

## Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Q&As

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) is a service style method allowing participants to decline one or more items/components in a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) meal or Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Supper or Adult Day Care meal. The Oregon Department of Education Child Nutrition Program's (ODE CNP) OVS Announcement webinar, held on January 13, 2021, discussed the implementation of a Modified or Partial OVS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following regulation and guidance was referenced during the OVS Announcement webinar.

- [SP 57-2014 Updated Offer Versus Serve Guidance for National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#)
- [COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response #67](#)
- [SFSP 10-2020 Questions and Answers related to Offer Versus Serve](#)

### Questions and Answers

The following questions were received during the OVS Announcement webinar. If your organization would like to elect OVS or you have additional questions, please contact your Child Nutrition Specialist.

- 1. Q: Do we have to wait for approval in CNPweb to start OVS, or can we submit changes and implement them before the approval comes through?**

*A: SFSP sites must be approved in CNPweb prior to implementing OVS. For CACFP sites, a Meal Distribution Plan (MDP) must be submitted or, if an MDP is already on file for the sponsor, it must be updated to reflect the addition of OVS. All sponsors must contact their Child Nutrition Specialist to elect OVS for SFSP or CACFP.*

- 2. Q: To clarify the Modified OVS, could a sponsor pre-bag a certain number of items and let participants choose the other items/components. For instance, could we bag the Meat/Meat Alternate, Fruit, Vegetable, and Grain for and have only the milk separate? This would allow participants to decline only the milk. Is this OK for lunch and supper under CACFP and SFSP?**

*A: This is correct. In Modified or Partial OVS, the sponsor may pre-plate or pre-bag items or components and offer the participant a choice of the remaining items or components. In the scenario posed, the participant would have to select the bagged items to ensure that the meal was reimbursable, but could choose whether or not to select the milk.*

3. **Q: I was under the understanding that sponsors have to offer a participant the option to select or decline any of the items/components and that none of these items/components could be pre-bagged or pre-plated.**

*A: Traditionally OVS in SFSP and CACFP must provide participants the option to select or decline any of the required items or components. This is often illustrated as a "cafeteria or buffet line" where participants can walk down the line to see each of the items/components offered and select at least three for a reimbursable meal. [SP 57-2014 Updated Offer Versus Serve Guidance for National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#) defines situations in which "Pre-packaged meals" may be allowed and Child Nutrition Response #67 further offers sponsors the ability to pre-pack some items/components and offer the remaining items/components on the side. For instance, for a lunch, pre-packing a Turkey Sandwich (Grain and Meat/ Meat Alternate components) and an apple (Fruit Component), then offering Milk and Celery Sticks on the side. The participant must take the bagged items to ensure a reimbursable meal, but they still have the choice of selecting or declining the remaining items.*

4. **Q: Doesn't a fruit or vegetable have to be taken?**

*A: No. The requirement that a fruit or vegetable be taken, as part of OVS, is only a requirement for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs. It does not apply to OVS for SFSP, if using the SFSP meal pattern, or CACFP.*

5. **Q: If we choose to "offer" milk under SFSP, we must include an extra component, correct?**

*A: If you choose to use offer versus serve for SFSP Breakfast and are pre-bagging/pre-plating all items/components except for the milk, you will need to ensure that at least 3 items of the following are in the bag in their minimum serving sizes; ½ cup fruit or vegetable or juice, one slice or one oz. eq. grain, and one other serving of fruit, vegetable, grain or a serving of meat/meat alternate. As an example, a sponsor may bag ½ cup apple slices, a mini bagel, and a 100% orange juice and then provide the participant the choice to accept or decline a half-pint of low fat milk. This is also true under CACFP Breakfast.*

*Under the SFSP and CACFP lunch/supper meal pattern, OVS requires at least 3 components to be taken out of the 5 components offered. If a lunch bundle includes the grains, meat/meat alternates, fruits, and vegetables and the milk was offered separately, no additional item or component will need to be added.*

6. **Q: And we must have enough milk "on hand" for each meal, correct?**

*A: Sponsors must purchase enough milk so that all participants have the option to accept or decline the milk component for all meals offered. If a sponsor runs out of milk, or any other component, and cannot offer that component to all participants, then the meals where milk was not offered would be considered missing a component and cannot be claimed for reimbursement. The exception is in*

situations where enough of a component was ordered, but the distributor was unable to fulfill that order. In these cases, the sponsor must submit a [meal pattern waiver request](#).

**7. Q: Does a breakfast sandwich count as only one food item even though there are multiple components included?**

*A: Sponsors may count up to three different components in a combination food item. A breakfast sandwich with both Grain (Biscuit) and Meat/ Meat Alternate (Egg) can count as two items, while a 2 oz. muffin may only count as one item. All food items in OVS for SFSP and CACFP must be different from one another to count toward the reimbursable meal.*

**8. Q: For Breakfast, I thought the items were two grains one fruit/veggie and one milk. Can it be one grain, one fruit, one veggie and one milk?**

*A: Yes, this would be an acceptable breakfast. The requirements for OVS in SFSP and CACFP are as follows. In Modified or Partial OVS, all of the same items/components must be provided; however, some of these may be pre-bagged/pre-plated for ease of service and safety.*

*In SFSP Breakfast and CACFP Breakfast, at a minimum, sponsors must offer the following 4 food items in minimum serving sizes:*

- *One serving of fruit/vegetable*
- *One serving of grain*
- *One serving of fluid milk*
- *One additional serving of fruit/vegetable, grain, or a serving of meat/meat alternate*

*In SFSP Lunch and Supper, at a minimum, sponsors must offer the following 5 food components in minimum serving sizes:*

- *One serving of meat/meat alternate*
- *Two different servings of fruit and/or vegetable (two different food items)*
- *One serving of grain*
- *One serving of fluid milk*

*In CACFP Lunch (Adult Day Care) and Supper (both At-Risk and Adult), at a minimum, sponsors must offer the following 5 food components in minimum serving sizes:*

- *One serving of meat/meat alternate*
- *One fruit and one vegetable or two different vegetables*
- *One serving of grain*
- *One serving of fluid milk*

**9. Q: At our afterschool center, we are only are serving afternoon snack. Does this qualify for OVS?**

*A: Afterschool Snack, which is comprised of two components, is not eligible for OVS.*