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SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS COLLECTION PROCEDURES FOR PRICING SCHOOLS

Accurate counts are the basis of a valid claim for reimbursement. The Local Education Agency (LEA) shall provide that free, reduced price, and paid reimbursable meals served to eligible children are counted at the point of service, or through another counting system which must be approved by the State Agency Office (SA). **Point of Service means that point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced price or paid meal has been served to an eligible student.**

In collecting payments for meals in distributing tickets, tokens and so forth, LEA officials must ensure that there is no overt identification for recipients of free or reduced price meals. Care must be taken to prevent such identification at the time the ticket or token is issued as well as in the serving line. Therefore, it is encouraged that money be collected prior to the meal service or that parents be billed.

All collection systems must have built-in accounting systems to record numbers of full price, reduced price and/or free meals served daily. Keeping these counts is a regulatory requirement.

The collection and distribution of tickets should be the same for free, reduced price and paid students. The following collection methods have been effectively employed across the Nation. They can be used equally well in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and / or After School Snack Programs.

Check appropriate box below:

(If more than one system of collections is used, indicate all the methods used. Indicate which sites use which system. If you use a system other than those described below, describe your system in detail. Include the method used to distribute tokens, tickets and the like, and the method used to account for full price, reduced price and free meals. Additionally, you are required to attach copies of the tickets, tokens used.)

Ticket / Token System

1. _____ Meal payments for all children are collected in the school office. Payments can be made by students and/or parents on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The secretary records the payments and knows which students qualify for free, reduced price and full price meals. Identical tickets labeled only with the student's names are distributed in the classrooms. The tickets are collected at the end of the serving line, at the Point of Service. After the meal is served the number of meals served by type is determined by comparing the student's names on the tickets to the student names on the student eligibility roster. For those students who choose not to purchase tickets but pay at Point of Service, a tally sheet is used to record the type of meal served, (reimbursable or non reimbursable).

1. _____ Parents/Guardians pay for the month in advance. Each teacher receives a student roster with all student names listed. Student's that receive free meals are marked as "PAID" so that no one but the bookkeeper knows which students receive free meals. As students go through the serving line, tickets are collected at the **POINT of SERVICE** and recorded by category. Teachers keep daily records of each student served and send the records to the bookkeeper on a daily or weekly basis for accounting purposes. The same procedures apply to students eligible for reduced price meals.
2. _____ Before school children can buy tickets at the cafeteria manager's office, but they do not receive the tickets. The cafeteria manager sends the purchased tickets as well as the tickets for students eligible for reduced price and free meals to the classroom each day. The teacher distributes the tickets just before meal time. The tickets are coded for accounting purposes. The tickets are collected at the end of the serving line at the **POINT of SERVICE** and a count of the number of meals served to the students who pay on the line is recorded and counted on a tally sheet.
3. _____ The homeroom teacher provides each student with an envelope for daily, weekly or monthly payments. Students return the envelopes with payment if paying full or reduced price or an empty envelope if eligible for free meals. The envelopes are collected in the school office and coded tickets are issued to every participating student. The tickets are collected at the end of the serving line at the **POINT of SERVICE** and a count of the number of meals served to students who pay on the line is recorded and counted on a tally sheet.
4. _____ Parents/Guardians are billed for full price and reduced price meals their children are served. All payments are mailed in so that no money is collected in the classrooms. All participating students receive a monthly ticket which is punched at the end of the serving line at the **POINT of SERVICE** after the student has received their meal each time they eat. The tickets are coded and as the cashier punches the ticket she/he notes the code and makes a tally of the type of meal served. The billing can be done monthly or at such a time after the completing of the meal service.
5. _____ Approved computerized Point of Service software.

Name of software: _____

Software program is used at all sites? _____ Yes _____ No

If no, explain _____

Coding Methods – Single digit codes, such as A, B, and C or 1, 2, and 3 are not to be used. The suggested coding methods to use with the tickets / tokens systems describe above are:

- **Number Coding:** Free tickets all have a four digit number, reduced price tickets have a five digit number and full price tickets have a six digit number.

- **Number Coding by Series:** For example numbers 1 through 199 are for free tickets; numbers 200 through 399 are for reduced price tickets and numbers 400 through 599 are for full price tickets.
- **Names:** Tickets have the student's name on them and after the tickets are collected they are compared to the student roster with the student eligibility documented on it.
- **Date Stamp:** Tickets have the date stamped on them in different spots. For example, tickets with the date stamp on the top third may be for full price meals, tickets with the date stamped in the middle are for reduced price meals, and tickets stamped on the bottom third are for free meals.

Check List Systems:

2. ____ All students pay for their meals in the office or a bill is sent to the parents/guardians. A checklist including the names of all students eating (full, reduced price and free meals) is then prepared and sent to the cafeteria. The students pass through the serving line and give their names to the cashier who checks off their names on the checklist at the end of the serving line at the **POINT of SERVICE**. The list is returned to the office for accounting purposes.
3. ____ Same as # 6 EXCEPT the checklist contains assigned numbers next to each student's name. The student gives her/his number and it is checked off at the **POINT of SERVICE** located at the end of the serving line. The number is then confirmed with the name. Since sequential numbers are easier to locate than names on a checklist, this system is faster and could be used for larger LEA's or larger sites in a LEA's jurisdiction.
4. ____ Explain in detail any other Meal Count System (use additional paper if needed).

Breakfast: _____

Lunch: _____

After School Snack Program: _____

