful, it will not ensure the information reaches all households, particularly those households without access to a computer or the internet.
- Outstanding **bad debt**, resulting from nonpayment of school meals or milk that is determined to be **uncollectable**, is an unallowable cost to the nonprofit school food service account and cannot be absorbed by the SNP department at the end of the school year. It must be paid for with other non-federal sources.
- A Resource Management Comprehensive Review will result: (1) for any areas in which one or more risk indicators are assessed during the Administrative Review

(i.e., maintenance of the nonprofit school food service account, paid lunch equity, revenue from non-program foods, and indirect costs), (2) if the Resource Management Summary form is not submitted by the deadline.

- The *Resource Management Summary* must be uploaded in TX-UNPS **NO LATER** than four (4) weeks from the date of the On-site review. A Comprehensive Resource Management Review must be performed on-site if the *Resource Management Summary* is not received 4-weeks prior to the review.

• **Resources** •

Administrators Reference Manual, Section 14: Financial Information Concerning School Nutrition Funds

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 15: Meal Pricing

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 19: Other Operational Issues

TDA Program/Non Program Cost and Revenue Proportion Calculation Worksheet
www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > NSLP Administration & Forms > Below table

USDA Non Program Food Revenue Tool
www.fns.usda.gov > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Policy (search for "SP 39-2011) under Date 2011

USDA Paid Lunch Equity Tool
www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > NSLP Administration & Forms > Paid Lunch Equity

800 Series – Civil Rights

(Off-site Assessment consists of 8 questions)

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- Civil Rights Training Documentation
 - Demonstrate annual training (e.g. certificates, training sign-in sheets, meeting agenda, topics covered, etc.)
 - Must include Hearing Official, Homeless Liaison and any staff involved in determining eligibility and/or the verification process
- Discrimination Complaint Process Documentation
 - Written procedures on receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination
- Public (Media) Release
 - Documentation that demonstrates the CE issued a media release containing the letter to the household, eligibility criteria, the household application form, and full Income Eligibility Guidelines chart

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

Limited English Proficient (LEP): An individual or household that does not speak English as their primary language and has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

• ***Reminders*** •

- The current non-discrimination statement must be provided on appropriate forms of communication and printed program materials.
- Both hand written or verbal discrimination complaints are accepted and should be documented and forwarded to the Texas Department of Agriculture.
- CE should establish a process that demonstrates how students with special dietary needs are accommodated (even if the CE does not currently have any students with special dietary needs).
- For public schools, race and ethnicity data is collected and reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) annually. Private schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) are responsible for collecting race and ethnicity data.

- The USDA “And Justice for All” poster must be displayed in a prominent location, in public view by participants without obstruction in each feeding site. One poster is sufficient per site.
 - Posters may be ordered from TDA via Download Forms in TX-UNPS
- Civil Rights training documentation should include date, topic/resources, and the participants’ names and signatures of all personnel who interact with program applicants and participants. (e.g. hearing official, homeless liaison, teachers responsible for checking student names off rosters, etc.) or training certificates for in-class or online training.
- Materials and other communications with households must be in a language that parents and guardians can understand in order to diminish any language barriers to participation for Limited English Proficient (LEP) families. Where households need information in a language other than English, CEs must make reasonable efforts, considering the number of such households, to provide communications in the appropriate languages. TDA provides prototype material in both English and Spanish.

• Resources •

Administrator’s Reference Manual, Section 13: Accommodating Students with Medical Disabilities and Special Dietary Needs

Administrator’s Reference Manual, Section 19: Other Operational Issues

TDA Civil Rights Training Materials

www.squaremeals.org > F&N Resources > Training > Online Education & Self Training > Civil Rights Courses (English and Spanish)

TDA Media Release Prototypes

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Administration and Forms > Search for “Media” under Form Name

USDA Food and Nutrition Service “And Justice for All” Poster

www.fns.squaremeals.org > TX-UNPS > Applications > Download Forms > SNP 125

900 Series – On-site Monitoring

(Off-site Assessment consists of 1 question)

• *Definitions/Terminology* •

On-site Monitoring Form: This form is intended to serve as review or self-assessment in preparation for an onsite Administrative Review (AR) and to ensure that CEs are correctly operating their counting and claiming systems. Staff may find conducting a self-assessment every other month will support preparation for an onsite review and promote effective management.

• *Reminders* •

- On-site Monitoring Forms are intended to assist child nutrition personnel in monitoring their program activities. Monitoring reviews should be conducted by the School Nutrition Program (SNP) director or his/her designee in the frequency identified below:
 - Afterschool Care Program (ASCP); must be completed for all sites participating in ASCP
 - First time, within first 4 weeks of snack service each school year
 - Second time, before the end of the school year
 - Community Eligibility Provision (CEP); must be completed for all sites within a CE with more than one feeding site
 - Prior to February 1 each year
 - National School Lunch Program (NSLP); must be completed for ***lunch meal service*** for all sites within a CE with more than one feeding site
 - Prior to February 1 each year
 - School Breakfast Program (SBP); must be completed for ***breakfast meal service*** for ***fifty percent*** of the sites operating SBP each year. Every site is reviewed every other year.
 - Prior to February 1 each year
 - Seamless Summer Option (SSO); must be conducted for all sites within a CE participating in SSO
 - At least once during SSO operation
 - Should be conducted by the SSO site manager or his/her designee
 - To be in compliance, all responses should be ***yes***

