

MEAL COUNTING, CLAIMING, AND REIMBURSEMENT

Target Audience



Child nutrition directors

Staff responsible for meal counting, claiming, and completing reimbursement forms

Estimated Time Required



45 minutes

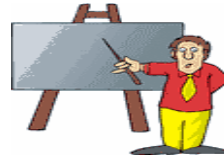
Objectives

- ▶ Understand reviewing and monitoring of Meal Counts.
- ▶ Become familiar with implementation of CNIPS.
- ▶ Understand revising Meal Claiming.
- ▶ Understand provisions (optional).

Tasks



- ✓ Read Instruction.
 - ✓ Review Web sites and Resources.
 - ✓ Complete and submit online Quiz.
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Meal Counting



During a program review, fiscal action may be taken if the meal count system yields incorrect meal counts.

Meal Service Times

BREAKFAST At the beginning or close to the beginning of the school day, generally before 9:00 AM

LUNCH Between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM

MEAL SUPPLEMENTS In the afternoon or in the evening on a school day.

Note: An educational component must be included during the snack period.

Meal Counting Essentials

- ▶ Meal counts must be taken at the point of service.
 - ✓ *The point of service is the point at which it is determined that a reimbursable meal has been served to an eligible child or student.*
- ▶ Meal counting procedures must prevent overt identification.
 - ✓ *Overt identification is openly or physically identifying students receiving free or reduced-price meals.*
 - ✓ Examples of overt identification might include:
 - Separate meal service lines for free and reduced price students.
 - Color-coded tickets for free and reduced-price students.
 - Serving different meals.

Meal Counting Methods

The meal counting methods vary by agency. Common ones include:

- ✓ **RCCI without day students and those agencies on Provisions:** Daily meal count sheets either head count or check each student at the time of meal service, code for eligibility and count meals by eligibility category each day. RCCI without day students may use head count or use the daily meal count sheet by client.
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- ✓ **RCCI with day students**: Must use a daily meal count sheet by client.
- ✓ Staff meal count sheets either head count or check each student at time of meal service.
- ✓ Point of Sale programs.
- ✓ Rosters are used as daily meal count sheets.

**Determine which type of meal count system is best for each site.
It may vary from site to site.**

Meal Counting and Collection Procedures

All agencies must have written meal counting and collection procedures that are approved by the Nutrition Services Division (NSD).

Any procedure revisions must be approved by NSD prior to implementation.

Written meal counting and collection procedures should be available at the agency's central office and all sites where meals are served.

These procedures should include:

- ✓ Time(s) of meal service
 - ✓ Meal counting method(s) used for breakfast and lunch
 - ✓ Sample roster with key information including:
 - Staff responsible for creating and maintaining rosters
 - Eligibility coding.
 - Date(s) the eligibility is effective
 - Procedure to notify staff of eligibility changes
 - ✓ Sample meal count record
 - ✓ Type of balance point used (tray, plate or item count) to compare with meal counts
 - ✓ Type of meal service: pre-plated, family style, offer versus serve
 - ✓ Policy for adult or visitor meals
 - ✓ Procedure to count field trip meals
 - ✓ Procedure to count student workers
 - ✓ Payment procedures
 - ✓ Plan to train staff
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- ✓ Procedures for conducting edit checks of daily meal counts including staff responsibilities and when they will be done
- ✓ Plan to complete site monitoring
- ✓ Method(s) used to of identify ineligible meals
- ✓ Procedure for dropped or second meals
- ✓ Meal count consolidation form(s) and procedures including staff responsibilities



If counting procedures differ between sites and meal types, they all need to be described.



Edit Checks

The daily meal counts for Residential Child Care Institutions cannot exceed the number of residents enrolled each day.

Daily Meal Count Edit Checks

Prior to filing a monthly Claim for Reimbursement, all sponsors must perform daily meal count “edit checks” by multiplying an annual attendance factor by the number of children enrolled at each school.

