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Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

The Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) Food and Nutrition (F&N) administers the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). These programs are not structured the same. The SSO combines features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the SFSP regulations. The SSO reduces paperwork and the administrative burden that is normally associated with operating three different programs. This enables contracting entities (CE) to operate the SSO under many of the same regulations, procedures and policies that they currently operate under during the regular school year.

The summer feeding programs, SSO and SFSP, were created to ensure that children in low-income areas could continue to receive meals during long school vacations when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast. The SSO offers good, nutritious food that's "in" when school is "out." This section applies to the SSO. For information regarding the SFSP, please visit www.summerfood.org or contact TDA at (877) TEX-MEAL (839-6325).

Summer refers to a period of time the state education agency does not count toward meeting the designated instructional days of education. Currently, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) mandates 180 instructional days as a school year.

State Mandated Summer Feeding Program Participation

The Texas legislature mandates participation in either the SSO or SFSP for CEs that are public school districts with **50 percent** or greater eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

CEs with 50 percent or greater eligible for free and reduced-price meals must either:

- Operate a summer feeding program directly;
- Arrange for another CE to operate a summer feeding program in their district; or
- Arrange with another entity for the operation of the SFSP in their district.

The participation must be for at least 30 calendar days.

CEs with 50 percent or greater eligible for free and reduced-price meals can be granted a waiver for one year for the following reasons:

- Enrollment included fewer than 100 children eligible for free and reduced-price meals.
- The cost of transportation was prohibitive.
- School buildings or cafeterias were under renovation or construction.
- An alternate provider already sponsored the SFSP in the area.
- Other extenuating circumstances.

TDA will require verifiable documentation in order to be considered for a waiver, which may include:

- 1) Documentation showing that there are fewer than 100 students in the district currently eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals under the NSLP; or
- 2) Documentation showing that transportation to enable district students to participate in the program is an insurmountable obstacle to the district's ability to provide or arrange for the provision of the program despite consultation by the district with the public transit providers; or
- 3) Documentation that the district is unable to provide or arrange for the program due to renovation or construction of district facilities and the unavailability of an appropriate alternate provider or site; or
- 4) Documentation that the district is unable to provide the program due to another extenuating circumstance and that there is not another alternate site or provider available; and
- 5) Documentation that the district has worked with TDA field offices to identify another possible provider for the program in the district; or
- 6) Documentation that the cost to the district to provide or arrange for the program would be cost-prohibitive for a district. A public school district's operation of a summer feeding program will be deemed cost-prohibitive if the projected operational expenses for the summer feeding program are greater than the sum of the expected federal reimbursements plus one month of the school food services' allowable three months operating expenses on hand. To demonstrate that operation of a summer feeding program is cost-prohibitive, the CE must provide:
 - a) Projected summer feeding program budget for the program year based on the number of expected participants and specific cost items to support the possible determination of cost-prohibitive nature of program operation;
 - b) The expected reimbursement amount based on either:
 - The previous year's program participation; or
 - An interest survey data taken since start of the current school year.

- c) Documents supporting the calculation of the food service department's three months operating expense balance, including:
- The current fund balance;
 - The current year's total operating expense;
 - Available case on hand;
 - Financial statements which indicate school nutrition program net cash resources are below two months net cash reserves; and
 - Written explanation of efforts made to attempt partnership with another CE to operate a summer feeding program in their district or arrange for another entity for SFSP operations, including:
 - Contacting the local TDA field operations office; and
 - Meet with two or more other entities to discuss potential partnerships.

TDA will contact the CEs with 50 percent or greater free and reduced-price eligibility regarding summer feeding program requirements and waiver options.

Participant Eligibility

Any child 18 years of age and under and those persons over age 18 who meet the federal definition of mentally or physically disabled may receive meals under the SSO free of charge.

Site Eligibility

Only CEs administering the NSLP or SBP may participate in the SSO. CEs can sponsor a site that is located outside of its approved attendance zones. Additionally, CEs can expand their summer food service to sponsors of non-school sites operated by other non-profit organizations, including government entities, recreational programs and enrichment classes or programs.

The SSO is a site-based program. All summer feeding sites must have at least 50 percent of the children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the NSLP or SBP. The free and reduced-price eligible percentages will be determined at TDA through the Texas Unified Nutrition Program System (TX-UNPS). All participating sites must be open to the community.

A non-area eligible campus/site may also qualify as an area eligible campus/site if it is located in the attendance area of a school with 50 percent free or reduced-price eligibility according to the current summer program year's school in TX-UNPS. An attendance zone is an area where children live and go to school. For additional information about attendance zones, contact TDA.

Campus/feeding site means a school as defined under NSLP regulations and may include one or more enrolled and/or open summer feeding site within the attendance zone of that school as determined by the school officials. Meal service sites may be located in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to schools, recreation centers, playgrounds, parks and churches.

Busing

If students are being bused to a school outside their attendance area to participate in the SSO, the school used as the meal service site (the school the students are being bused to) can establish eligibility in two ways.

The CE may determine eligibility based on the enrollment/attendance data obtained for:

- The school the children attend and are bused to, or
- The school the children would have attended if it were not for the school's busing policy (the neighborhood in which the facility is located and where the children live).

Site eligibility may be determined in the above situations only if the CE is able to document the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals at each school, both before and after the students are reassigned to the school outside their neighborhood.

The CE must use the same method of determining SSO site eligibility for all sites in which busing occurs. CEs must continue to use the attendance/enrollment data from the school in whose attendance zone the site is located when busing is not used.

Requirements for SSO Site Applications

CEs are required to operate the SSO a minimum of 30 calendar days. At a minimum, the CE must submit the following information for each site in TX-UNPS to TDA for program approval:

- a. Name, address and phone number of site.
- b. Beginning and ending dates of site operations by feeding site.
- c. Indicate if the site operates on a year-round school calendar.
- d. Free and reduced-price data to support site eligibility on the Schedule A (at least 50% free and reduced-price or located in the attendance zone of an area eligible school).
- e. Type of site: open, restricted open, closed enrolled, migrant or camp.
- f. Organization that will operate the site for the CE, if applicable.
- g. How meals will be advertised to the community (not applicable for closed enrolled sites and camps).
- h. Types of meals, including day(s) of week and time(s) of day that meals are served.

For the following two types of sites, in addition to the requirements of letters a-h above, SFAs must submit the following:

For closed-enrolled sites:

- Identify all sites located in eligible areas.
- Identify data used to qualify each site.
- Explanation to why the SFA is sponsoring closed sites.

For camps:

- Indicate type of camp (residential or non-residential).
- Identify all camps located in eligible areas.

- Explain why the CE is sponsoring the camp.
- Certify that the camp will only claim reimbursement for children that are determined eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Types of Sites

The SSO has the following types of sites:

- Open sites
- Restricted-Open sites
- Closed-Enrolled sites
- Camp sites
- Migrant sites
- Non-traditional sites (also known as mobile sites)

All of these types of sites may be located in a school or non-school.

