

Comparison of Programs for the 2021-2022 School Year: SSO/ NSLP/ SFSP

This comparison chart outlines key differences between the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) in School Year (SY) 2021-2022 and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). **The guidance provided in this document only applies to SY 2021-2022.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the USDA has issued flexibilities for operating the SSO in SY 2021-2022.

The SSO reduces paperwork, administrative burden, and allows Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to provide free meals to all children. The USDA encourages LEAs to operate the SSO in SY 2021-2022 to ensure children continue to have access to nutritious meals while providing LEAs with a higher reimbursement rate per [COVID 19: Child Nutrition Response #86](#).

Topic	Seamless Summer Option (SSO) for School Year 2021 – 2022	National School Lunch Program (NSLP)/ School Breakfast Program (SBP)	Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)*
Eligible Sponsors	<p>LEAs approved to operate NSLP are eligible to operate SSO in SY 2021-2022, per COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #85.</p> <p>LEAs participating in SSO may operate SSO without regard to area eligibility requirements.</p>	LEAs with an approved NSLP application.	<p>During the 2021-22 SY, the SFSP is only available during the summer months.</p> <p>LEAs, local government agencies, private non-profit organizations, universities or colleges, community and faith-based organizations.</p>
Eligible Participants	<p>Based on site type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed enrolled sites: same as NLSP • Open sites: same as SFSP 	Students enrolled in a school of high school grade or younger; including persons enrolled in a school program for the mentally or physically disabled; and persons under 21 enrolled in a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI).	<p>Persons 18 years of age or younger in the community</p> <p>Persons over 18 with a physical or mental disability who participate in a public or private school program.</p>

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Times of Operation	<p>Schools may operate SSO for all of SY 2021-2022.</p> <p>Meals may only be claimed on instructional days.</p> <p>Weekend meals are not allowed, unless those are instructional days or the sponsor is an RCCI.</p>	<p>When school is in session as established by the school district, including summer school.</p>	<p>May – September for traditional school calendar areas.</p> <p>October- April during unanticipated school closures (i.e., emergencies).</p> <p>During school vacations of 15 days or more for schools on a continuous year calendar.</p>
Meal Service Locations	<p>Schools, and non-school facilities such as churches, community centers, public housing, libraries, parks, and mobile feeding sites.</p>	<p>Schools and RCCIs</p>	<p>Same as SSO</p>
Meal Cost for Children	<p>Meals are free for all children regardless of the LEA’s location, per COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response: #85.</p>	<p>Meal cost and reimbursement is based on a student’s free, reduced-price, and paid eligibility.</p>	<p>All meals are free, except for camps, which are only reimbursed for children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Camp sponsors may, and usually do, provide meals free of charge to all children.</p>
Types of Meals	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p>Snack (AM or PM)</p> <p>Supper</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p>Afterschool Snack</p>	<p>Same as SSO</p>

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Maximum Number of Meals	<p>Maximum of two meals or one meal and one snack served per day.</p> <p>Exception for migrant sites: three meals.</p> <p>Lunch and Supper cannot be reimbursed for the same day at the same site.</p> <p>When school is in session, LEAs may operate SSO and simultaneously participate in the CACFP At-risk Afterschool Meals or the NSLP Afterschool Snack Program.</p>	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p>Afterschool Snack</p>	<p>Two meals for most sites.</p> <p>Three meals for migrant sites and camps.</p> <p>Lunch and supper cannot be reimbursed for the same day at the same site.</p>
Meal Service Time Flexibility	<p>LEAs can distribute multiple meals at one time per COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #88.</p> <p>This waiver expires on June 30, 2022, however LEAs should use this flexibility only for the duration and extent it is needed.</p>	<p>Same as SSO</p>	<p>LEAs can distribute multiple meals at one time until September 30, 2021 per COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #78.</p>
Non-Congregate Meals	<p>LEAs may serve meals in a non-congregate setting per COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response #87.</p> <p>This waiver expires on June 30, 2022, however LEAs should use this flexibility only for the duration and extent it is needed.</p>	<p>Same as SSO</p>	<p>LEAs may serve meals in a non-congregate setting until September 30, 2021 per COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #75.</p>

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Parent/Guardian Pick-up	<p>LEAs may allow parents/guardians to pick up meals to take home to their children per COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response #89.</p> <p>LEAs must receive approval from MSDE before implementing this flexibility.</p> <p>This waiver expires on June 30, 2022, however LEAs should use this flexibility only for the duration and extent it is needed.</p>	Same as SSO	<p>LEAs may allow parents/guardians to pick up meals to take home to their children until September 30, 2021 per COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #76.</p>
Meal Pattern	<p>Meal pattern must meet 7 CFR 210.10 standards for NSLP and 7 CFR 220.8 standards for SBP.</p> <p>Offer versus serve requirements are waived COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #92.</p> <p>Meal pattern flexibilities may be granted in specific circumstances per COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #90. LEAs must submit a request and receive approval from MSDE before implementing this flexibility.</p>	Same as SSO	<p>Meal pattern must meet 7 CFR 225.16(d) standards for SFSP, though LEAs may substitute NSLP/SBP meal patterns.</p>

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Reimbursement Rates	<p>Schools operating the SSO will receive reimbursement at the higher SFSP rate for all eligible meals effective July 1, 2021, per COVID 19: Child Nutrition Response #86.</p> <p>USDA will update the SFSP rates, effective January 1, 2022</p>	<p>All eligible meals provided under NSLP/SBP are reimbursed at applicable federal and state rates based on free, reduced-price, or free eligibility.</p> <p>Additional payments provided for free or reduced-price breakfasts in severe-need schools.</p>	<p>For Calendar Year 2021: Maximum Per Meal Reimbursement Rates for All States (not including AK or HI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rural or Self-Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breakfast: \$2.4625 ▪ Lunch/Supper: \$4.3175 ▪ Snack: \$1.0200 ● Other types of sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breakfast: \$2.4150 ▪ Lunch/Supper: \$4.2500 ▪ Snack: \$0.9975 ● Camps are reimbursed only for meals served to eligible children.

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Monitoring Required of LEA/Sponsors	<p>LEAs can elect to use COVID- 19: Child Nutrition Response #94 to waive the onsite monitoring requirement. The requirement to conduct site monitoring has not been waived.</p> <p>To ensure program integrity, LEAs will conduct site reviews to monitor meal counting, claiming, and meal pattern compliance. Reviews should be completed on the MSDE monitoring form for SSO found in the MARS Resource Center. Desk audits are allowed.</p> <p>Sites that must be reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% of lunch sites ● 50% of breakfast sites <p>Deadline: February 1, 2022</p>	Same as SSO	<p>During normal operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-operational visits before a new or problem site operates the summer program. ● Site visits the first week of operation (waived for sites that operated successfully the previous summer). ● Site review during the first 4 weeks of operation, followed by additional monitoring as needed.
Public Notification	<p>Schools operating SSO must provide public notification regarding the availability of school meals and the eligibility criteria at or near the beginning of the school year. MSDE provided an annual public notification on behalf of the LEAs on June 30, 2021.</p> <p>LEAs participating in the SSO in SY 2021-2022 should notify households that all meals will be offered for free through SSO.</p>	Same as SSO.	Sponsors must provide the public release to media and other organizations to inform the public of participation in the SFSP.

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