The attendance factor is the a percentage developed no less than once each school year which accounts for the difference between enrollment and attendance. (average percentage of enrolled students typically attending school on a given day)

To perform daily meal count edit checks, agencies must:

- Multiply the number of enrolled children approved in each meal category (free, reduced-price and paid) by the annual attendance factor.
 - Compare these numbers; know as attendance adjusted eligible figures, to the daily counts of free, reduced–price, and free meals.
 - Document their calculations.
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- Provide written justification for any day where any categorical count exceeds the attendance-adjusted number. (Sample justification could be meal participation increased due to a special promotion or it was pizza day.)



Sample forms can be found at [California Department of Education, Edit Check.](#)

Monthly Edit Check



Meal counts on the Claim for Reimbursement must also not exceed the number of children approved in any category multiplied by the operating days within the month. A sample form can be found at: [Monthly Edit Check Forms](#)

Annual Attendance Factor

The United States Department of Agriculture annually provides a national attendance factor.

Sponsors may determine their own agency-wide attendance factor or ones for specific sites.

RCCIs with no day students should use 100 percent for their attendance factor.

RCCIs with day students should use the national attendance factor or their own actual site or agency-wide attendance factor they have calculated.

Site Monitoring

- ▶ Sponsors must monitor all sites to evaluate meal counting procedures by February 1 every year.
 - ▶ Site monitoring should include observation of meal service through completion of the daily sales report and/or meal count records.
 - ▶ Monitors should ensure the following are not claimed:
 - ✓ Adult meals
 - ✓ Second meals eaten by eligible students
 - ✓ Suppers or dinner (third meal of the day)
 - ✓ Snacks served on ineligible days
 - ✓ Meals not meeting meal pattern
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- ✓ Meals served outside the meal times, unless waiver is in place
- ✓ A la carte items
- ✓ Sack lunches sent to school
- ✓ Lunch eaten at the RCCI when the school offers lunch unless the child is truant or sick



To help identify potential errors, rotate staff that monitors meal counting procedures in your district.



Monitoring must be completed by
February 1
of each year for each site.

Common Meal Counting Errors

- ✓ Lack of or incomplete written meal counting procedures.
- ✓ Meal counting procedures that do not reflect actual meal counting system(s).
- ✓ Meal counting systems that rely on memory.
- ✓ Daily meal counts based on attendance or exceed the daily attendance
- ✓ Meal counts that are the same everyday.
- ✓ Meal counts based on tray counts or the number of meals ordered or delivered.
- ✓ Meal counts that do not match those on the site monitoring report.
- ✓ Meal counts that include ineligible meals.
- ✓ Meal counts not based on an actual point-of-service count.



Meal Count Records Retention

- ▶ Original meal count records for the current day and month should be retained at the site level.
- ▶ All original meal count records, including rosters and site monitoring reports, must be retained for three years plus current year.

Staff Training

All agencies should have a training plan for meal counting procedures. It should include:

- Annual training for key staff.
- Ongoing training for new staff or sites with identified problem.
- Review of all meal counting procedures.
- Document training with an agenda and sign-in sheet.



Child Nutrition and Information Payment System (CNIPS)

California Department of Education (CDE) launched the Claims Payment component of the Child Nutrition and Information Payment System (CNIPS) in November of 2008.

The payment component of the CNIPS system went live on November 25, 2008 with payment of October claims forward.

The Claims Payment component of the CNIPS allows:



- Online entry of claims submission and process.
 - Uploading of claim data from Point of Sale (POS) systems.
 - Reviewing the status of claim submissions online.
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CNIPS Point of Sale (POS) Specifications

For sponsors who decide to submit site meal count data, CNIPS will electronically accept a reimbursement claim through a file produced by each agency's Point of Sale (POS) meal system. This point of sale information can be at this website.

[Point of Sales](#)



With CNIPS, sponsors will continue to be the only entity providing meal count information, either aggregated or at the site level, to CDE.