• **Resources** •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 7: Counting and Claiming

TDA Prototype On-site Monitoring Forms

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Search for "On-site" under Form Name

1000 Series – Local School Wellness Policy

(Off-site Assessment consists of 7 questions)

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- Current Local School Wellness Policy (board approved)
 - Assessment of Local Wellness Plan
 - Documentation that demonstrates how the assessment was conducted and made available to the public
 - Documentation that demonstrates the method used for soliciting participation from permitted stakeholders in the development, review, update, and implementation of the policy
-

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

School campus: All areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day. (Not applicable to faculty areas in which students do not have access.)

School day: The period from the midnight before, to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC): A group of individuals, representative of segments of the community, generally appointed by the school district to serve at the district level who collectively provide advice on coordinated school health programming and its impact on student health and learning.

Stakeholders: Individuals that must be permitted to contribute to the development, implementation, periodic review, and update of the Local School Wellness Policy including school board members, parents, students, nurses, PE teachers, community members, child nutrition representatives and school administrators.

• ***Reminders*** •

- Every CE must establish and follow a local wellness policy (LWP). The LWP must focus on nutrition education and promotion, physical activity, and school-based activities to promote student wellness.

- The LWP has two aspects:
 - Written formal policy or procedure
 - Written implementation plan
 - The wellness policy must declare who develops, implements, and review/updates the policy/plan and what the wellness plan will address.
 - Local wellness policies must include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness, as well as nutrition guidelines to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity for all foods available on each school campus. The HHFK Act requires that local wellness policies include goals for nutrition promotion.
 - LEAs are required to designate one or more LEA or school officials to ensure that each school complies with the local school wellness policy.
 - SHAC meeting agendas may be used as documentation to demonstrate assessment of a CE's local wellness policy.
 - Revised policies must include standards for other, non-sold foods and beverages made available on the school campus during the school day.
 - Final rule clarifies that in-school marketing of food and beverage items must meet competitive foods standards.
 - LEAs must notify the public annually about the content of the LWP and any updates to the policy.
 - LEAs must assess compliance and make assessment available to the public at least once every 3 years with the first assessment available.
 - A local wellness policy template that will comply with the final rule is available and provided by TASB (Texas Association of School Boards).
-

• **Resources** •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 19: Other Operational Issues

USDA Local School Wellness Policy

www.fns.usda.gov > Team Nutrition > Local School Wellness Policy

1100 Series – Smart Snacks

(Off-site Assessment consists of 4 questions)

- AR Specialist will observe on the DOR and will review Smart Snacks' a la carte, fundraising, and nutrient fact documentation on-site.

• *Definitions/Terminology* •

Combination food: Products that contain two or more components representing two or more of the recommended food groups: fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein, or grains.

Competitive food: All food and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day that compete with the school's operation of the NSLP and/or SBP, other than those meals reimbursable under programs authorized by the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act.

Fundraiser: An event that includes any activity during which currency/tokens/tickets, etc. are exchanged for the sale/purchase of a product (food or nonfood) in support of the school or school-related activities. There are no restrictions on the number of fundraisers that include the sale of food and beverage items that meet the Smart Snacks standards as well as the sale of non-food items.

Exempt Fundraiser: An event that includes the sale of food and beverage items that do not meet the regulatory requirements of the Smart Snack standards based on the frequency established by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Each campus may have up to six exempt fundraising days per year. Food and beverage items sold for exempt fundraisers cannot be sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during the school meal service.

School campus: All areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day. (Not applicable to faculty areas in which students do not have access.)

School day: The period from the midnight before the beginning of the official instructional day, to 30 minutes after the end of the official instructional day.

Smart Snacks: Another term used in reference to the Competitive Food Nutrition Standards for foods ***sold*** during the school day on the school campus that are not part of the reimbursable meal.

● **Reminders** ●

- Smart Snack Standards apply only to food and/or beverages **sold** during the school day on the school campus.
- Competitive foods includes, but is not limited to, food and/or beverages sold in a meal service line, in vending machines, in school stores, or as part of fundraisers.
- Smart Snacks standards **do not apply** to food sold during non-school hours, weekends, and off-campus fundraising events such as frozen pizza sales or concessions during after-school sporting events, school plays or concerts.
- Any entrée item offered as part of the lunch program or the breakfast program is exempt from all competitive food standards if it is sold as a competitive food on the day of service or the day after service in the lunch or breakfast program.
 - An exempt entrée item must be in the same serving size or smaller than the entrée item offered in the NSLP or SBP reimbursable meal.
- Side items, snack foods, beverages and any entrées not served as part of a reimbursable meal will need to comply with the nutrition standards, including calorie, fat, sugar and sodium limits, in order to be sold to students in school.
- Use of accompaniments is limited when competitive food is sold to students in school. The accompaniment must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the food item served and meet all standards.
- Products that contain two or more components representing two or more of the recommended food groups (fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein, or grains) and packaged together are considered to be a combination food. The items must be sold together as one unit and must meet the criteria for a combination food.
- The CE must keep complete and accurate documentation or records for all competitive beverages and foods sold.
- Texas public, charter and private schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program may sell any foods and beverages that do not meet nutritional standards outlined in 7 CFR Parts 210 and 220 as part of a fundraiser, during the school day, for up to six days per school year on each school campus, provided that no specially exempted fundraiser foods or beverages may be sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during the meal service (exempted fundraisers).

