

## School Nutrition Bulletin 1718-03

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2017

### Announcements from the WI DPI School Nutrition Team (SNT)

- It's National School Lunch Week
- October is Farm to School Month
- Updated! SNT Financial Question and Answers Document
- ServSafe Course and Exam Opportunity
- NEW! Recipe Analysis Workbook

#### It's National School Lunch Week!

The theme for this year's National School Lunch Week is "School Lunch: Recipes for Success," which is designed to help you share positive school lunch stories and the secret ingredients to success!

The National School Lunch Program plays an important role in helping to ensure that every child in the nation starts school ready to learn. This program is a national commitment to the promotion of our children's health and well-being, allowing children to concentrate on graduating with the skills and knowledge they need to be college and career ready.

Share your stories during the week to show us what makes your school lunch program special! Use the [National School Lunch Week 2017 Toolkit](#) for engagement resources. Be sure to use #NSLW17 and #WisNSLW in your social media posts, and tag the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs on Facebook and Twitter using @WisDPI\_SNP.

#### October is Farm to School Month

Interested in Farm to School? Consider joining the Wisconsin Farm to School Leadership Group or the Wisconsin Farm to School Newsletter listserv!

The Wisconsin Farm to School Leadership Group holds group calls on the second Tuesday of each month from 10 - 11am. Learn about Farm to School efforts happening throughout the state and share your Farm to School stories. The Leadership Group is open to anyone with an interest in Farm to School and is a great way to connect with others. To join, simply email one of the facilitators:

- [Vanessa Herald](#) of the [University of Wisconsin Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems](#)
- [Beth Hanna](#) of [Community Groundworks](#)
- [Allison Pfaff Harris](#) of the [Department of Public Instruction School Nutrition Team](#).

The Wisconsin Farm to School Newsletter is shared twice a month and includes Farm to School updates, resources, trainings, funding, job opportunities, and media features. Subscribe to the Wisconsin Farm to School Newsletter by using this [link](#).

### Updated! SNT Financial Questions and Answers Document

This document has been updated in response to questions our office received regarding USDA Policy Memorandums SP 46-2016, SP 47-2016, and SP 23-2017 on Unpaid Meal Charges. Please note significant USDA clarifications related to student refunds, Q12-14. In addition, SFAs are reminded that it is unallowable for the food service account to absorb “bad debt” as it relates to current or past fiscal periods. This resource can be found on the [SNT Financial Management website](#) under “Unpaid Meal Charges” and also covers common questions related to building and renovations, donations, and partnering with internal or external organizations. SNT encourages authorized representatives to share this resource with local business managers and administration. Below are some of the questions and answers from the document that we would like to highlight.

#### Meal Charge Policy

**Q9. Does the Unpaid Meal Charge Policy need to be pre-approved by the State Agency (SA)?**

A. No. Retain records of the policy and the methods used to communicate the policy to households and any staff responsible for enforcing it. The policy and communication streams will be checked during the Administrative Review (AR).

**Q10. Is the DPI developing a State-level Unpaid Meal Charge Policy?**

A. No. The School Nutrition Team (SNT) encourages agencies to develop a policy that meets both USDA regulations and the unique needs of the local SFA and their families.

**Q11. Can SFAs simply email households a link to the full written Unpaid Meal Charge Policy which is posted on the district’s website?**

A. Maybe. Annually, at the beginning of the school year, every household needs to be provided the full policy in writing. If the length of the policy is burdensome to print and distribute or include in the student handbook, SFAs may email it to households. However, not every household may have access to a computer. SFAs must have a way to assure that every household has been provided a copy of the policy in writing. For example, if an SFA can identify households that do not have an email, or can track bounce backs, the policy must then be mailed or provided through an alternate method. This also applies to transfer students’ mid-year.

#### Refunds

**Q12. After a student graduates or leaves the district, if there are funds remaining in a student’s meal account, can a SFA establish a dollar amount (e.g., anything under \$10.00) that the SFA will not attempt to refund?**

A. No. When *any* student leaves the district or graduates, SFAs must attempt to contact the student’s household to return *any* funds remaining in the account. Currently, there is

no approved flexibility to simply set a dollar threshold (e.g., \$10.00), SFAs can transfer remaining funds in a student's meal account to a sibling in the same household who remains in the district. SNT encourages SFAs to develop policy language which clearly explains how households will be contacted to issue refunds (e.g., via email, phone, mail), the number of times (e.g., three attempts) before the SFA will no longer attempt to issue a refund, and that the school will report the funds as "unclaimed property".