School Sites

Sites that are located at schools may determine eligibility through school data, enrollment eligibility data or census data. All SSO feeding sites must have at least 50 percent of the children eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the NSLP and SBP or receive approval as an eligible site based on location in an attendance zone of an eligible school/campus. The free and reduced-price eligible percentages for public schools will be determined by TDA by the information submitted by the CE in TX-UNPS.

The entire campus of a school site is considered part of the site, including the surrounding grounds and classrooms. However, schools may designate specific areas of the campus as feeding sites. If children are served at different areas of the campus, each location must be monitored during the meal service.

CEs operating school sites must ensure the school sites remain open to participation by all children in the neighborhood.

If a CE intends to operate the SSO at a site where an accredited summer school program is in session, the CE must ensure that the food service is open to all children residing in the area served by the site. If a summer school site is not open to all the children of the community and provides meals only to enrolled summer school students, the site is not eligible to participate in the SSO. In this situation, the meals served only to enrolled summer school students may be reimbursed through the NSLP and SBP by eligibility category.

If the school is only offering enrichment courses that are not considered part of the academic curriculum and do not require mandatory attendance, the school may be eligible to participate in the SSO as an open or closed-enrolled site.

CEs must submit the SSO site information on all sites that are not open school sites to participate in the SSO.

Provision 2 CEs must use a school site's base year to determine area eligibility using the Base year percent of enrolled eligible students, not claiming percentages. All Provision 2 schools meals served should be counted as free meals.

Open Sites

An open site is one that serves all children in a geographical area where a minimum of 50 percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

An open site can claim a maximum of two meals per day (for example, lunch and breakfast or lunch and a snack). If two meals are served, one of the meals must be lunch. If the site serves a single meal, the meal may be breakfast, lunch or a snack. The CE may choose the meals that will be served. CEs approved for open sites are reimbursed for eligible SSO meals that are served to all participating children. CEs that operate year-round schools should be claiming meals through the NSLP/SBP. Year-round schools should contact TDA for further information.

Restricted Open Sites

A restricted open site is one that is initially open to broad community participation but participation is restricted by the CE for reasons of security, safety or control. A restricted open site is open to the entire community on a first-come, first-served basis. This must be mentioned in the media release. Children cannot be selected based on a particular characteristic or from an identifiable group in the community. Restricted open sites may not charge a fee for children to attend. An example of a restricted open site is a site that has space for only a certain number of children due to the fire code.

A restricted open site can claim a maximum of two meals per day (for example, lunch and breakfast or lunch and a snack). If two meals are served, one of the meals must be lunch. If the site serves a single meal, the meal may be breakfast, lunch or a snack. The CE may choose the meals that will be served. Restricted open sites are reimbursed for eligible SSO meals that are served to all participating children.

Closed Enrolled Sites

Closed-enrolled sites are sites located in eligible or non-eligible areas that are limited to a group of enrolled children of which at least 50 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals (academic summer schools closed to the community are ineligible to participate in the SSO). A closed enrolled site could include any program for children, other than academic summer school that is closed to the public, provided at least 50 percent of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Examples of closed enrolled sites include recreation programs and enrichment classes or programs. The CE could sponsor and operate these sites or sponsor sites that are operated by local government or private non-profit organizations. Closed enrolled sites must have site eligibility re-determined each year.

A closed enrolled site can claim a maximum of two meals per day (for example, lunch and breakfast or lunch and a snack). If two meals are served, one of the meals must be lunch. If the site serves a single meal, the meal may be breakfast, lunch or a snack. The CE may choose the meals that will be served. Closed enrolled sites are reimbursed for eligible SSO meals that are served to all participating children.

Camp Sites

CEs may sponsor camp sites that serve meals at residential summer camps and non-residential day camps that offer a continuous schedule of organized cultural or recreational activities for students.

These CEs must collect household size and income information on the multi-child or multi-use household income eligibility application used in the NSLP and SBP to determine the eligibility of children who are claimed as eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The CE must maintain these applications on file. CEs must serve or make available the same meal to all children regardless of reimbursement status.

CEs can only claim reimbursement for those meals that are served at the camp to children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the NSLP and SBP. Allowable meal services include breakfast, snack, lunch and/or supper.

At camps, a maximum of three meals may be served, such as breakfast, lunch and a snack. Only migrant sites and camps may be reimbursed for lunch and supper served to the same children on the same day. For camps, both residential and non-residential, only the meals served to income eligible students (based on free and reduced-price applications) will be reimbursed.

Migrant Sites

CEs primarily serving children through age 18 of migrant families, as certified eligible by the CE's migrant coordinator, may operate migrant sites. Allowable meal service includes breakfast, snack, lunch and supper. At migrant sites, a maximum of three meals may be served, such as breakfast, lunch and a supper. Only migrant sites and camps may be reimbursed for lunch and supper served to the same children on the same day.

Non-Traditional Sites

CEs in rural areas often have difficulty identifying their sites. Additionally, the rural population may be dispersed or it may not be cost-effective to transport children from the rural areas to sites located in rural towns. In these situations, sponsors may use non-traditional methods to meet the nutritional needs of low-income rural children (for example, transporting meals to children rather than transporting children to meal service sites).

Example: A CE uses a bus as a meal service site. The bus stops at numerous locations and provides meals to children at each stop. The children eat on or near the bus. CEs in rural areas may use bus routes to meet the needs of low-income children, provided that:

- Each location where meals are dispensed meet site eligibility criteria;
- Consumption of meals are on or near the bus/vehicle; and
- Established meal service times and display of non-discrimination poster are followed.

The CE must also have the ability to adjust meal deliveries according to attendance fluctuation.

CEs must ensure the safety of the food that is served to the children, such as following Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), maintaining proper temperatures of food throughout the route and meeting state and local health standards.

CEs may include the allowable cost of transporting food to children in rural areas in the same manner that they claim the costs of transporting children to food service sites, that is, the costs must be allowable and reasonable. CEs must advertise that the mobile feeding sites are available by including the location and meal service times.

If warranted by specific circumstances, CEs may use non-traditional methods to meet the nutritional needs of children living in urban areas.

Example: CEs may establish mobile feeding sites to serve children who live in urban housing projects or mobile home parks and do not have access to sites at fixed locations.

Sites for Year-Round Schools with Off-Track Breaks

CEs approved on a year-round/continuous schedule and have off-track breaks that are officially part of the school schedule can be approved to operate the SSO. Typically, the off-track breaks are of 2 to 3 weeks, but could be shorter with TDA approval.

Since all off-track students at SSO sites receive meals free of charge, the school must be able to distinguish between the off-track students and the on-track students who may be paying reduced-price or full prices for their meals. The school must also distinguish the different tracks because off-track meals are reimbursed at the free rate and on-track meals are reimbursed at the free, reduced-price and paid rates.

CEs Operating Extended-Year NSLP Programs and the SSO

CEs may operate an extended-year NSLP program and the SSO during the same time period. The CE must request TDA approval for the schools that are extending their NSLP operation year and would follow the same NSLP rules for those designated schools. The CE must apply for those school sites that meet the requirements for Seamless Summer sites separately according to the SSO guidelines.