- CEs should establish local food sale policies to include the selling of non-food items in combination with food items.
 - Food provided by parents or guardians is considered to be food given to students and is not subject to the Competitive Food Nutrition Standards.
 - CEs may establish local policies that are more stringent than requirements set by USDA or TDA related to the food environment at schools per their Local Wellness Policy.
-

• **Resources** •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 20: Competitive Food Nutrition Standards

Smart Snacks Product Calculator (Alliance for a Healthier Generation):

www.fns.usda.gov > Healthier School Day (under *Initiatives*) > Tools for Schools > Smart Snacks > Resource Materials > Smart Snacks Calculator

USDA Smart Snacks in Schools

www.fns.usda.gov > Healthier School Day (under *Initiatives*) > Tools for Schools > Smart Snacks > Resource Materials/Policy Guidance/Smart Snacks History

1200 Series – Professional Standards

(Off-site Assessment consists of 10 questions)

AR Specialist will observe on-site.

• *Definitions/Terminology* •

Minimum Hiring Standards: New Child Nutrition Directors (hired after July 1, 2015) are subject to minimum education standards (based on Contracting Entity (CE) size) and minimum prior training standards.

Minimum Training Standards: Annual continuing education/training standards apply to all employees. The number of training hours vary for four staffing levels:

Training Standards for All School Nutrition Program Employees (All Local Educational Agency Sizes)

All Directors	For School Year 2015-2016 ONLY: at least 8 hours of annual continuing education/training. Beginning school year 2016-2017: at least 12 hours of annual continuing education/training. This required continuing education/training is in addition to the food safety training required in the first year of employment.
All Managers	For School Year 2015-2016 ONLY: at least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training. Beginning school year 2016-2017: at least 10 hours of annual continuing education/training.
All Other Staff Other than the Director or Manager who works an average of at least 20 hours per week	For School Year 2015-2016 ONLY: at least 4 hours of annual continuing education/training. Beginning school year 2016-2017: at least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training.
Part-Time Staff Work <20 hours per week	Each year, at least 4 hours of annual continuing education/training, regardless of the number of part-time hours worked. Note: If hired January 1 or later, an employee must only complete half of the above required training hours.

Professional Standards: As a part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA), the USDA has established minimum education standards for new State and local school nutrition directors as well as annual training standards for all school nutrition professionals.

• *Reminders* •

- CEs must maintain records demonstrating the following:
 - The program director meets the hiring standards
 - If the program director's length of employment covers a period of time that is longer than the required records retention standard, the CE must keep those records for as long as the employee is on staff

- plus the required number of years. This documentation must also include records indicating the CE's total student enrollment.
- The program director has met the requirements for food safety training within the last five years
 - CEs need to ensure that records related to food safety training are kept for the full five years even if other records retention periods expire.
 - All employees have completed the continuing education/training hours each school year
 - CEs must retain records that demonstrate the following:
 - Learning content
 - Actual time participating in learning activities
 - Attendance
-
- Allowable training should focus on the day-to-day management and operation of the school nutrition programs.
 - Training must be job-specific and intended to help employees perform their duties well.
 - Documentation includes, but is not limited to, attendance sign in sheets, continuing education/ training agendas, certificates of attendance, and other training documents.
 - TDA has created a Continuing Education/Training Tracking Record. This form demonstrates what information must be retained by the CE.
 - An additional resource to track training has been developed by USDA FNS. A downloadable tool is available for tracking the training individuals have completed at the CE level.

• Resources •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 25: Professional Standards
TDA Professional Standards

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > Professional Standards

USDA Professional Standards and Training Tracker
www.fns.usda.gov > Child Nutrition Programs > National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
> Professional Standards

1600 Series – School Breakfast and Summer Food Service Program Outreach

(Off-site Assessment consists of 2 questions)

• *Definitions/Terminology* •

Outreach: Informing families about the availability and location of meals. Includes all methods used to promote and publicize meals available.

School Breakfast Program (SBP): Federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): Created to ensure that children in low-income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations, when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast.

• *Reminders* •

- CEs are required to reach out to families to notify them of the availability of breakfast prior to, or at the beginning of, the school year and multiple times throughout the school year (SBP).
 - CEs are required (even if a summer feeding program is not offered) to reach out to families before the end of the school year to notify them of the availability and location of free meals for students via the SFSP.
 - TDA sends outreach materials to be distributed to all students each spring. Materials are to be displayed and distributed immediately to inform students and families about how to find summer meal sites.
-

• *Resources* •

TDA Summer Feeding Programs
www.summerfood.org

USDA Summer Feeding Programs
www.summerfood.usda.gov

2100 Series - Special Provision Option (CEP)

(Off-site Assessment consists of 6 questions)

Only complete the 2100 series of questions if you operate a Community Eligibility Program (CEP) in any of your sites.

