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**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

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# Options for Serving Meals in Charter Schools

Think food, since students can't think without it!



- **CDE Vision**
  - All students graduate ready for college and careers, and are prepared to be productive citizens of Colorado.
- **CDE School Nutrition Mission**
  - The Office of School Nutrition is committed to ensuring all school-aged children have equal access to healthy meals by supporting, training, and connecting Colorado's child nutrition community.

# Why Serve School Meals?



- School meals help bridge the gaps in food insecurity for many children
  - 1 in 6 children in Colorado live in households without consistent access to food- that's over 200,000 children!\*
- School meals can help students achieve
  - Students who eat school breakfast have higher rates of attendance and graduation, and have higher math test scores!\*\*

*\*Feeding America*

*\*\*No Kid Hungry*



# Types of USDA Child Nutrition Programs

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers several meal programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Summer Foodservice Program (SFSP)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)- grant-based
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)- only for sponsors NOT participating in any of the above programs



# Benefits of USDA School Meal Programs

- School meals and snacks served can be claimed for reimbursement!
- Meals are served free or at a reduced price to households that qualify for benefits
- Menu patterns ensure that meals meet the nutritional needs of children at different age/grade groups
- Additional funding opportunities are available for schools that participate



# How can my school participate?

In order to participate in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP), your school must be part of a School Food Authority (SFA)

Options:

- a) With your district/Local Educational Agency (LEA)
- b) With another Charter School Food Authority (SFA)
- c) As your own SFA
- d) Special Milk Program (No SFA needed)





## District/LEA is your SFA

- District uses their existing resources/staff to provide meals for your school
  - Could be catered or prepared on site
- Usually the district SFA keeps all revenues, to be used only for the school foodservice fund
- Sometimes participation fees are charged





## Join a Charter SFA or Charter Collaborative SFA

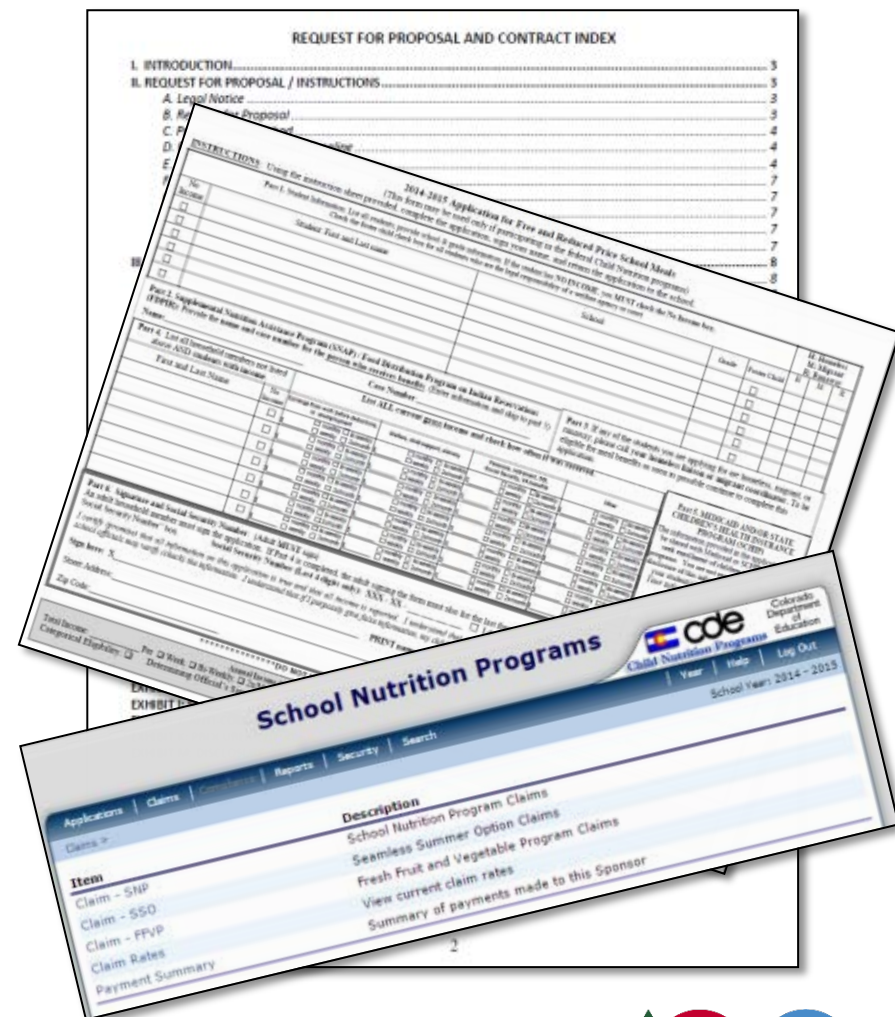
- Most administrative work done by SFA
- Usually fees for participation (based on meals served)
- Must obtain written release from district/LEA
- There are several ways to serve meals:
  - Self operational- you prepare your own meals
  - Vended- an outside Foodservice Management Company (FSMC) prepares the meals- fixed fee per meal
  - Catered by a district SFA- district is not your SFA, but provides fixed fee meals
- Existing Charter SFA's are: Charter School Institute (CSI) and Charter Choice Collaborative



