

OFFER VS. SERVE for SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS - *At A Glance*

WHAT IS OFFER VS. SERVE?

Offer versus Serve (OVS) is a service option in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) that allows students to decline some of the food components offered. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat.

- At the senior high school level, OVS is required at lunch unless the school or sponsor demonstrates to the State agency that their system does not accommodate OVS. This is most common at residential child care institutions (RCCIs).
- OVS is optional for grades K-8.
- OVS is optional for School Sponsors providing meals through the at-risk afterschool meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, through the Summer Food Service Program, or the NSLP Seamless Summer Option.
- OVS cannot be used for snacks in any program.
- Sponsors must plan lunches and breakfasts that meet all meal pattern requirements and provide all students access to the required meal components and quantities.
- If a student does not select the required food components/food items in the required quantities, the meal is not reimbursable
- Pre-packaged meals are allowed at all age/grade levels. For senior high schools, if this is the only system available for the NSLP, OVS for all or some components must be implemented unless a school was approved by the State agency to not implement OVS.

If pre-packaged meals are offered as part of breakfast in the classroom, field trips, or for students leaving the campus for work study, OVS is not required, even at the senior high level; however, the minimum required servings of all components must be provided.

KEY TERMS

Unit Pricing - School meals must be priced as a unit. This means that one price is established for a complete reimbursable meal in the paid meal category. OVS does not affect the meal's unit price established by the SFA. Students who take 3, 4, or 5 food components for lunch or 3 or more food items for breakfast pay the same price.

Food Component - one of the food groups that comprise a reimbursable meal. For lunch they are meat/meat alternate; grain; fruit; vegetable; and fluid milk. For breakfast they are grain; fruit; and fluid milk. Schools must always offer all food components in at least the minimum required quantities.

Food Item - A food item is a specific food offered within the food components. For example, a hamburger patty on a bun is one food item with two of the five food components (meats/meat alternate and grain). Separate ½ cup servings of peaches, applesauce and pears are three food items that represent one component (fruit).

Combination Food - A food item that contains more than one food component. Combination foods will credit towards the meal pattern differently for breakfast and lunch. Example, Fruit and Yogurt Parfait

- Lunch= 3 components/1 food item
- Breakfast= 2 component/ 3 food items

Food Component (1)- Fruit
Food Item (1):

- Blueberries= 1/3 c
- Bananas= 1/3 c
- Strawberries=1/3 c

1 Serving= 1 c fruit
(breakfast and lunch)



Food Component (2)- B/G
Food Component (3)- M/MA
Food Item (2): Granola=1oz eq.
Food Item (3): Yogurt= 1oz eq.

1 Serving= 2oz eq. B/G
(breakfast only)
1 serving= 1oz eq. B/G +
1oz M/MA (lunch only)

BREAKFAST OVS

The meal pattern for breakfast consists of three food components:

- (1) Fruits (F) (or vegetables substitution)
- (2) Grains (G) (or optional credited meat/meat alternate (M/MA)) and
- (3) Milk

For OVS:

- At least four food items must be offered; and must be available in minimum serving sizes per age/grade group.
- All students, at any grade level, must select at least three food items;
- If selected, the grain (or M/MA offered for this component) and milk must be in the daily minimum required amount; and
- For the fruit component, the student must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and/or vegetable.

If choices of food items within the components are offered, the menu planner must indicate what choices or combination of choices the student may select including any minimum or maximum number that may be taken.

Except for selecting a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (and/or vegetable), it is the student's choice to select or decline food items.

There is no separate requirement to offer the M/MA component in the breakfast meal pattern; however, menu planners have two options for including M/MA in breakfast:

(1) A sponsor may offer M/MA in place of grain after the minimum daily grain requirement (1 oz. eq. for all age/grade groups) is offered. One oz. eq. of M/MA may count as one oz. eq. of grain for purposes of meeting the weekly grain component requirement.

OR

(2) A sponsor may offer M/MA as an "extra" food and not credit it toward any component. If used as an "extra" food, the M/MA does not credit toward the daily or weekly grain component requirement, but must still be counted toward the weekly dietary specifications (calories, saturated fat, Trans fat, sodium)

Schools may offer vegetables in place of fruits. The first two cups per week of any such substitution must be from the following subgroups: dark green, red/orange, beans/peas, or "other vegetables".