• **Definitions/Terminology** •

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): Provides an alternative to household applications for free and reduced price meals for economically disadvantaged students in local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools. Sites that elect this option agree to serve all students free lunches and breakfasts for four (4) successive school years and claim the meals based on a percentage of Identified Students multiplied by a USDA-defined multiplier factor.

Enrolled Student Number: Students who are enrolled in and attending schools participating in the special provision option who have access to at least one meal service daily. (NOTE: This includes half-day students who have access to either breakfast or lunch.)

Identified Student Number: Students certified for free meals through means other than individual household applications in the School Year prior to implementing the community eligibility provision. This includes both students who are directly certified and categorically eligible (including Homeless, Foster, Migrant, Head Start, Runaway and non-applicant students).

Identified Student Percentage (ISP): Percentage used for CEP that is determined by dividing the number of identified students by the number of enrolled students. (Number of Identified Students) ÷ (Number of Enrolled Students) = ISP

Multiplier Factor: The number that is multiplied by the ISP to calculate the CE's reimbursement rate. This factor adjusts the ISP for reduced-price meals that are not included in the ISP. (ISP) x (Multiplier Factor) = Percentage of Meals Served Reimbursed at the Free Rate

• Reminders •

- Ensure that non-federal funds are properly allocated to account for the difference of offering all meals to students at no cost.
- CE must be able to explain and provide documentation on how the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) was determined – *CEP only*.
- CEs choosing to implement *CEP* must offer both breakfast and lunch meals at no charge.
- For *CEP*, schools must retain the records used in the development of the ISP (Year 0) during the entire period the SPO is in effect, including all extensions. In addition, this documentation and all other documentation must be retained for 3 years after submission of the final Claim for Reimbursement for the last fiscal year of *CEP*.
 - Certification documentation may include direct certification lists, documentation for extension of eligibility, and lists from homeless/migrant liaisons and certification of Foster children.

• Resources •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 5: Special Provision Options

USDA Community Eligibility Provision

www.fns.usda.gov > Child Nutrition Programs > Community Eligibility Provision (under *Spotlights*)

On-site Review

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On-site Review Summary

Scope of the On-site Review

The On-site review process allows TDA staff to validate information collected during the off-site assessment, to observe school nutrition program operations at the selected sites, and evaluation of the CEs compliance with program requirements. The On-site review includes a formal entrance conference, observation of meal preparation and service, additional questions on specified topics, additional documentation review, and an exit conference.

CEs will answer questions and provide documentation on the following topics in the On-site review in addition to any requests related to validating information provided for the off-site assessment and documentation submissions:

- CE On-site monitoring
- Civil rights
- Competitive food services
- Food safety
- Offer versus serve
- Other federal programs (ASCP, FFVP, SSO, SMP, and At Risk CACFP)
- Reporting and recordkeeping
- Water

Entrance Conference

The A R Specialist will conduct an entrance conference with the relevant CE staff (CN Director, Superintendent and/or Business Manager) to discuss the results of the Off-site Assessment Tool and to explain what is covered during the On-site Review. The intent of the Entrance Conference is to establish the tone for the review. The Administrative Review Process is intended to provide technical assistance balanced with an assessment of program compliance.

Exit Conference

At the conclusion of the On-site portion of the Administrative Review, TDA will conduct an exit conference to discuss any program findings identified, the extent of the findings, and a preliminary assessment of the actions needed to correct the findings. TDA will also address appropriate deadlines for completion of corrective action.

On-site Review Procedures

The AR Specialist will validate information collected during the off-site assessment, observe school nutrition program operations at the selected sites, and evaluate the CEs compliance with program requirements. This may be done through staff interviews, documentation review, etc.

As part of the validation process, the AR Specialist may perform any of the tasks listed on the following pages.

Meal Access and Reimbursement

Meal Counting and Claiming - Site Level

- Interview and observe staff to determine if meal counting and claiming procedures are the same as those outlined on the CE's Attachment B
- Observe meal service at the POS to ensure counting and claiming is correct and yields an accurate count of reimbursable meals without overt identification
- Review the meal count documentation to ensure meal counts are correct
- Review meal counts for the month of review (MOR) to ensure meal counts do not exceed number of eligible students.

Meal Counting and Claiming - CE Level

- Review meal counts for the MOR to determine if meal counts from each school were consolidated correctly

Meal Pattern & Nutritional Quality

Meal Components and Quantities

- Observe meal service lines for breakfast and lunch and review menu documentation for DOR including meals served in alternate locations, menu substitutions, field trips, etc.
- Review planned menu(s) for the day and compare to what is offered
- Evaluate food production records for DOR and standardized recipes
- Review CN labels, manufacturer certified product information statements, food production records, etc.
- Observe meal preparation for breakfast and lunch to ensure standardized recipes are used and followed (i.e. ingredients are added in specified amounts as indicated in recipe, measurements are being taken, etc.)