To view a Power Point presentation explaining CNIPS as well as other CNIPS information go to this website: [CNIPS](#)

To access the CNIPS login page go to: [CNIPS Login](#). A User ID and password will be required. This can also be used to access all CDE forms for Child Nutrition Programs as well as other Child Nutrition Program information.

Current Claim Submission Process



Agencies began submitting claims using the CNIPS beginning with the October 2008 claim.

Claim for Reimbursement Forms and Instructions



School Nutrition Program Calculation Worksheet

Look for "Worksheets"

Use this form to calculate your expected reimbursement. This information is helpful for monthly review of program.



School Nutrition Claim

Look for "Printable Forms"

Current Reimbursement Rates

Current reimbursement rates for completing Claims for Reimbursement can be found at [Reimbursement Rates](#).



Certification and Signature



The authorized official who signs the Claim for Reimbursement is usually the superintendent or business official. He/she must read and understand the statement below before signing the claim form.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge this claim is true and correct in all aspects; that the records are available to support this claim; that it is in accordance with the terms of existing School Nutrition Program agreement(s); and that I have not received payment for this claim.

Claim Submission



- ▶ To complete the reimbursement claim, total your point-of-service meal count sheets for each meal for each site. Then consolidate all meal counts for each meal type.
- ▶ An original claim and a copy must be submitted.
- ▶ The target date to submit Claims for Reimbursement is the tenth of the month following the claim month.
- ▶ All original and adjusted Claims for Reimbursement must be postmarked by the twentieth of the second month after the claim month.

Example: The target date for submission of a June Claim for Reimbursement is July 10th, and the final submission date for an original or adjusted is August 20th.



- ▶ Before submitting your Claim for Reimbursement, use the [School Nutrition Program Claim Checklist](#), under “Worksheets” to help ensure an accurate claim and timely payment.

Once you enter and submit your claim for payment, you will know right then if you have errors that need to be corrected. Once you correct that error, the payment will be processed.



Change of Address

Send requests on agency letterhead stationery to

Resources and Information Management Unit

Nutrition Services Division

California Department of Education

1430 N Street Room 1500

Sacramento, California 95814



Claiming

Claims may be processed after the submission deadline in these instances:

- ▶ Audits or Coordinated Review Efforts (CREs).**
- ▶ One time only exceptions (one every 36 months) from USDA .**
- ▶ Adjusted claims that do not produce over payments.**
- ▶ Downward-adjusted claims.**

The one time only claim submission exceptions will be considered by USDA under the following extenuating circumstances:

- ✓ Death of key staff member.**
- ✓ Natural disaster.**
- ✓ Major mechanical processing breakdown and inability to manually process data.**



Revenue and Costs

- Report annual revenue and costs on your June claim each year.**
 - Report information in whole dollars only.**
 - Ask another staff member to double check the calculations.**
 - Include Summer Seamless Feeding Option sites in the totals.**
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Detailed instructions for reporting revenue and costs can be found at [Revenue and Costs](#).

Go to the [School Nutrition Reimbursement Instructions Booklet](#), page 49, for further instruction on Revenue and Costs.



It is highly recommended that you print the state form and enter your own actual numbers to determine your actual costs.

There are two methods available for determining revenue and costs:

- Method A - Average Cost/Participation
- Method B - Meal Equivalents



Method B is based on these assumptions:

- ✓ Two breakfasts equals the cost of one lunch.
- ✓ One supper equals the cost of one lunch.
- ✓ Four supplements equal the cost of one lunch.

It is recommended that all RCCIs use Method B, Meal Equivalents.

School districts should determine which method is appropriate for allocating food costs in their districts.

Use the [Summary Worksheet Food Service Cost Allocations](#) under “Worksheets”.