Since all students at SSO sites receive meals free of charge, the school must be able to distinguish between them and the extended-year students who may be paying reduced-price or full price for their meals. The school must also distinguish the SSO site meals that are reimbursed at the free rate and the schools that have extended-year meals that are reimbursed at the free, reduced-price or paid rate.

Methods of Qualifications for SSO Sites

Sites may qualify for participation in the SSO by using data other than a school's percentage of free or reduced-price enrollment. The CE may use census block group data as approved by TDA. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) must approve the use of data from other sources, such as departments of welfare and education and zoning commissions. Submit to TDA requests for approval from USDA. Generally, current data must be used.

SSO Meal Service

Meal Pattern Requirements

Nutritional standards for meals served and claimed must meet meal pattern requirements for lunch, breakfast and/or snacks. Refer to the specific section regarding the NSLP, SBP and/or Afterschool Care Program (ASCP) for requirements. Supper meals served and claimed for reimbursement must meet the NSLP pattern requirements.

CEs should use the NSLP options, including: the Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning; the Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning; the Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) or the Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (ANSMP) methods. CEs should follow their currently approved menu planning system as approved in TX-UNPS.

Supper meals served and claimed for reimbursement must meet the NSLP meal pattern requirements for approved migrant and camp sites.

Food Production Records

CEs have the option to use TDA food production records for Traditional Food Based Menu Planning System, Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning System and NSMP. If the CE uses their own food production record, they must include all elements included on the TDA food production records. CEs have the option to maintain their food production records in either paper copy or electronically. However, CE must be able to provide the food production records to TDA upon request and during the Coordinated Review Effort (CRE).

Allowable Meal Service Options

A CE may only serve and claim reimbursable meals for the SSO in which they are currently approved to serve and claim during the regular school year (August through May). For example, a CE approved for breakfast only for August through May cannot serve or claim lunch, supper and/or snack meals under the SSO during the summer months.

More than two meal types can be served at any site; however, the CE must ensure that children eat and are claimed for no more than two meals per child per day in the SSO.

Designated Meal Periods

Breakfast must be served to a child in the morning hours. Lunch must be offered between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Supper meals must begin before 7:00 p.m. and end by 8:00 p.m. Snacks must be evenly and adequately spaced between other meal service times to minimize food waste and ensure good nutrition practices. TDA recommends a two-hour interval between all meal services.

Stagger Meal Service Times

CEs participating in the SSO as an open site may serve meals at staggered times for community children and school children attending summer school. CEs must serve the same meal service (i.e., food served, length of serving time, eating area, meal service locations, etc.).

Weekend Meal Service

CEs must request approval from TDA for weekend meal service. A CE that plans to serve weekend meals in the SSO must include this information in the policy statement, Attachment B, in TX-UNPS.

A La Carte Sales

A la carte sales are not encouraged during summer meal service. Children should be encouraged to participate in the meal service being offered before they pay for a la carte items.

Offer versus Serve

A CE, regardless of location of the sites, may choose to use the offer versus serve option if the CE or a specific school under its direction:

- Used the offer versus serve option during the current NSLP school year; and
- Serves the food cafeteria style on the school campus.

A CE choosing to use offer versus serve must:

- Use offer versus serve for serving breakfasts or lunches only;
- Serve the children at minimum the amounts of food required by the NSLP; and
- Offer all required food items/components.

Offer versus serve meals must be documented on the food production records. If a CE does not elect to use offer versus serve, it may use either the NSLP meal plan without offer versus serve or the SFSP meal plan.

Second Meals

Second meals are not reimbursable in the SSO and may not be claimed for reimbursement.

Months of Operation

Schools operating on a traditional school calendar may not serve SSO meals during winter or spring breaks. Schools operating on a year-round calendar may serve SSO meals during any scheduled school break of 2 to 3 weeks, but could be shorter with TDA approval. SSO meals may be served at non-school sites sponsored by the CE during unanticipated school closures. The months of operation for SSO meals are as follows for schools operating a traditional or year-round calendar:

- May through September, when school is not in session.
- October through April for non-school sites that are responding to an unanticipated school closure.

Months of Operation for Schools on a Continuous or Year-Round Calendar:

- During scheduled breaks of 2 to 3 weeks, but could be shorter with TDA approval.
- Any time during the year for non-school sites that are responding to an unanticipated school closure.

An unanticipated school closure is defined as a natural disaster, unscheduled major building repair, court order relating to school safety or other issues, labor management dispute, or other similar cause as approved by TDA. As mandated by the National School Lunch Act, meals provided during an unanticipated school closure must be served at a non-school site.

Texas Public School Nutrition Policy

Public schools are required to follow the guidelines of the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy (TPSNP) for the SSO. The non-compliance penalties remain in effect. Although encouraged, private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) are not required to follow the TPSNP for the SSO. All Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNVs) are unallowable in the SSO.

Adult Meals for Supervision/Security Officials

The cost of one meal per meal service per campus site for security personnel is an allowable expense that can be absorbed through use of reimbursement funds. However, adult meals cannot be claimed as reimbursable. The security official must be a salaried employee from a local, municipal, county or state government law enforcement agency.

Allowing this program expenditure assists CEs in providing security for open site campuses and demonstrates a strong partnership/involvement between education, community and local law enforcement personnel. School Nutrition Program (SNP) staff meals may not be claimed as reimbursable; however these meals remain an allowable expense to the program.

Program Access

CEs operating academic summer schools and the SSO should ensure they make a concerted effort to attract children from the community who are not attending summer schools to participate in the summer program. TDA will determine both in the approval process of sites and in the review of sites that schools approved to operate as seamless summer option sites make a reasonable effort to advertise the availability of free meals to children in the community who will not be attending summer school.

CEs applying to participate in the SSO must describe how each site will advertise the availability of meal services to children in the community. The CE should provide enough detail in its application so the method of advertising meal services to the public can be documented and confirmed later during a review by TDA or FNS. For example, if the CE stated that SSO site meals would be advertised in a publication, a copy of the advertisement should be available. Also, documentation of public service announcements by radio or television stations, and copies of flyers provided to students or mailed to students' parents.

During a scheduled CRE, TDA will observe community participation at the site and attempt to confirm whether the school advertised meals as described in their application.

SSO Outreach/Awareness

Beginning in summer 2011, regardless of whether the CE participates in the SSO, SFSP or does not participate in a summer feeding program at all, the CE **must** notify households **before the end of the school year** of the availability and location of summer meals in their geographical area. The information distributed to the households can include the location of all nearby summer feeding program meal sites, times of service and SFSP organization's contact information (if available). The information **must** include the summer feeding program website, www.summerfood.org and the Texas 2-1-1 phone number. The cost of developing the outreach materials should be covered by summer feeding program funds rather than NSLP funds. TDA will also be developing outreach materials for CEs to download and distribute. These materials will be available on www.squaremeals.org and www.summerfood.org prior to the end of the school year. TDA recommends that these outreach materials be included in each student's report card that is distributed on the last day of school and posted on the CE's website.

