

National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally funded program that assists schools and other agencies in providing nutritious lunches to children at reasonable prices. In addition to financial reimbursement assistance, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods provides foods to help School Food Authorities reduce lunch program costs. The USDA is responsible for overseeing the program nationally. In California, the California Department of Education (CDE), Nutrition Services Division administers the Program.

The NSLP must be open to all enrolled children. Free or reduced-price meals must be provided to those children who qualify for such benefits. Agency staff must verify the income of a percentage of approved income eligibility applications to confirm their eligibility. Records must be kept to document that the lunch program follows all federal and State rules and regulations. Some of the records that must be kept are:

- Meal production records and inventory records that document the amounts and types of food used
- The number of lunches served each day, by site, and by category (free, reduced-price, and paid)
- Applications submitted by families for free and reduced-price meals, by site, and a description of the follow-up actions taken to verify eligibility
- Records of income, expenditures, and contributions received

Public and private nonprofit schools and districts are eligible to participate in the NSLP. Also eligible are public and private nonprofit licensed residential child care institutions (e.g., group homes, juvenile halls, orphanages, etc.).

Additional information is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/nslp.asp>

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