- Identify whether all required meal components are available on every reimbursable line
- Observe that all required meal components are available on every line throughout the entire meal service
- Observe the point of service and determine if meals selected by students contain the required components and food quantities for the appropriate age/grade group
- Observe meal service for breakfast and lunch; areas of review will include, but are not limited to:
 - Adequate meal components and quantities offered
 - Milk variety
 - Fruit/Vegetable juice requirement
 - Vegetable subgroup and whole grain-rich requirements
 - Menu substitutions (if applicable on day of review)
 - Field trips (if applicable on day of review)

Offer versus Serve (OVS)

- Observe implementation of OVS to ensure compliance
- Observe if adequate signage is posted
- Observe food service staff can accurately recognize a reimbursable meal
- Validate the CE's OVS policy and information gathered through the off-site assessment
- Interview staff prior to meal service to assess if training on OVS has been conducted, staff understands what makes up a reimbursable meal, and staff can distinguish a la carte purchases from a reimbursable meal
- Observe that students understand how to select a reimbursable meal as they move through the service line

Dietary Specifications & Nutrient Analysis

- Select school to review as identified during Off-site Assessment
- Validate Dietary Specifications Assessment information on-site through observation of meal preparation and service
- Evaluate menus, food production records, standardized recipes, and other documentation to support meals offered
- Assess compliance with zero trans fat requirements by reviewing nutrient fact labels and packaging. CE should maintain documentation on whether trans fat is naturally occurring (meat or dairy).

Resource Management

Off-site Assessment Tool assigns risk indicators. If completed tool indicates risk, TDA will conduct a more comprehensive review either off-site or on-site, with the exception of allowable costs, which must be conducted on-site.

General Program Compliance

Adult Meal Prices

- Determine if adult meal prices meet requirements

Civil Rights

- Observe display of “And Justice for All” poster
- Verify non-discrimination statement used on pertinent material
- Observe meal service for non-discrimination

Food Safety

- Review HACCP plan
- Review two most recent food safety inspections
- Review temperature logs
- Review monitoring logs
- Observe meal preparation and service to determine if HACCP principles are followed
- Observe posted process charts

Local Wellness Policy

- Review supporting documentation as addressed in Off-site Assessment to ensure CE is in compliance with Local Wellness Policy requirements

SFA On-site Monitoring:

- Review the On-site Monitoring Forms completed for each site serving breakfast and lunch prior to February 1st of each school year when CE operates more than one feeding site

Signage

- Observe required signage for meal components is posted for breakfast and lunch

Smart Snacks

- Observe during meal service
- Interview staff
- Review supporting documentation for all foods and beverages sold

Water

- Observe breakfast and lunch to ensure free water is available during meal services

Other Federal Program Reviews

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At-Risk Supper Program	65-66
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	67-68
Seamless Summer Option	69-70

Afterschool Snacks

AR Specialist will observe on-site; no off-site assessment questions.

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- Completed Food Production Records for a minimum of 5 completed serving days at sites selected (AR Specialist will specify sample)
 - Month of Review Daily Record Meal counts
 - Detailed count sheet for selected day and site
 - On-Site Monitoring Form(s)
-

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

Area-Eligible Sites: The site is at a school or located within the attendance area of a school in which at least 50% of enrolled students are certified for free or reduced-price meals. Snacks are served free to all children, and reimbursed at the free rate.

Non Area-Eligible Sites: Snacks are served at free, reduced-price, and paid rates based on approved eligibility.

Manual System: Meal counts are generated by a manual Point of Service system. Meal counts are manually tallied, consolidated and transferred to the SFA. Consolidation of the meal counts by SFA is completed manually. Hard copy records are kept on file.

Educational and Enrichment Activities: Requirement for afterschool programs to provide students with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities (or expanded learning opportunities). Educational and enrichment activities include, but are not limited to, academic enrichment, arts and crafts, computer skills, homework assistance, life skills, music, tutoring, and sports activities.

[NOTE: Competitive sport team events cannot be designated as educational and enrichment activities; however, students involved in competitive sports programs may participate in afterschool meal programs as described in the Program Participants subsection in section 10 of the ARM.]

• Reminders •

- Review Site(s) application in TXUNPS to ensure no changes need to be made prior to your review.
- CE must maintain documentation for all sites classified as an area-eligible site.
- Snacks must be served **AFTER** the end of the instructional school day.
- ASCP snack service must operate for at least 1 hour. The program (education and enrichment activities and meal service) must operate for at least one hour.
- Two hours must elapse between the start of CACFP At-Risk supper service and an ASCP snack service or vice versa.
- Only one snack may be claimed per child per day for reimbursement.
- Offer versus serve is not allowed for the Afterschool Care Program (ASCP) snacks.
- Snacks must be consumed on site.
- CEs are required to conduct onsite monitoring of each participating site using the Afterschool Care Program (ASCP) Onsite Monitoring form and process.
 - First monitoring must occur within first 4 weeks of snack service each school year and
 - Second monitoring must occur before the end of the school year
 - Monitoring review should be completed by child nutrition staff
 - On site monitoring review records must be maintained and made available at the request of the AR Specialist

• Resources •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 10: Afterschool Meal Programs

Afterschool Care Program (ASCP) Onsite Monitoring Form

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > National School Lunch Program > NSLP Administration & Forms > search "Monitoring" under Form Name

At Risk Supper - Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)

(AR Specialist will observe on-site; no off-site questions)

The following documents should be available for upload in TX-UNPS:

- Completed Food Production Records for a minimum of 5 completed serving days at sites selected (AR Specialist will specify sample)
- Have CN labels or Product Analysis available
- Month of Review Daily Record Meal counts
- Physical count sheets, if done manually
- On-Site Monitoring Form(s)
- Documentation of required training for program staff

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

Area-Eligible Sites: The site is at a school or located within the attendance area of a school in which at least 50% of enrolled students are certified for free or reduced-price meals. Dinners are served free to all children, and reimbursed at the free rate.