By March of each year, all CEs participating in TDA's SSO will be notified of the SSO specifics. CEs will be notified by TDA of the deadline to submit necessary information electronically through TX-UNPS.

SSO Monitoring

SFA Level Site Monitoring

The CE must review the meal counting, claiming and meal pattern compliance for each summer site within the first three weeks from the beginning of the SSO operation. TDA has provided a prototype monitoring form to be completed by the CE for each site. Refer to the end of this section for the On-Site Monitoring Form. Schools must keep food production records for the meals produced.

Edit checks are not required for the SSO sites. However, CEs must ensure that meal counts are correctly claimed based on their records of meals served.

When operating the NSLP, such as extended year schools or year-round schools that will be in session during the summer, the CE must conduct edit checks.

State Level Monitoring

TDA will review at least one SSO site in operation at all CEs scheduled for a CRE review during the previous School Year (SY) or scheduled in the upcoming SY.

For example, the review of a SSO site could be conducted as follows:

CRE scheduled in SY 10-11:

- SSO review in Summer 10 or Summer 11.

CRE scheduled in SY 11-12:

- SSO review in Summer 11 or Summer 2012.

TDA may review SSO sites even if a CRE is not scheduled for that CE, especially if concerns arise about management of the SSO operations.

SSO Program Records

Required Program Documentation

Documentation to support meal reimbursement claims include, but are not limited the following: food production records, documentation necessary to support the point-of-service count and a completed On-site Monitoring form(s).

Record Retention

All documentation or records supporting the CE's reimbursement claim must be kept on file for a minimum of five years (public schools) or three years (private schools) after the end of the fiscal year to which they pertain. If audit findings have not been resolved, the applications must be maintained as long as required for the resolution of the issues raised by the audit.

Restrictions on Participation in the SSO

In CEs where NSLP/SBP Performance Standard 1/Performance Standard 2 deficiencies have been noted due to CRE findings, other audit findings or CEs placed on financial hold status will not be allowed to participate in the SSO. Non-school sponsored sites determined to be seriously deficient in the administration of the SFSP or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) will not be approved to operate.

TDA will begin notifying the CE in the spring of each year if the CE will not be allowed to participate in the SSO for that year. CEs restricted from participation in the SSO have the option to apply for the SFSP. CEs that are determined for mandatory participation due to having 50 percent or higher eligibility may participate in the SFSP, unless the CE submits and is approved for a waiver from participation.

Reimbursement Rates

Meals served under the SSO are reimbursed at the “free” rates prescribed by the USDA for the NSLP (including snacks) and SBP. Supper meals, claimed by migrant sites and residential camps, are reimbursed at the NSLP free lunch rate.

Meals served at camps that are approved, as SSO sites are reimbursable only for children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Camps participating in the SSO may not claim any meals at the NSLP paid rate for children who are ineligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Qualified schools continue to receive the severe need breakfast rates under the SSO operations.

Eligible schools participating as SSO sites will continue to earn the commodity entitlement under NSLP for lunches and sites approved to serve and claim suppers.

Schools participating in the SSO that are qualified will receive the extra \$0.02 differential for lunch and supper meals. In addition, lunches claimed under the SSO may count toward the determination of the CE’s eligibility for the extra \$0.02 differential and the site’s eligibility for the severe need breakfast rate.

The CE will receive the same reimbursement rates for non-school sites as for the school sites. When different schools within the CE’s jurisdiction qualify for different rates, such as the severe need breakfast rate, then the non-school site will earn the same reimbursement rates as the nearest school. If the CE is sponsoring a school that is outside its jurisdiction, the CE will receive the same NSLP reimbursement rates that the school site earns during the regular school year. CEs should follow the format of reporting SSO meals in TX-UNPS.

Since the rates change on July 1 each year, the June and July claims for reimbursement cannot be combined. June meals served under the SSO would be included in the same claim as regular

NSLP meals for June. If the CE did not operate the regular NSLP in June but operated the SSO for 10 days or less in June, the CE could combine the June SSO meals on the May claim. Conversely, if the CE operates the SSO for 10 days or less during July, it could combine the July and August claims for reimbursement.

Food Service Management Company's Role in SSO

A food service management company (FSMC) under contract with a CE for NSLP meal service can handle the same administrative tasks for meals served under the SSO. The contract must cover summer meal service under the NSLP. FSMC personnel would follow the NSLP regulations, 7 CFR 210.16, which describe permissible administrative tasks that the company can perform on behalf of the CE.

Application to Participate

CEs can apply to participate in SSO through TX-UNPS beginning May 1st each year. CEs must operate the SSO for a minimum of 30 calendar days.

CE Information Required to Participate

Interested CEs must provide the following information to TDA:

- CE name, address and contracting entity (CE) ID.
- SNP Director's name, phone number and e-mail address.
- Campus names, CE ID and percentages of eligible free and reduced-price children, along with the meal service(s) to be offered (for example, Breakfast/Lunch only).
- If qualifying a non-area eligible site that does not have at least 50 percent eligible children to participate as an area eligible site, the school name and campus number justifying the area
- eligible attendance area is required.

Comparison of Programs – SFSP, NSLP and the Seamless Summer Option

Refer to the following pages for a comparison chart of the SFSP, the NSLP and the SSO.

Comparison of Programs SFSP/NSLP/Seamless Option

This is a comparison between the various summer nutrition programs. The purpose of this comparison chart is to inform and encourage more contracting entities (CEs) to provide meals in the summer and other times when school is not in session. Both the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) reduce paperwork and administrative burden, making it easier for CEs to feed children in low-income areas during the summer months or during the extended breaks of a year-round school schedule.

Areas where the provisions in the Seamless Summer Option are same as SFSP, rather than NSLP, are highlighted as **Same as SFSP**.

Topic	SFSP	NSLP/SBP	Seamless Summer Option
Times of Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May – September for traditional school calendar areas • October-April during unanticipated school closures (i.e. emergencies) • During student vacations for schools on a continuous year calendar 	When school is in session as established by the school district, including summer school.	Same as SFSP
Meal Service Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Camps Churches Community Centers Housing projects Libraries Migrant centers Parks Playgrounds Pools Other public sites where children gather 	Schools Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCI's)	Same as SFSP
Meal Cost for Children	All meals are free (Although camps 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)	Meal cost (free/reduced price/paid) for children is based on their income eligibility.	Same as SFSP

