



Policy Updates December 18, 2024

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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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Food and Nutrition Division
Nutrition Assistance Programs



Updated 12/18/2024
www.SquareMeals.org

Fees for Online Meal Payments



New Guidance Related to Fees for Online Meal Payments

USDA Memo SP 04-2025, *Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs*
(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/electronic-payments-fees>)

- Effective school year 2027-2028, families with students eligible for reduced-price meal benefits must not be charged any fees for using electronic payment services in the school meal programs.*
- SFAs are encouraged to implement this requirement as soon as they are able. SFAs may use funds in the nonprofit school food service account to cover the fees under their current contract.

* Applies the school year immediately following the expiration of the SFA's current contract with a payment processing company, if the contract expires after SY 2027-28.



New Guidance Related to Fees for Online Meal Payments

USDA Memo SP 04-2025, Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs
(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/electronic-payments-fees>)

- Contains best practices for increasing free or low-cost payment methods.
- Contains ideas for how to increase awareness of free payment methods
- Does NOT contain information on situations when free or reduced-price families use the online payment method for food or services other than reimbursable meals (for example, a la carte, meals for parents)



CHILD NUTRITION

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

New Guidance Related to Fees for Online Meal Payments

REMEMBER:

- SFAs must provide all families a free and accessible method of making deposits to the student meal account.
- SFAs must provide a method of making deposits to the student meal account that does not require computer access.
- SFAs must notify families of available payment options and any associated fees in ways that are easy to find and understand.
- All families must have access to all payment methods made available by an SFA for adding money to their student(s)' meal account(s).



Updated Child Nutrition Label Guidance



Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements

USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025,
*Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation
for Meal Pattern Requirements*
(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation>)

- Child Nutrition (CN) Labels
- Watermarked CN Labels
- Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (PFS)



CN Labels and Dates

- Valid for 5 years
- Date on CN Label is original date of authorization
 - Example: If a CN Label was authorized on Feb. 15, 2024, it is initially valid until Feb. 15, 2029
- If CN Label is over 5 years old, CEs must use the CN Label Verification System to determine if the CN Label was re-approved by USDA and is still valid (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/authorized-labels-manufacturers>)



Summer Rural Non-Congregate 2025!



Summary of Non-Congregate Requirements

- Site must be in rural-designated area
- 2-mile proximity required from nearest site.
- New sponsors will be evaluated based on previous CNP experience
- Sponsor must be in good standing
- Switched SFSP sites will be considered “new”
 - Subject to sponsor pre-operational visits and first two weeks site visit



Available Flexibilities

- Grab-and-Go Unitized Meals (10-day max distribution)
- Parent/Guardian Pick-Up
- Home Delivery (5-day max distribution)
- Bulk Food Component Distribution (5-day max distribution)
- Hybrid Congregate/Non-Congregate Sites



Updates for Summer 2025

- NC Request Form to be released in January (will include meal distribution times)
- ALL SITES must submit the form in 2025.
 - Returning sites from last year will have some streamlining built in.
 - TDA will not establish new sites within 2 miles of sites that operated NC last summer.
 - TDA will be contacting sites that operated last year.

Updates for Summer 2025

- New guidance from USDA expected mid-January.
- Updated FAQs, request form, and resources:
<https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Summer-Meal-Programs/Summer-Non-Congregate-Feeding-Program>
- **PLAN NOW!**
 - Strategize site locations and consider multiple sites along mobile routes to reach families far away.
 - Consider meal service times that are convenient for families with working parents.
 - Think of methodology that streamlines guardian pick-up (for example, pre-registration)
 - Consider community partnerships.

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1. mail:

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

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

program.intake@usda.gov

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