Congregate Feeding: Meals served in the CACFP are intended to be consumed in settings where organized groups of children are gathered to eat; therefore meals must be consumed on-site in order for the meal to be reimbursable.

Educational and Enrichment Activities: Requirement for afterschool programs to provide students with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities (or expanded learning opportunities). Educational and enrichment activities include, but are not limited to, academic enrichment, arts and crafts, computer skills, homework assistance, life skills, music, tutoring, and sports activities. (NOTE: Competitive sport team events cannot be designated as educational enrichment activities; however, students involved in competitive sports programs may participate in afterschool meal programs as described in the Program Participants subsection in Section 10 of the ARM.)

• Reminders •

- Review site(s) application in TXUNPS to ensure no changes need to be made prior to your review.
- Be prepared to show how the CE ensures that no staff member participating in the program has been deemed ineligible by the Disqualification Lists.
- Be prepared to demonstrate the education/enrichment activities that were used to qualify the program.
- Snacks or meals must begin after the end of the identified regular school day.
- CACFP supper service must last no more than two hours.
- Two hours must elapse between the start of supper service and an ASCP or CACFP At Risk snack service or vice versa.
- Potable water must be available for supper service.
- While the congregate feeding requirement must be met, a single vegetable, fruit, or grain item of a supper can be taken off site for the student to consume later.
- Supper must be “open to all” children who meet CACFP age requirements (through age 18 years (19 if the child turns 19 during the school year.) Children with disabilities are eligible without regard to age.
- The CE must monitor or review CACFP At Risk sites at least three times each year with no more than six months between reviews. The first monitoring review must occur within the first four weeks of operation.

• Resources •

Administrator’s Reference Manual (ARM), Section 10: Afterschool Meal Programs

www.squaremeals.org > Child and Adult Care Program >CACFP Policy and Handbook > CACFP- At Risk Afterschool Handbook

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

AR Specialist will observe on-site; no off-site assessment questions.

The following documents should be available for upload at the request of the AR Specialist:

- Cost documentation to validate any claim filed, specified by the AR Specialist
 - Meal counts as specified by the AR Specialist
-

• **Definitions/Terminology** •

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP): USDA program under the National School Lunch Act that provides funding to States to make free fresh fruits and vegetables available in eligible elementary schools during the school day.

• **Reminders** •

- Number of schools reviewed is based on the table below.

Number of Schools Selected for an NSLP AR that Operate the FFVP	Minimum Number of FFVP Schools to be Reviewed
1 to 5	1
6 to 10	2
11 to 20	3

- AR Specialist will validate one claim for reimbursement for each FFVP school selected for review and will observe the FFVP operation in each of the selected schools.
- FFVP must be made available to all enrolled children.
- FFVP must be served free to students within the school day, but outside the meal service times of the NSLP and SBP.
 - FFVP cannot be provided for afterschool care programs or during summer school sessions
 - CEs must incorporate nutrition education into the daily curriculum, preferably during the service of fresh fruits and vegetables

- CEs must follow all food safety requirements and HACCP guidance during service to ensure proper handling and storage of fresh produce to prevent spoilage and loss
 - Teachers who are directly responsible for serving the fruit and/or vegetable to their students in a classroom setting may partake of the fruit and/or vegetable.
 - Administrative training for the FFVP is offered online annually on squaremeals.org for CEs participating in the program.
 - Proper procurement procedures must be followed.
 - CEs may use no more than 10% of the total grant for administrative costs.
-

● **Resources** ●

www.squaremeals.org > Programs > Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program > FFVP Training

USDA FFVP

www.fns.usda.gov > Programs > Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Seamless Summer Option

AR Specialist will observe on-site; no off-site assessment questions.

The following documents should be available on the day of review:

- Meal counts as specified by the AR Specialist (lunch meal service for the five operating days prior to the on-site review)
 - Food production records (completed and planned) for the week of review at the selected site for lunch
 - Child Nutrition (CN) labels, recipes, product formulation statements, nutrition fact labels and any other supporting documentation
-

• ***Definitions/Terminology*** •

Area Eligible Site: Designated geographic area within an attendance zone where 50 percent of the children living in the area qualify for free or reduced-price meals under NSLP or SBP or census data from a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved sources.

Attendance Zone: Designated geographic area that determines where a child goes to school. *Approved Attendance Zone* – Designated geographic area that determines where a child goes to school that has been identified by TDA as eligible for SSO services.

Eligible Site: Site eligible to operate SSO based on area eligibility or standard eligibility determinations.

Eligible SSO Program Participant: All children enrolled in a school of high school grade and under as determined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) including persons enrolled in a school program for the mentally or physically disabled, and person under 21 enrolled in an RCCI.