Comparison of Programs

Topic	SFSP	NSLP/SBP	Seamless Summer Option
Establishing Site Eligibility	<p><u>Open sites:</u> 50 percent or more of the children in an area qualify for free or reduced price school meals, based on school or census data, and open to community.</p> <p><u>Enrolled sites:</u> 50 percent or more of enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced price meals, determined by approved application, or operate in an eligible area.</p> <p><u>Migrant sites:</u> Certification by a migrant organization that the sites serve children of migrant farm workers.</p> <p><u>Camps:</u> offer a regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children.</p>	<p><u>Schools:</u> Public and private non-profit schools of high school grade and under that are part of State's education system.</p> <p><u>RCCI's:</u> Public and licensed, non-profit, private</p>	Same as SFSP
Type of Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast • Lunch • Snack (AM or PM) • Supper <p>Lunch & supper cannot be reimbursed for the same day by the same site, except for camp and migrant sites.</p> <p>2 meals for most sites 3 meals for migrant sites and camps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast • Lunch • Afterschool Snacks 	Same as SFSP
Maximum Number of Meals	2 meals for most sites 3 meals for migrant sites and camps	Breakfast Lunch Afterschool Snack	Same as SFSP
Commodities	1.5 cents per meal for sponsors and self-prep sites May also receive bonus commodities, as available, in accordance w/ statute.	22.25 cents per meal (2011-12 school year) May also receive bonus commodities, as available, in accordance w/ statute.	Same as NSLP

Comparison of Programs

Topic	SFSP	NSLP/SBP	Seamless Summer Option																												
Reimbursement Rates	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of meal</th> <th>Self-prep or rural</th> <th>Other types of sites</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Breakfast</td> <td>1.8800</td> <td>1.8450</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lunch or Supper</td> <td>3.2925</td> <td>3.2375</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Snack</td> <td>0.7750</td> <td>0.7575</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Calendar Year 2011</p> <p>*For the contiguous States only. Rates for Alaska & Hawaii are higher.</p>	Type of meal	Self-prep or rural	Other types of sites	Breakfast	1.8800	1.8450	Lunch or Supper	3.2925	3.2375	Snack	0.7750	0.7575	<p>Less than 60% & severe need</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of meal</th> <th>Breakfast</th> <th>Lunch</th> <th>Snack</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Paid</td> <td>.27</td> <td>.26</td> <td>.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R/P</td> <td>1.21</td> <td>2.37</td> <td>.38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Free</td> <td>1.51</td> <td>2.77</td> <td>.76</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>School Year 2011-12</p> <p>*For the contiguous States only. Rates for Alaska & Hawaii are higher.</p>	Type of meal	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack	Paid	.27	.26	.07	R/P	1.21	2.37	.38	Free	1.51	2.77	.76	<p>All eligible meals provided under seamless option paid at NSLP/SBP applicable rates</p>
Type of meal	Self-prep or rural	Other types of sites																													
Breakfast	1.8800	1.8450																													
Lunch or Supper	3.2925	3.2375																													
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Paid	.27	.26	.07																												
R/P	1.21	2.37	.38																												
Free	1.51	2.77	.76																												
Reimbursement Method	<p>SFSP sponsors receive the maximum amount of operating and administrative reimbursements (meals times rates) without regard to their actual or budgeted costs.</p> <p>Sponsors may use reimbursements to pay for any allowable program cost.</p> <p>Camps are reimbursed only for meals served to eligible children.</p>	<p>Total meals by type times the free, reduced, or paid rate for each type of meal.</p> <p>Extra \$.02 per lunch if 60 percent or more of lunches in second preceding year were free or reduced price</p> <p>Additional payments for free or reduced price breakfasts in severe need schools</p>	<p>If area eligible, all meals reimbursed at NSLP/SBP free rate</p> <p>If applications required (camps or closed enrolled in non-eligible area), free and reduced price meals reimbursed at free NSLP/SBP rate. No reimbursement for paid meals</p> <p>No separate administrative reimbursement provided</p>																												
Monitoring Required of SFA/Sponsors	<p>Pre-operational visits before a new or problem site operates the summer program.</p> <p>Site visits the first week of operation (waived for experienced school sponsors).</p> <p>Site review during first 4 weeks of operation, followed by additional monitoring as needed.</p>	<p>Onsite review of lunch counting and claiming system for each school by Feb. 1st each year.</p>	<p>Review of meal counting, claiming and meal pattern compliance at least once during each site's operation.</p>																												

Comparison of Programs

Topic	SFSP	NSLP/SBP	Seamless Summer Option
Monitoring Required of State	Review every 3 years; more frequently based on program size and prior problems identified by the State Agency.	Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) every 5 years. School Meal Initiative (SMI) review every 5 years to determine how well the CE is meeting the nutrition standards.	CRE every 5 years. Must include one seamless site in a CRE review of a CE participating in the option. SMI reviews are not required. Same as NSLP/SBP
Meal Pattern	Meal pattern must meet 7 CFR 225.16(d) standards. However, CEs may substitute NSLP/SBP meal patterns.	Must meet requirement for NSLP menu planning approaches in 7 CFR 210.10; or SBP approaches in 7 CFR 220.8.	Same as NSLP/SBP
Eligible Participants	Persons 18 years or younger and persons 19 or older with a physical or mental disability, as defined by the State.	Students enrolled in a school of high school grade and under determined by the TDA; including persons enrolled in a school program for the mentally or physically disabled; and persons under 21 enrolled in an RCCI.	Same as SFSP
Public Notification	Sponsor must send public media notice regarding program and eligibility.	CE must send public media notice regarding program and letter or notice with an application to parents for all children in attendance at the school at the beginning of each school year.	Public media notice may be done but is not required. CE must state in application how each site (excluding closed enrolled sites) will advertise availability of meals to neighborhood community. Same as NSLP
Eligible Sponsors	CEs (SFAs) Local government agencies Private non-profit Universities or Colleges Community & faith-based	CEs (SFAs)	Same as NSLP

Seamless Summer Option Questions and Answers (FY 2009 Edition)

General

1. **Question:** What is the Seamless Summer Option (SSO)?

Answer: The SSO is designed to encourage more CEs to provide meals during summer and other school vacation periods. This option combines features of the NSLP, SBP, and SFSP. The SSO reduces paperwork and administrative burden making it easier for CEs to feed children in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods and, for year-round schools, school vacation periods longer than 10 school days.

2. **Question:** What organizations may participate in the SSO?

Answer: Only CEs administering the NSLP or SBP may participate in the SSO. However, with TDA approval, CEs may sponsor non-school sites.

3. **Question:** Is TDA required to allow CEs to operate under the SSO?

Answer: Yes.

4. **Question:** What sites are eligible to participate as facilities sponsored by a CE in the SSO?

Answer: The following types of sites may participate and may be located in schools or at non-school facilities (buildings or outdoor locations).

Area Eligible **

Open

- Serves all children through age 18 at a site that is located within the geographical boundaries of a school attendance area that has at least 50 percent of its children approved for free or reduced-price school meals or based on other data as discussed in #12 of these Questions and Answers.
- Meals reimbursed at free school meal rates for all attending children.

Restricted open

- On a first-come, first-serve basis, serves children through age 18 at a site that is located within the geographical boundaries of a school attendance area that has at least 50 percent of its children approved for free or reduced price school meals or based on other data as discussed in #12 of these Questions and Answers.
- Attendance is limited for reasons of security, safety; or control.
- Meals reimbursed at free school meal rates for all attending children.

