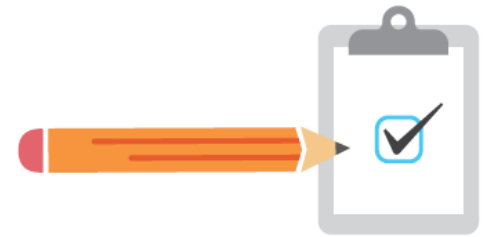


# Accurate Meal Counting

## IN THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM



Sponsors are paid based on the number of meals served to children, so keeping an accurate meal count is an essential component of making sure the claims are also accurate.

### Reimbursable Meals Are:

#### Served to children 18 years and under

Meals served to disabled adults, ages 19 - 21, who participate in a public or private educational program may also be claimed for reimbursement. Adults can be served a meal, but the meals are not reimbursable.

#### Counted at the Point of Service (POS)

POS means at the point in which the child has received a complete and reimbursable meal. Typically the count is taken at the end of the service line.

#### Meet meal pattern requirements

Children must select a meal based on the meal pattern and offer vs serve (if applicable) for the appropriate meal type. Schools have a choice of selecting the SFSP meal pattern or the NSLP/SBP meal pattern. Be sure to check the application to know which one has been approved.

#### Served during the approved meal service time

Sponsors report meal service times within the SFSP application. Sites are to serve during the approved and advertised time periods. If it is determined that time is not working out, the SFSP application can be updated by the Sponsor and approved by DPI.

#### Eaten Onsite

Children must eat the meal at the approved site unless the meal is served during a field trip. Based on the sponsor's policy, only one item - a fruit, vegetable, or grain component, may be taken offsite.



## Know Your Meal Types

### 1st Meals

Complete meal served to a child 18 and under or disabled adult participating in an educational program.

### 2nd Meals

Complete 2nd meal served to a child 18 and under or disabled adult participating in an educational program. Seconds must be served after all other children receive a 1st meal.

### Program Adult Meals

Meal served to adults working directly with the operational side of the SFSP. Program Adult meals are an allowable SFSP expense, but cannot be reimbursed.

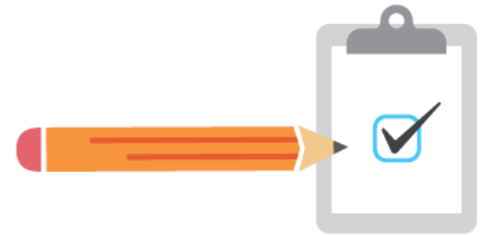
### Non-program Adult Meals

Meals served to all other adults. These are not an allowable cost to the SFSP so the adult or another fund must pay for them.

### Disallowed Meals

Meals served to children that are not eligible for reimbursement (incomplete, taken offsite).

# Choosing the best way to count meals



There are different ways a POS count can be taken. Different methods can be chosen based on how the site operates.

## Check-off or Tally Sheets

Person stands at the end of the meal service line and checks off meals by type (1st, 2nd, Program Adult, Non-program Adult, and Disallowed Meal) as they are served. Prototype meal count forms can be found online at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition/sfsp/market>.

Meals received		50	+ Meals available from previous day	0	=	50	(Total meals available)	0											
% pints milk received		50	+ % pints milk available from previous day	5	=	55	(Total % pints available)												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120

## Token or Popsicle Stick Method

Children pick up a token or popsicle stick at the beginning of the line and put it in a container at the end of the line after receiving a complete meal. Last server in line verifies the meal meets requirements and that the token/popsicle stick is placed in the container. Works well when there are limited staff. Need to use different color tokens or popsicle sticks and/or method to count 2nd meals and/or adult meals.

## Computer POS System

Set up the appropriate meal types in a POS system. Person with computer, tablet, or smart phone is positioned at the end of the line and records the meals in the system as they are served. This method allows for the generation of reports at the end of the claim period resulting in more accurate claims.

## What if...

### A child wants to leave with a meal?

Plan ahead because it will happen! Post signs around the site, serving area, and put notices on menus that it is expected that children stay on site to eat. Make sure all staff at the site are aware of the rules so they can help. Remind children as they are coming through the line the first few days of the expectations. If you are unable to prevent a child from leaving with a meal, that meal is then disallowed. Establish a procedure to follow to ensure the meal is removed from the 1st meal count.

### A site is not returning meal count forms?

Establish a procedure before the summer starts that addresses expectations on returning meal count forms, calling in counts, etc. Without proper meal count documentation, meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

## Clicker Counter Method

Person stands at the end of the meal service line and clicks for each complete meal that is served to a child. A different clicker or method is needed to count 2nd meals and/or adult meals.



Whichever method is chosen, develop policies and procedures to help ensure meal count integrity and train staff. Plan to check meal count records weekly for errors, missing information, fluctuations in numbers, and problems with delivery (if applicable).

## Organization is Key

Consider providing sites with meal count forms pre-printed with the site name, dates, type of meal service, etc. Copy meal count forms for the various meal services on different colored paper, use light colors if forms are faxed - examples: breakfast on yellow, lunch on pink, supper on blue and snack on green. Request completed forms to be returned by a specific day/time.

## Family Style Meal Service

Camps and enrolled sites can serve family style. Take the POS count when the children have been seated and have been offered a complete meal.