Non-Area Eligible Site: Designated geographic area with an attendance zone where 50 percent of the children living in the area do not qualify for free or reduced-price meals under NSLP or SBP.

Open Site: A school or non-school site located within the geographical boundaries of a school, where at least 50% of students are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals as demonstrated by NSLP and SBP school-based data or census data from a USDA approved source. All meals are served free at open sites.

Restricted, Open Site: A site that meets the open site criteria, but is restricted for safety, control, or security reasons; all meals are served free at open sites.

Closed, Enrolled Site: A site that meets the 50% criteria, explained above, but serves only children in a specific program or activity, excluding academic summer school programs; all meals are served free. Academic summer schools are excluded.

• **Reminders** •

- CEs must follow age/grade group meal pattern requirements. A meal pattern age/grade portion size waiver is available only to open and restricted, open sites where meals are served to all children in the community. An age/grade waiver is approved for a specific site.
 - CE must advertise the availability of free meals and the location to the children in the community; all advertising materials must contain the required non-discrimination statement.
 - Applications for SSO programs are due to TDA by May 31 of each year and are submitted through TX-UNPS.
 - CEs mandated to operate a summer program must operate the program for at least 30 calendar days during the summer recess.
 - CEs are required to self-monitor at least once a year, if the CE operates more than one feeding site. TDA has created an Onsite Self-Monitoring Form to be used for this review.
 - CEs mandated to participate in the SSO must submit the CE's summer operating costs at the end of the summer through TX-UNPS (*Summer Cost Report*).
 - CEs that implement SSO and receive an administrative review of their school nutrition programs in SY 2017-18 will receive an SSO Administrative Review either the summer before or the summer following the scheduled AR.
-

• **Resources** •

Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 12: Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

Post Review

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Completing the Corrective Action Document (CAD)	75-76
Sample Corrective Action Document Tasks and Timeline	77-79

Post Review Summary

Exit Conference

Findings or errors noted during the review will be addressed at the exit conference and on the corrective action documents (CAD).

Corrective Action Documents, if required will address:

- The identified findings
- The corrective action(s) required
- The timeframe(s) by which the corrective action must be completed
- Any documentation the CE must submit to TDA to demonstrate corrective action

Follow-up or Second Follow-up Review

TDA may conduct a targeted follow-up review to verify corrective action for findings from any review. Before TDA conducts a Second Follow-up Review, the CE must provide an adequate response to all previous CADs and must request the Second Follow-up Review.

Fiscal Action

TDA will take fiscal action as described by USDA in its AR guidance. The regulations require fiscal action for Critical Areas of Review and provide a framework to allow TDA to take fiscal action or withhold payments for program noncompliance in the General Areas of Review. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fiscal action may result if an overclaim is noted during the review.
- Fiscal action may be taken when there are repeated findings across reviews of any type.
- Fiscal action may include the suspension of the performance-based reimbursement for meal pattern noncompliance.
- TDA has an option to disregard any overclaim of \$600 or less per program each fiscal year.

Appeals

An appeals procedure is provided when fiscal action is taken or funds are placed on financial hold. A CE can appeal fiscal action resulting from the denial of all or part of a claim for reimbursement or withholding of payments established by an AR. **Findings cannot be appealed.**

Appeals Timeframe Summary Chart

CE submits written request for an appeal— <i>postmarked within 15 calendar days of receipt of notice of fiscal action or withholding of funds notice.</i>	TDA and CE informed of the Administrative Review Official's (ARO's) decision on appeal of fiscal action or withholding of funds— <i>within 60 calendar days of the date of receipt of the CE's request for an appeal.</i>
TDA acknowledges receipt request for appeal— <i>within 10 calendar days of receipt of appeal request.</i>	
TDA and CE are given notice of the date of the appeal hearing— <i>at least 10 calendar days before hearing.</i>	

Records Retention

CEs must retain documentation related to the AR. If a case occurs where records used or needed for the AR process exceed the number of years required for documents to be retained, the CE must retain all AR related—records until the appropriate number of years have passed from the date the AR was closed.

Public and charter schools are required to keep documentation related to school nutrition programs for 5 years. Private schools, other nonprofit organizations, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) are required to keep documentation for 3 years.

Completing the Corrective Action Document (CAD)

CEs are expected to provide an adequate CAD that demonstrates that the CE has taken action to resolve all findings according to the timeline and directions that TDA provides at the exit conference and **apply changes to all sites**. CEs will upload CAD responses into TX-UNPS. If a CE does not provide an adequate response, TDA may place a financial hold on all future claims until the CE provides an accurate CAD in response to AR findings.