**** Area eligibility is based on the percentage of enrolled children approved for free or reduced price meals as of the last day of operation of the most recent school year or the last day of the previous October or other data as discussed in #12 of these Questions and Answers.**

Enrolled

Closed enrolled

- Serves only children through age 18 in a specific program or activity serving only an identified group of children.
- Meals reimbursed for all children in attendance at the free school meals rates when the site has:
 - At least 50 percent of the children enrolled at the site approved for free or reduced-price school meals; or
 - Documentation indicating that the site is located within the geographical boundaries of a school attendance area with at least 50% of its children approved for free or reduced-price school meals or other data as discussed in Question #12 of these Questions and Answers.

A closed enrolled site not meeting one of the above criteria is not eligible to participate unless qualified to participate as a day camp.

- A closed enrolled site with less than 50 percent of their enrolled children approved for free or reduced price school meals is not eligible to participate unless qualified to participate as a day camp.
- Enrolled children's eligibility status may be determined by:
 - Information obtained from their schools;
 - Applications submitted and approved by the sponsoring school or local educational agency (LEA);
 - Direct certification conducted by the sponsoring or school or LEA.

Camps

- May be residential or non-residential (day camp).
- Must offer regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children.
- Eligibility must be established for each enrolled child.
- Cannot establish eligibility based on the camp's location in a geographical area of a school attendance area with 50 percent of its eligible for free or reduced price meals or using other data as discussed in #12 of these Questions and Answers; or based on 50 percent or more of camp's enrolled children being approved for free or reduced-price meals.
- Only meals served to children through age 18 who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals (based on individual eligibility) may be reimbursed.

- Enrolled children’s eligibility status may be determined by:
 - Information obtained from their schools;
 - Applications submitted and approved by the sponsoring school or LEA;
 - Direct certification conducted by the sponsoring school or LEA.
- Meals reimbursed at the free school meals rates for eligible children in attendance.
- Meals served to ineligible children are not reimbursed; camps may charge ineligible children for meals.

Migrant

- Primarily serving children through age 18 of migrant families, as certified by a migrant coordinator.
- Meals reimbursed for all children in attendance at the free school meals rates.

State Agency Approval of SSO Participation

5. **Question:** What are the criteria for CE participation in the SSO?

Answer: The CE must be able to demonstrate administrative capability and financial viability to properly operate during school vacation periods. TDA will not approve applications from CEs that have had a Performance Standard 1 or Performance Standard 2 violation in their most recent Coordinated Review Effort (CRE). Further, schools and sites that have been determined to be seriously deficient in the administration of the SFSP or Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) cannot be approved for participation in the SSO. Previous participation in the SFSP is not a requirement for participating in the SSO.

6. **Question:** What are the requirements for SSO site (including schools) applications?

Answer: At a minimum, CEs must submit the following information for each site to TDA for application approval:

- Name, address, and phone number of each site;
- An indication of whether the site would operate for schools that have a year-round school calendar and provide meals during the duration of vacation periods;
- Type of site (See #4 in these Questions and Answers);
- Name of the organization(s) that will operate the site for the CE (if applicable);
- Types of meals, including day(s) of week and time(s) of day, served;
- Additional information listed below for the particular type of site.

For open sites and restricted open sites:

- Documentation indicating that the site is located within the geographical boundaries of a school attendance area with at least 50 percent of its children approved for free or reduced-price school meals or other data as discussed in #12 of these Questions and Answers; or, if the site is a school, that at least 50 percent of children enrolled in the school are approved for free or reduced-price meals;
- For restricted open sites, an explanation of why the CE is restricting attendance on the

basis of security, safety or control.

For closed enrolled sites:

- Documentation indicating that the site is located within the geographical boundaries of a school attendance area with at least 50 percent of its children approved for free or reduced-price school meals or other data as discussed in #12 of these Questions and Answers; or that at least 50 percent of the children enrolled at the site are approved for free or reduced price school meals;
- If individual children's eligibility is the basis for eligibility, the source of the documentation (from their regular schools, applications submitted to site and approved by the sponsoring school or LEA or a combination of both sources);
- An explanation of why the CE is sponsoring a closed enrolled site.

For camps:

- Indicate type of camp:
 - residential or
 - non-residential (day camp);
- For non-residential camps, a brief description of the organized program for participating children;
- An explanation of why the CE is sponsoring camps instead of establishing other, more conventional SSO sites;
- The source of the documentation for individual children's eligibility (from their regular schools, applications submitted to site and approved by the sponsoring school or LEA or a combination of both sources);
- Certification that the camp will only claim reimbursement for children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

7. **Question:** A school year is defined as July 1 through June 30 and the new income eligibility guidelines (IEGs) become effective on July 1. Since SSO sites may be operational across two school years, can eligibility information from the prior school year continue to be used and which IEGs should be used?

Answer: The information from the school year that ended on June 30th may be used to determine area eligibility. Further, a child's individual eligibility (either based on an application or direct certification) from the school year that ended on June 30th may also be used. If an application is submitted to determine an individual child's eligibility, the CE would use the IEGs in effect at the time an application was processed.

8. **Question:** Is TDA required to provide training to CEs approved to operate the SSO?

Answer: There is no mandatory training, but the CEs should contact their Education Service Center (ESC) for technical assistance.

Site Eligibility

9. **Question:** Can a CE sponsor a site that is located outside of its district?

Answer: Yes, with TDA approval.

10. **Question:** Can a CE sponsor non-school sites operated by other non-profit organizations?

Answer: Yes, with TDA approval.

11. **Question:** Can a CE sponsor sites (school or non-school) which are operated by profit-making entities?

Answer: No, profit-making entities cannot be sites under the SSO.

12. **Question:** Can sites qualify for participation in the SSO by using data other than a school's percentage of free or reduced price enrollment?

Answer: Yes. The CE may use census block group data as approved by TDA. TDA must also approve the use of data from other sources, such as departments of welfare or education and zoning commissions, prior to use. Generally, current data must be used.

13. **Question:** Once approved to operate the SSO, must site eligibility be re-determined each year?

Answer: Yes, for any sites, such as closed enrolled sites and camps that participate on the basis of individual children's eligibility. No, for any sites that participate on the basis of area eligibility. If the SSO site is located within the geographic boundaries of a school attendance area and that school has 50 percent or more free and reduced-price participation, then the site is eligible to participate in the SSO for 5 years. SSO sites qualified on the basis of census block group data (see #12 of these Questions and Answers) are certified under that data until new data is available.

14. **Question:** If the site is either a school using Provision 2 or 3 or is within the attendance area of a school using Provision 2 or 3, what eligibility data is used?

Answer: Data from the school's base year may be used to determine area eligibility. As discussed in #12 of these Questions and Answers, the CE may also use census block group data as approved by TDA. TDA must also approve the use of data from other sources, such as departments of welfare or education and zoning commission's prior to use.

15. **Question:** Can a CE limit its sponsorship just to school sites?