LUNCH OVS

The meal pattern for lunch consists of five food components:

- (1) Fruits (F)
- (2) Vegetables (V)
- (3) Grains (G)
- (4) Meat/meat alternate (M/MA) and
- (5) Milk

OVS must be available for students at senior high schools. OVS is optional at middle and elementary schools.

For OVS, all students, at any grade level, must select:

- At least 3 of 5 food components AND
 - One of the choices selected must be at least a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving of the fruits and/or vegetables component or a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup total serving of both fruit and/or vegetable.
- If only three components are selected, and two of these are 1. fruit and 2. vegetable, the student may only select the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup portion size for either the fruit OR vegetable. For the other component (fruit or vegetable), the student must select at least the minimum daily required serving of the component for it to be counted. (Vegetable - K-5 & 6-8= $\frac{3}{4}$ cup and 9-12= 1 cup. Fruit - K-8 = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, 9-12= 1 cup)
- If grain, m/ma and milk are selected, the student must select at least the daily $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit and/or vegetable minimum required amount.
- Other than selecting the required minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit and/or vegetable serving, it is the student's choice to select or decline a food component. Schools may not specify other food components a student must select.

Five food components must be offered in at least the daily minimum required quantities and weekly minimum quantities

Students, servers and point of service staff must be able to identify what constitutes a reimbursable meal. The NSLP regulation requires that schools identify, near or at the beginning of serving lines, what foods constitute unit priced reimbursable meals. Schools using OVS must also identify, through signage placed at the beginning of the serving line, what a student must select in order to have a reimbursable meal under OVS.

IDENTIFYING OFFER VS. SERVE REIMBURSABLE SCHOOL LUNCHES

K-8 Foods Offered: Chili – 2 oz. M/MA & ¼ cup R/O Vegetable
 Cornbread – 2.4 oz. eq. Grain
 Salad Bar with Fruits and Vegetables
 Milk – 1% White and Nonfat Choc. and White

Student Selects: 1 cup lettuce
 ½ cup tomatoes
 ½ cup carrots
 Cornbread



X This would not be a complete reimbursable meal. The student only selected 2 food components (vegetables and grain). If the student had also selected at least ½ cup of fruit from the salad bar they would have 3 components and a reimbursable meal.

9-12 Foods Offered: PBJ – 2 oz. eq. Grain & 1.25 oz. eq. M/MA +
 Cheese Stick - .75 oz. M/MA
 Apple – 1 cup
 Baby Carrots – 1 cup
 Milk – 1% White and Nonfat Choc.

Student Selects: PBJ Sandwich
 1% Milk



X This would not be a complete reimbursable meal. The student must select the required daily minimum for her/his grade group of each component. The daily minimum M/MA required for grades 9-12 is 2 oz. eq. of M/MA. The student would have to select both the PBJ and Cheese Stick for the complete M/MA component. Additionally, no fruit or vegetable was selected as required.

K-8 Foods Offered: Turkey Sandwich – 2 oz. eq. M/MA & 2 oz. eq. Grain
 Corn, Green Beans, Potato Wedges – ½ cup each
 Orange Slices, Fruit Cocktail, Banana – ½ cup each
 Milk – 1% White & Nonfat Choc. /White

Student Selects: Turkey Sandwich
 ½ cup Orange Slices



✓ This would be a complete reimbursable meal. The student selected 3 food components; M/MA, Grain and a ½ cup serving of Fruit.

9-12 Foods Offered: Spaghetti with Meat Sauce – 2 oz. eq. M/MA, 1.75 oz. eq. of Grain & ¼ cup R/O Vegetable
 Wheat Roll - .75 oz. eq. Grain
 Oatmeal Raisin Cookie – 1 oz. eq. Grain
 Garden Salad – 1 ½ cup serving= ¾ cup
 Milk – 1% White and Nonfat Choc. /White

Student Selects: Spaghetti
 Cookie
 Milk



X This would not be a complete reimbursable meal. While the student selected a complete serving of M/MA & Grain (Up to 2 oz. eq. of grain-based desserts may be credited towards the grains component per week.), they did not select the required ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.