• Reminders •

- CEs should review the on-line training provided by TDA for an overview of the AR features in TX-UNPS with a specific focus on Corrective Action Documents.
 - www.squaremeals.org > Programs> National School Lunch Program > NSLP Training > Online Education and Self Study > TX-UNPS – Administrative Review: Corrective Action Document (CAD)
- CEs should respond to the CAD in TX-UNPS **after** they have received formal notification from the AR Specialist that includes the CAD letter and instructions for submitting via TX-UNPS.
- **IMPORTANT** – All CAD responses must describe the processes that the CE will put into place to prevent a finding from reoccurring in the future at all sites. Response should identify:
 - What happened
 - How the finding will be prevented for occurring again
 - Who is responsible for implementing the changes and ensuring compliance
- The SNP Review Findings screen in TX-UNPS lists the number of findings that were discovered during the Administrative Review and the status of each finding in terms of where it is within the CAD process along with the date the response is due to TDA. The following statuses may be displayed on this screen:
 - **Not Started** – the Reviewer has not yet completed their portion of the CAD; therefore, there is nothing for the CE to do at this time.
 - **Pending Action** – the Reviewer has completed their portion of the CAD; therefore, it is ready for the CE to begin completing the responses to the CAD;
 - **Pending Submission** – the CE has completed the CAD, but the Corrective Action Plan has not yet been submitted to TDA for review and approval.

- **Pending Approval** – the CE has completed the response for each finding and submitted the CAD to TDA for approval. ***At this point the CE cannot modify the response.***
 - **Denied** – the Reviewer has not approved the CAD.
 - **Closed** – TDA has reviewed the CAD and has approved it.
- Once the CE has clicked the *Submit for Acceptance* button, the response cannot be modified.

Sample Corrective Action Document Tasks and Timeline

APPLICATION PROCESSING/RECORD-KEEPING TASKS AND TIMELINE

The following chart will be used to identify required tasks in approving submitted free and reduced applications and maintaining accurate records. The purpose of this chart is to document timelines and track activities to ensure all household applications are reviewed for completeness and accuracy.

ANNUAL TASKS	DATE	STAFF
Attend ESC Eligibility/Verification Training	Summer	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Retain end of year copy of master district roster and master direct certification list for 30 day carry over to new school year.	June	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Prepare new school year application packet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TDA prototype application materials on Squaremeals website www.squaremeals.org • Update application information and letters from prototype and upload into electronic POS • Update hard copy application and provide electronic version to each site for printing when requested from household 	June	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Update POS System for the new school year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up roster criteria to include: Student Name, Eligibility Status, Type, Approval Date, Withdrawn dates • Update 30 day carryover end date for new school year eligibility 	June	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Record Keeping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull all current year application files and store for future reference (5 years). • Set up new school year application files in the following order by household # <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active ○ Inactive ○ Denied 	June	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Update website application information for new school year.	July 1	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Submit updated Media Release to the local newspaper and local radio station to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Announcement 	July - August	Cafeteria Program Assistant

ANNUAL TASKS	DATE	STAFF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full IEG chart • Sample Free/Reduced Application • Application Directions • Letter to Households 		
Returning student households will be provided instructional letter to update student information and apply for the meal program in “Custom Forms” online	First week of school	Cafeteria Program Assistant

¹ ONGOING TASKS	DATE	STAFF
<p>Manage Direct Certification data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Import TDA Direct Certification student updates into POS system • Identify extended eligible students by household address • Upload CE rosters for state eligibility match and extend eligibility to household students 	Monthly	Cafeteria Program Assistant
New student households are provided electronic access to complete online application or hard copy application form.	Upon registration	Registrar at each campus
Upon electronic notification that a new application has been submitted, reviewing official will use the ESC provided highlighted application processing samples as a reference to determine completeness and accuracy of information. Applications are either approved or denied.	Upon receipt of new application	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Hard copy applications submitted to the reviewing official are date stamped and entered into the electronic system for processing. All required information is entered and reviewed for completeness and accuracy prior to approval/denial.	Upon receipt of new application	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Missing information is requested first by phone. When the household cannot be reached by phone the application is returned with highlight of missing information and note requesting the missing information.	When necessary	Cafeteria Program Assistant
All communication is noted on the application in a different color ink than what the household used. Notes are initialed and dated.	When necessary	Cafeteria Program Assistant
Reviewing Official signs and dates all approved/denied hard copy applications. Approval/denial letters are generated through the electronic system on the same day as the application is processed (electronic or manual submission) and letters sent home within 2 days.	Upon approval/denial	PEIMS/Café Program Assistant
<p>Hard copy applications are filed by household assigned number according to category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active 	Once processed or	Cafeteria Program Assistant

1 ONGOING TASKS	DATE	STAFF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inactive • Denied 	student withdrawal	
<p>Upon withdrawal, hard copy application is pulled from active file, withdrawn date is recorded and application is filed in Inactive file. Registrar will be instructed to check student account balances and notify family of process to request a refund if needed through the business office.</p>	Upon withdrawal	Cafeteria Program Assistant
<p>A report of withdrawn students is generated weekly and compared to rosters for accuracy.</p>	Weekly	Cafeteria Program Assistant
<p>Reviewing Official will review all hard copy applications for accuracy a second time the week before the 30 day carryover end date and then monthly throughout the year for all newly submitted hard copy applications.</p>	Monthly	Cafeteria Program Assistant
<p>Households checking “Foster” on an application will be contacted to provide state documentation for directly certifying foster children. Registrars will be asked to provide copy of any state foster documentation to the Reviewing Official</p>	As needed	Cafeteria Program Assistant



*To enhance compliance, efficiency, and quality
in delivering healthy school meals.*

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