Answer: Yes. A CE should match its sponsorship of sites with its financial and

administrative capabilities. Where feasible, a CE could expand its SSO participation to serve children in the community by sponsoring non-school sites that are operated by non-profit organizations.

16. **Question:** Under what circumstances can a school operate an academic summer school and also serve as SSO?

Answer: Any meals served to children in the academic summer school during the time they are considered attending school must be claimed and reimbursed under the NSLP and SBP. If the school site provides meals only to enrolled summer school students, it is not eligible to participate in the SSO. If, however, it opens their feeding programs to the community, all meals can be served free under the SSO for sites in eligible areas.

17. **Question:** Can a school or site participating under the SSO as an open site serve meals at staggered times for community children and school children attending summer school?

Answer: Yes, but it must be the same meal service (i.e., food served, length of serving time, eating area, etc.).

18. **Question:** Can a year-round school with off-track breaks participate in the SSO?

Answer: Yes, as long as the school is on a year-round/continuous schedule and the off-track breaks are officially part of the school schedule. Typically, the off-track breaks are at least 10 school days; however, shorter periods may be approved by TDA.

Periods of Operation

19. **Question:** What are the months of operation for schools operating under a traditional school calendar?

Answer: The months of SSO operation for these schools are:

- May through September when school is not in session
- October through April for non-school sites only that are responding to an unanticipated school closure (see #22 of these Questions and Answers).

20. **Question:** When may the SSO be operated in year-round schools?

Answer: The SFA may operate the SSO during any scheduled breaks of 10 or more school days, unless shorter periods are approved by TDA. In addition, the SSO may operate any time during the year for non-school sites only that are responding to an unanticipated school closure (see #22 of these Questions and Answers).

21. **Question:** Can schools operating on a traditional school calendar operate the SSO during winter or spring breaks or at other times when school is closed?

Answer: No, unless there is an unanticipated school closure (see #22 of these Questions and Answers). Schools following a traditional school calendar cannot offer meals under the SSO during winter or spring breaks.

22. **Question:** What is an unanticipated school closure?

Answer: An unanticipated school closure is defined as due to a natural disaster, unscheduled major building repair, and court order relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management dispute, or other similar cause as approved by TDA. As mandated by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, meals provided during an unanticipated school closure must be served at non-school sites.

Meal Service

23. **Question:** What is the age requirement for children participating in the SSO?

Answer: All persons in the community who are 18 years of age and under and those persons over age 18 who meet TDA's definition's of mentally or physically disabled may receive meals under the SSO.

24. **Question:** If a closed enrolled site employs staff that are 18 or younger, can the meals served to those staff members be claimed under the SSO?

Answer: No, the meals cannot be claimed because it is a closed enrolled site. In closed enrolled sites, only those meals served to the enrolled children may be claimed. Even though the teen-age staff members meet the age requirement, they are not enrolled at that site. As employees, they cannot be considered enrolled.

25. **Question:** Can an SSO site charge for meals served to participating children?

Answer: No. Meals at all approved SSO sites, except for camps, must be served free of charge to all children. CEs that sponsor camps may charge for the meals served to children who are not eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.

26. **Question:** What are the types of meals that may be served under the SSO?

Answer: With the limitations described in #27 of these Questions and Answers, a site may serve breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack and supper under the SSO. Menu planning must follow one of the regulatory menu planning approaches in the NSLP and the SBP.

27. **Question:** How many meals are reimbursable under the SSO per day?

Answer: The number and type of meals that may be reimbursed depends on the category of site. At open, restricted open, closed enrolled sites: a maximum of two meals, such as lunch and breakfast, or lunch and one snack, or breakfast and one snack, may be claimed per day (except for SBP meals, see #35 of these Questions and Answers).

At camps (residential and non-residential): only the meals served to children eligible for free or reduced meals (based on approved applications or direct certification) may be reimbursed; a maximum of three meals, such as breakfast, lunch and one snack, may be claimed per day (except for SBP meals, see #35 of these Questions and Answers). Lunch and supper may be claimed when served to the same children on the same day.

At migrant sites: a maximum of three meals, such as breakfast, lunch and one snack, may be claimed per day (except for SBP meals, see #35 of these Questions and Answers).

Only camps and migrant sites may claim both lunch and supper served to the same children on the same day.

28. **Question:** What meal pattern/menu planning system is to be used for a supper meal under the SSO?

Answer: CEs use the NSLP options described in Section 9 of this manual.

29. **Question:** Are there designated meal periods for SSO sites?

Answer: Yes. Meal times for breakfast and lunch must follow the designated times in the NSLP and SBP regulations. Breakfast must be served to a child in the morning hours. Lunch must be offered between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. Supper meals must begin before 7:00 p.m. and end by 8:00 p.m. Snacks must be evenly and adequately spaced between other meal service times to minimize food waste and ensure good nutrition practices.

30. **Question:** Will a la carte sales be allowed at the same time that the seamless option meals are being served?

Answer: Yes, as long as a la carte items sold do not violate the requirements of the TPSNP. However, a la carte sales are not encouraged during summer meal service. Children should be encouraged to participate in the meal service being offered before they pay for a la carte items.

31. **Question:** Can meals be served on weekends under the SSO?

Answer: Yes, with TDA approval. A CE that plans to serve weekend meals in the SSO must include this information in its application.

32. **Question:** Must a school differentiate between meal counts for on-track (NSLP/SBP) and off-track (SSO) children in year-round sites?

Answer: Yes. Since off-track students at SSO sites may receive meals free of charge regardless of their eligibility status, the school or site must be able to distinguish between them and the on-track students who may be paying reduced or full prices for their meals. The school must also distinguish the different tracks because off-track meals are reimbursed at the free rate and the on-track meals are reimbursed at the free, reduced-price or paid rates.

33. **Question:** Are SSO sites required to get permission from TDA prior to a field trip?

Answer: There is no requirement that CEs must obtain permission prior to serving meals on a field trip.

34. **Question:** Is offer versus serve allowed at SSO sites?

Answer: Yes. The CE may allow offer versus serve, but is not required, at SSO sites.

35. **Question:** Are second meals reimbursable at SSO sites?

Answer: Second breakfasts, lunches and snacks may be offered but cannot be claimed under the SSO.

36. **Question:** Can an SSO site serve meals family style?

Answer: The only sites that may offer meals family style are camps; other types of sites may not offer meals family style.

Local Level Monitoring

37. **Question:** When must SSO sites be reviewed by the CE?

Answer: Each year CEs are required to review all of their SSO sites at least once during its operation. The CE must review the site's compliance with meal counting, claiming, menu planning, and food safety requirements.

38. **Question:** To assure that the menu planning requirements are met, should the school/site have records of food purchases?

Answer: Yes. Schools must keep production records and menus for the meals they produce. The production records must allow TDA to evaluate how the meals contribute to the required food components or menu items.

39. **Question:** Do CEs have to conduct edit checks for sites operating under the SSO?