For Schools Using Provisions Only Provisions, Meal Counting and Meal Claiming

Provision 1

▶ Base Year and Second Year

- Meal Counts-Record daily meal counts by eligibility category to calculate reimbursement claims.
 - Meal Claims – Use point-of-service meal counts by eligibility category.
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Provision 2

▶ **Base Year (1st year of the 4 year cycle)**

- **Meal Counts – Serve all participating children at no charge. Take meal counts by type.**
- **Meal Claims – Use point-of-service counts by eligibility category.**
- **Record the percentages of free, reduced-price and paid meals served.**

▶ **Second (2nd) through Fourth (4th) Years**

- **Meal Counts – Take daily point-of-service meal counts.**
- **Meal Claims – Multiply point-of-service meal count totals by percentage computed during the same month of the base year.**
- **Negligible change or decline in socioeconomic data – obtain approval at the end of the fourth year and begin a new four year cycle. Applications are not required.**

▶ **Fifth (5th) Year, if an extension is approved.**

- **Meal Counting and Meal Claiming continues the same as for the second year through the fourth year. (not base year)**

Otherwise: Return to a base year or return to standard meal counting and claiming.

Sample Monthly Claim Calculation for Provision 2

**SPONSOR PROVISION 2 CLAIM WORKSHEET
SINGLE SITE**



Agency: ABC District

Current Month/Year: 11/06 Base Year: 2004

Meal: Breakfast [] Lunch [X]

Apply base year claim percentages for each site to subsequent years' total meal counts for corresponding month

1 Month	BASE YEAR				CURRENT YEAR		
	2 Base Year Meals Claimed <small>Actual meal counts claimed by eligibility category</small>	3 Site Claim Percentages		4 Current Year Site Total Meal Count	5 Current Year Site Meals to Claim by Category		
November	Free	275	Free %	76.4%	300	229	Free
	Reduced	50	Reduced %	13.9%		42	Reduced
	Paid	35	Paid %	9.7%		29	Paid
	Total	360	Total %	100%		300	Total



If the total percentages of free, reduced-price, and paid meals do not equal 100 percent for Provision 2 schools, the paid category must be adjusted to make 100 percent.

Always carry the base year percentages to one place beyond the decimal.

Check USDA Provisions 2 Guidance Manual for annualized claiming.



Check the following Web site for more information on:
[Annualized Claiming](#)

Provision 3

▶ Base Year

- Meal Counts - Take daily point-of-service counts by category.
- All participating children are served at no charge or may be charged for meals.
- Meal Claims – Use point-of-service meal counts by eligibility.

▶ Second Year (2nd) through Fifth Year (5th)-Years 1-4 of the cycle

- Meal Counts - Take daily point-of-service meal counts.
- Meal Claims - Use number of meals claimed in each category, each month of the base year for corresponding month in subsequent years, adjusted for enrollment increase or decrease as of October 31st each year compared to the base year. Adjust for the number of serving days in the month, if the number is different than the number of serving days in the base month.



Sample Monthly Meal Claim Calculation for Provision 3



Enrollment Information:

October 31, 2004 (Base Year) = 600
 October 31, 2006 = 700
 Difference = 100
 Percentage Change for 2006 = $100/600 = 17\%$

**SPONSOR PROVISION 3 CLAIM WORKSHEET
SINGLE SITE**

Agency: CDE School School Site: _____
 Base Year: 2004 Meal: Breakfast Lunch
 Current Yr: 2006

SPONSOR: ENTER THE PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT FOR THE CURRENT YEAR INTO COLUMN 3 - Base year claim numbers by category (Free, Reduced, Paid) are multiplied times the percentage change in enrollment in the current year for each corresponding month to arrive at meal counts to claim by category.

1 Month	BASE YEAR		CURRENT YEAR		
	2 Base Year Meals Claimed <small>Actual meal counts claimed by eligibility category</small>	3 Current Year Increase in Enrollment %	4 Current Year Meals to Claim by Category		
November	Free	350	16.7% Increase	408	Free
	Reduced	45		53	Reduced
	Paid	30		36	Paid
	Total	425		497	Total

The chart above assumes the same number of operating days in the base month and the current month.