**Q13. If the agency has remaining funds in accounts that can no longer be refunded because the SFA is unable to contact the household, or has exhausted attempts to contact the household, what should happen to the remaining funds?**

A. Funds in student meal accounts are considered a liability until a meal is purchased. When the funds are left "unclaimed", they cannot be used to offset another student's negative account, unless *paid* households have *chosen to donate* those funds to the school food service account. All funds left in any student meal account which cannot be contacted must be turned over to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) as unclaimed property. The DOR has rules concerning unclaimed property that must be followed.

**Q14. There are households that receive free and reduced price meals requesting to donate their remaining funds. Can the SFA implement an optional household signature agreement for *all* eligibility categories (F/R/P) who choose to donate remaining funds when a student graduates or leaves the district? (SP 23-2017 just addresses donations from paid households.)**

A. No. At this time, there is no flexibility which allows for the donation of remaining funds other than from households *not* approved for free and reduced price meals, so these funds must be turned over as unclaimed property.

#### Bad Debt

**Q15. At the end of the current fiscal period, our SFA had \$1,425.00 in unpaid, "uncollectable" student debt for meals and food items sold to students. Does this bad debt get absorbed by the food service account? Can I simply abate the uncollectible portion against the related revenue account with no operating transfer being required?**

A. NO! 2 CFR 200.426 states that "bad debts" are unallowable costs for federal programs. That is why it is important for schools to develop and follow meal charge policies and procedures in order to minimize student debt. If a SFA writes off any "uncollectible" accounts related to meal and food items sold to students in food service, an operating transfer must be recorded from the general fund (Fund 10) to food service (Fund 50) in the amount of the bad debt. If the SFA has set up a repayment plan or is continuing to collect on "delinquent debts", collection efforts can continue, as long as the agency feels it is worth their effort to do so.

**Q16. I have a community member who would like to donate money to food service, to help families who are in need. How is this handled? Is it allowable to put money into**

**student accounts anonymously? The person donating does not want to be acknowledged in any way.**

A. The donation can be receipted into food service (Fund 50 for public schools, Source 291, Gifts). Since the donation has a specific purpose of helping families who are in need, the school can decide how much of the donation can be added to particular family accounts. The school should develop written criteria for deciding which families would qualify for assistance.

**Q17. Who determines when “delinquent debt” should be written off as “bad debt”?**

A. It is up to the local officials at the school to determine when further collection efforts are useless or too costly and when delinquent debt will be written off as bad debt. Local officials need to establish reasonable timeframes and method for collecting unpaid meal charges. The State of Wisconsin does not define what is considered a “reasonable timeframe”.

### [ServSafe Course and Exam Opportunity](#)

Friday, October 27

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

DPI Offices

125 S. Webster Street, Madison, WI 53703

Cost is \$79. If you already own the **7th edition** ServSafe Manager book, exam is only \$38.

[Register here!](#)

Our standard procedure is to distribute books to participants at the beginning of class. If you wish to receive your book ahead of time, please see our [training webpage](#) for more instructions. Please contact [Claire Koenig](#) at (608) 266-3079 or [Rebekkah Plano](#) at (608) 264-6715 with questions about ServSafe.

### [Now Available! The New Interactive Recipe Analysis Workbook \(RAW\) – A Feature of the New USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-Based Tool](#)

Hot off the press! The Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG) Interactive Web-Based Tool now includes a new component, the Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW). The RAW helps program operators determine the meal pattern contribution for their recipes! You can now easily search for creditable ingredients, calculate the meal pattern contribution, and print a contribution statement. Stay tuned for more upcoming releases related to the FBG to include a downloadable version and a mobile app!

FBG is the essential tool for food yield information for all Child Nutrition Programs, helping you: 1) purchase the correct amounts of foods and 2) determine the meal pattern contribution.

The FBG Interactive Web-Based Tool (released July 2017) allows you to:

- Easily search and navigate food yields,

- Compare food yields, and
- Create and save favorite foods lists.

It also includes the interactive Product Formulation Statement Workbook, allowing manufacturers to easily calculate their product's contribution statement and generate crediting documentation.

It's now easier than ever to access the new [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based Tool](#). Create your account and verify with one simple click!

[School Nutrition Bulletin 1718-3, 10/10/17 \(pdf\)](#)

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This is a communication from the WI Department of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Team.

You can contact the School Nutrition Team at [dpifns@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:dpifns@dpi.wi.gov). To subscribe to schoolmealsnews, please send an email to [join-schoolmealsnews@lists.dpi.wi.gov](mailto:join-schoolmealsnews@lists.dpi.wi.gov) [dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition](http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition) #WISchoolMealsRock