Answer: No. Edit checks are not required for SSO sites during the period of time that the CE is operating the sites under the SSO policies. However, CEs must ensure that meal counts match participation and claims reflect the number of meals served. However, if a school is operating the NSLP/SBP for academic summer schools, edit checks are required as outlined in the Counting and Claiming Section of this manual.

State Level Monitoring

40. **Question:** Is TDA required to review SSO sites during the School Year (SY)?

Answer: Yes. TDA must review at least one SSO site in operation at all CEs scheduled for a CRE review. The review may be conducted in the summer prior to or following the scheduled CRE. For example:

<u>CRE Schedule</u>	<u>Seamless Summer Site Review</u>
SY 2010/2011	Summer of 2010 or 2011
SY 2011/2012	Summer of 2011 or 2012

This will involve a second visit to the CE to evaluate the seamless summer site in operation.

TDA is not required to conduct annual reviews of CEs that operate under the SSO or to conduct any special reviews for these CEs beyond the normal CRE review schedule. However, TDA may review SSO sites even if a CRE is not scheduled for that CE, especially if there are concerns about management of the SSO.

41. **Question:** Can a CRE be scheduled during the summer to avoid making the second visit to the SSO site?

Answer: Only if the school is operating the NSLP on a year-round basis and both NSLP schools and SSO schools will be operating at the time of the review.

42. **Question:** Do findings from seamless summer sites, reviewed on a CRE, contribute to CRE thresholds?

Answer: No. Findings from a review of a SSO site will not be incorporated into the CRE report or the annual FNS-640 report; a separate report on these findings should be issued to the CE as an addendum to the CRE report.

While fiscal action for the SSO is computed separately from CRE findings, the amount of fiscal action for the NSLP and the SSO must be combined to determine if the \$600 disregard can be applied to any over-claim.

Program Access

43. **Question:** How can CEs operating an academic summer school attract children from the community who are not attending summer school?

Answer: Both in the approval process and in the review of sites, TDA will ensure that schools approved as SSO sites make a reasonable effort to advertise the availability of free meals to children in the community who will not be attending summer school.

CEs applying to participate in the SSO must describe how each site will advertise the availability of meal services to children in the community. The CE should provide enough detail in its application so the method of advertising meal services to the public can be documented and confirmed later during a review. For example, if the CE stated that SSO site's meals would be advertised in a publication, a copy of the advertisement should be available. Also documentation of public service announcements by radio or television stations, and copies of flyers provided to students or mailed to students' parents.

Reimbursement Rates

44. **Question:** Which reimbursement rates are used in the SSO?

Answer: Meals served under the SSO are reimbursed at the "free" rates prescribed by the USDA for the NSLP (including snacks) and for the SBP. Supper meals are reimbursed at the NSLP's free lunch rate.

At camps operating the SSO, only those meals served to children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals may be reimbursed at the free rate. Meals served to children who are ineligible for free or reduced-price meals are not reimbursable.

45. **Question:** Will qualifying schools continue to receive the severe need breakfast rates under the SSO?

Answer: Yes.

46. **Question:** Will eligible schools participating as SSO sites continue to earn the commodity entitlement under NSLP?

Answer: Yes. Schools will receive the full commodity allotment for both lunches and suppers.

47. **Question:** Will schools participating in the seamless option still receive the extra \$.02 differential for lunch and supper meals?

Answer: Yes. In addition, lunches claimed under the SSO may count toward the determination of the CE's eligibility for the extra \$.02 differential and the school's eligibility

for the severe need breakfast rate.

48. **Question:** What rates will non-school sites receive?

Answer: In most cases, the CE will receive the same reimbursement rates for non-school sites as for the school sites. When different schools within the CE's jurisdiction qualify for different rates, such as the severe need breakfast rate, then the non-school site will earn the same reimbursement rates as the nearest school. If the CE is sponsoring a school that is outside of its jurisdiction, the CE will receive the same NSLP reimbursement rates that that school site earns during the regular school year.

Reporting

49. **Question:** How will CEs report the meals served in the SSO to TDA?

Answer: CEs will claim reimbursement for SSO meals through TX-UNPS.

52. **Question:** Since the new NSLP and SBP rates for the upcoming SY are effective in July, how would the claims for June and July be handled?

Answer: Since the NSLP rates change on July 1, the June and July claims cannot be combined. June meals served under the SSO would be included in the same claim as regular NSLP meals for June. If the CE did not operate the regular NSLP in June but operated the SSO for 10 days or less in June, it could combine the June SSO meals on the May claim. Conversely, if it operates the SSO for 10 days or less during July, it could combine the July and August claims.

53. **Question:** Can a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) under contract with a CE for NSLP/SBP meal service handle the same administrative tasks for meals served under the SSO?

Answer: Yes, assuming that the contract includes the SSO meal service, FSMC personnel must follow the NSLP regulations, which describe permissible administrative tasks that the company can perform on behalf of the CE.

Seamless Summer Option On-Site Monitoring Form

The Seamless Summer Option On-site Monitoring Form should be used by the CE to evaluate its program. Complete one for every summer site the CE has in operation. To be in compliance, CE staff should respond “yes” to the questions. For further explanation, a section reference from the *Administrator’s Reference Manual* appears in the left-hand column.

		YES	NO
<i>Counting and Claiming</i>	1. Is the count taken at the point-of-service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. If the cashier/counter is at the beginning of the line, is a monitor stationed at the end of the line who removes from the count any meal which does not contain sufficient components in order to claim reimbursement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Is there a system in place to ensure that second meals are not claimed for reimbursement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. After viewing the point-of-service count in operation, does it appear that it yields an accurate count?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. If there is more than one serving line, are the counts from all lines properly consolidated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Is there a trained substitute cashier/counter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. When preparing the monthly reimbursement claim, are the numbers of meals claimed for all schools/sites consolidated correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Is an on-site review completed and documented during the first three weeks of operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Lunch, Breakfast and Snack</i>	9. Are the same meal patterns used August through May?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Are each of the required food items offered at every meal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Are complete food production records maintained on all meals claimed for reimbursement, including breakfasts, snacks, lunches and suppers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Are utensils that yield standard-sized servings used for portioning all menu items?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13. Based on the menu system being used, are the required number of meat servings offered each week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14. Based on the menu system being used, are the required number of bread servings offered each week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15. Based on the menu system being used, are the meals being analyzed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		YES	NO
	16. Is school/site operating only two meal services? (i.e., Breakfast/Lunch or Lunch/Snack)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	17. Is each child permitted to select from the required choices of milk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other Operational Issues</i>	18. Is the nondiscrimination statement and information as to where a complaint may be filed included on program materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	19. a. Are procedures established to receive complaints alleging discrimination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Are complaints forwarded to the Texas Department of Agriculture?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	20. Is there no separation by race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in the eating periods, seating arrangements, serving lines or eating areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21. Did the school/site conduct outreach to the media and community/grass roots organizations about feeding sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Financial</i>	22. Are records maintained for a period of five years (public schools) or three years (private schools and RCCIs) after the final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year or until resolution of any audits or reviews?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature of Site Manager

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Name of Site