To calculate the number of meals if the number of operating days is different, complete the above calculation, then divide the number of calculated meal counts by the number of operating days in the base month, then multiply by the number of operating days in the current month.

Also consider annualized claiming. [Management Bulletin 02-131](#)



Calculating an Enrollment Number by Category for the Claim

Provision 2 and 3 sites must calculate an adjusted enrollment by category based on the current month (Provision 2) or year (Provision 3) compared to the Base Year enrollment in order to provide an accurate attendance figure for the monthly edit check.

In the event of enrollment changes, this calculation is important to ensure that the monthly claim be processed smoothly.

Monthly Edit Checks for Meal Claiming and Provisions 2 and 3

Edit checks for Provision 2 and 3 compare the total enrollment times the attendance factor (See Module 5 Meal Counting) to the total meal count each day.

Edit checks are not conducted by category (free, reduced-price and paid).



For Provision 2 and 3, contact the local Child Nutrition Consultant (CNC) for:

- Worksheets which will aid in the calculation of adjusted enrollment.
- Edit check calculation worksheet.
- Excel meal claim calculation worksheets.

Recordkeeping



- ▶ All base year documents should be kept on file with the current year documents.
 - ▶ Eligibility applications should be kept by month by site.
 - ▶ Rosters should be kept by month by site.
 - ▶ Base year eligibility documents must be retained until a new base year is developed and for a minimum of 3 additional years beyond the Provision cycle.
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Recordkeeping Table for Provision Options

Provision 1 Sites	Provision 2 Sites	Provision 3 Sites
BASE YEAR		
Nutrition Services Division approval by site.	Nutrition Services Division approval by site.	Nutrition Services Division approval by site.
March data from the previous school year verifying 80% free/reduced enrollment		
School Calendar	School Calendar	School Calendar
	Meal count percentages developed for each month's claim (the number of meals claimed for each eligibility category divided by total meals)	
ALL YEARS FOLLOWING THE BASE YEAR		
	Socioeconomic data used to determine cycle extension (if applicable).	Socioeconomic data used to determine cycle extension (if applicable).
	Nutrition Services Division extension approval by site.	Nutrition Services Division extension approval by site.
Documents used in base year:	Documents used in base year:	Documents used in base year:
▶ Eligibility scale	▶ Eligibility scale	▶ Eligibility scale
▶ Applications	▶ Applications	▶ Applications
▶ Direct certification list	▶ Direct certification list	▶ Direct certification list
▶ Eligibility rosters	▶ Eligibility rosters	▶ Eligibility rosters
▶ Verification results	▶ Verification results	▶ Verification results
▶ Daily & monthly meal counts	▶ Daily & monthly meal counts	▶ Daily & monthly meal counts
▶ School Calendar	▶ School Calendar	▶ School Calendar
New applications and verification documents for new applications in 2 nd year.		Percentage increase or decrease in enrollment (based on current year Oct. 31 data compared to base year) and number of meals claimed by eligibility category for each month in base year adjusted for the number of operating days in the base month compared to the number of operating days in the current month.

Web Sites For Assistance With Provisions 1, 2, and 3



[Management Bulletin 02-131.](#)

[USDA Provision 2 Guidance.](#)

[CDE Nutrition Services Division Provision 2 Worksheets.](#)

[CDE Nutrition Services Division Provision 3 Worksheets](#)

Resources



For further information on Claim Reimbursement, go to the
[School Nutrition Reimbursement Instruction Booklet](#)



Contact Persons

Claim for Reimbursement

Danette McReynolds

Phone: (916) 322-8313

E-mail: dmcreeynolds@cde.ca.gov

For Meal Counting and Claiming contact your local Child Nutrition Consultant.

For name and phone number of your local Child Nutrition Consultant call:

(800) 952-5609

(916) 445-0850