# Working with an SFA

## A few highlights of how an SFA works for a school:

- Supports the school in the Request for Proposal/Contracting process for school meals
- Processes all of the Free and Reduced Price Meal applications and communicates with families regarding benefit eligibility
- Manages reporting to state and districts regarding FRL and meal program information
- Processes monthly claims for reimbursement
- Monitors program compliance and completes audits as required
- Maintains the Point of Service system that captures meals served for claims
- Provides training for staff and technical assistance as needed





## Become a School Food Authority

- Must obtain written release from district/LEA
- Schools must apply to CDE School Nutrition Unit
  - Application deadline is February 15 each year
- School must show ability to operate program
- School is responsible for all paperwork and accountability
- The School Nutrition Unit provides training, technical assistance and support during the process of becoming an SFA



## Provide milk only through the Special Milk Program

- Only for sponsors who do not participate in other federal meal programs
- Non-SFA sponsors are allowed
- A great way to transition into providing meals
  - Become comfortable following regulations and submitting claims for reimbursement
- If students bring their own meals, you can provide milk and be reimbursed for it



# Meal Reimbursement Rates



School Year 2019-2020	Free	Reduced-Price	Paid
Lunch	\$3.48	\$3.08	\$0.39
State Reimbursement		\$0.40	
Breakfast	\$1.84	\$1.54	\$0.31
State Reimbursement		\$0.30	
Special Milk Program			\$.215

\*Reimbursement rates include an additional \$0.07 given for each meal if menus are certified as compliant with menu patterns (new SFA's must be certified for compliance). Severe Need rates are not included in this chart.

\*After a year of participation, schools may qualify for USDA Food Entitlement = \$.3625 per lunch served the prior year



# Child Nutrition Program Considerations

- All CNPs are reimbursement programs
  - Payment ONLY after meals are served to students
  - General fund may need to cover startup costs
- Reimbursement is received for all students who take a complete meal – not just students who are eligible for free or reduced priced meals
- All program regulations must be followed; ongoing support and monitoring is provided by the CDE School Nutrition Unit

# Program Requirements

- In order to participate in any of the federal meal programs, all applicable regulations must be followed. Some examples are:
  - Accept and Process applications for free/reduced meals and assign meal benefits appropriately
  - Maintain confidentiality of student statuses and information
  - Maintain a non-profit foodservice fund
  - Follow meal pattern requirements for appropriate grade groups
  - Practice safe food handling according to state and local food codes
  - Procure goods and services according to federal regulation
  - Compile and claim meals based on their free, reduced, or paid meal status
  - SFA must have a policy to address unpaid meals
  - And much more!







- What are your facilities like?
  - Do you have little space and equipment to serve food or a full kitchen?
- What type of program can your staff support?
  - All options involve some school staff, but it does vary
  - Example: Administrative work load is much higher for your own SFA, but there should be more staff to support the meal program
- What is your student demographic?
  - High F&R%?- may qualify for additional programs (ASP, FFVP)
  - Higher F&R also means higher participation usually



- What financial commitment can your school make?
  - The goal is a break-even program, but any negative foodservice fund balance must be covered by the general fund **each year**
  - In addition, foodservice funds may **only** be used for the foodservice program
- What will your startup costs be?
  - What equipment or facility upgrades are needed?
  - Even catering might require a commercial refrigerator and warming cabinet
  - Technology costs- many SFA's use electronic POS systems to count meals



- Meal programs will impact other school food sales
  - Smart Snacks policy restricts what foods can be sold during the school day
  - Competitive Foods policy restricts food sales in competition with school meals
- Does your school have additional goals around nutrition?
  - Scratch cooking, local, etc.

# Purchasing Equipment



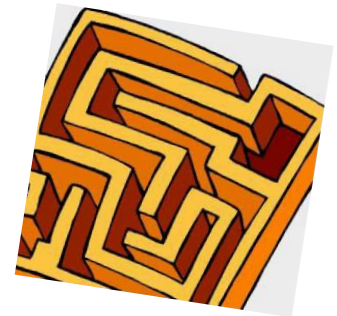
- If using funds outside of the foodservice fund (fund 21), school can purchase equipment using their own procurement policies
- If using foodservice funds, all equipment must be procured according to federal regulation (2CFR 200)
  - Capital Equipment purchases over \$5,000 must be approved by CDE unless they are on the prior approval list
    - Use the Equipment Purchase Approval Tree located on our website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/capitalequipmentapprovaltree>



# Navigating the School Meal Maze



- CharterChoice Collaborative (SFA)  
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  - Britton Knickerbocker, Executive Director  
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- Colorado Charter School Institute (SFA)  
720-468-3078
  - Ilene Agustin, Food Service Director  
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  - Amanda Karger, Director of Finance  
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- Other Colorado Charter SFAs: Hope Online, Peak to Peak, Pinnacle, and Windsor





# THE DISH

Updates from the  
School Nutrition Unit



COLORADO  
Department of Education

<https://us5.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=bee6c43ae6102530cf98cadf9&id=68b648e283>







[CDE School Nutrition Unit](#) knows that you have many areas to think about regarding your school, but remember that studies have shown that your students need food to think!

Please contact us with any questions!

- General questions: 303-866-6661 or [nutrition@cde.state.co.us](mailto:nutrition@cde.state.co.us)
- Charter School questions: contact [Alicia Grove](#) (720-795-2038)