

Child Nutrition Programs: Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Grab and Go Frequently Asked Questions

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This FAQ document is to assist School Food Authorities (SFAs) and Sponsors with guidance on the administration and operation of Grab and Go (GNG) meal service in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the School Nutrition Programs Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

1. Question: What is a Grab and Go summer food site?

Answer: An indoor or outdoor location where a child receives a program meal and takes the meal home or away from the site for consumption. GNG can also include home-delivered meals. Unlike a traditional summer feeding site where the meal is served and must be immediately consumed. The USDA calls this a non-congregate site.

2. Question: Who can provide GNG meals?

Answer: Any sponsor that has an eligible summer feeding sites (SFSP or SSO) located in a rural area and is in good standing with the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. GNG sites cannot have a congregate (normal) meal service providing the same meals at the same location on the same day and meal service time.

3. Question: I already operate a normal (congregate) meal service program. Can I also operate a GNG at the same location?

Answer: Maybe. GNG cannot be provided when congregate meal service is available, but GNG can be provided when congregate meal service is not available.

Allowable examples:

- A site that offers breakfast with a congregate meal service may be approved to provide a lunch GNG meal service.
- A site that offers lunch and breakfast three days a week may provide GNG for the days with no congregate meal service, including weekends.
- A site that offers lunch and breakfast congregate meals for most of the summer but stops congregate meal service may provide GNG during the break.
- A site that offers a congregate meal service and then wraps around to have a GNG meal service for the following days that do not have congregate service.

4. Question: How is an area determined to be rural?

- Answer: The best option to determine if the site is rural or urban is to utilize the Rural Designation Map: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/rural-designation>.
- For additional definitions of rural, please see USDA memo [SFSP 04-2024, SP 06-2024 Rural Designations in the Summer Meal Programs, Revised](#) which contains additional information on rural designations.

5. Question: How is a site determined to be area-eligible?

Answer: Normal area eligibility rules apply.

- The site is in an attendance area of a school in which at least 50 percent of the enrolled children have been determined eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.

- The site is located in a geographic area where, based on the [USDA Area Eligibility Mapper](#) or information provided by a Department of Welfare or Zoning Commission, or other approved sources, at least 50 percent of the children residing in that area are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.
- The site collects Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications completed by the child's parent/ guardian and at least 50 percent of the children enrolled at the site are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. If using the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications, the SFA or Sponsor needs to ensure that the applications are completed fully and approved correctly. When Free and Reduced-Price Applications are used to determine area eligibility, only meals served to approved Free and Reduced-Price students may be claimed for free reimbursement. Paid student meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

6. Q: If my site is not area eligible, is there any other way to become a GNG site?

Answer: Yes, a site could operate a conditional Grab-and-Go site. A conditional Grab-and-Go site qualifies for Program participation because it conducts a non-congregate meal service for eligible children in an area that does not meet the definition of "areas in which poor economic conditions exist" and is not a "Camp." These sites are required to collect Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. The Sponsor must ensure that the applications are completed fully and approved correctly. When Free and Reduced-Price Applications are used to determine area eligibility, only meals served to approved Free and Reduced-Price students may be claimed for free reimbursement. Paid student meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

7. Question: What models of GNG are allowed?

Answer: Home Delivery and Meal Pick-Up options may be used. Additional special considerations for these flexibilities can be found [here](#).

- Meal Pick-Up: Provide packed meals that children can take to eat later.
- Home Delivery: Meals are delivered or shipped to homes. A parental consent form must be completed before meals can be delivered to the home. Parent/Guardian Pick Up: With an approved integrity plan and a method to track parents linked to eligible students, identified parents or guardians may pick up meals. A method must be in place to identify eligible children if they come to pick up meals rather than their parent/guardian. Childcare providers that are not parents or guardians are not considered a guardian and are not allowed to pick up meals for children in their care.

8. Question: What are the requirements for Home Delivery?

Answer: For meals to be delivered to a child's home, the SFA or Sponsor must obtain written consent from every eligible child's parent or guardian prior to the delivery of meals using the CANS Home Delivery Consent form (see iCAN download forms). Sponsors must confirm the household's current contact information and the number of eligible children in the household to ensure that the correct number of meals are delivered.

9. Question: Can meals be distributed to a parent or guardian at a GNG pick-up site?

Answer: Maybe. Children must be present for meal pick-ups. The only allowed exception is if the site is specifically approved to distribute to a parent or guardian and has a method to track GNG meals served to parents/guardians and their corresponding registered children.

10. Question: What are the food health and safety standards for GNG?

Answer: All meals must meet food health and safety standards. Cold foods must be kept cold (less than 41°F), and hot foods kept hot (140°F or hotter). Any food left without proper hot or cold holding must be thrown away due to food safety concerns per SD Food Service rules. Food packaging must maintain proper temperature through the delivery period. The SFA or Sponsor must consider household access to cold storage and reheating when planning multiple or bulk meals (for example: does the family have a refrigerator/freezer that the food will fit into; do they have a microwave or oven to reheat food).

11. Question: Is there any additional funding for GNG?

Answer: No. However, expenses related to GNG, including meal delivery, can be considered an allowable cost under SFSP and SSO. Delivery costs can also be paid with non-program funds.

12. Question: Are SFAs and Sponsors required to follow meal patterns for GNG meals?

Answer: Yes. All meals served for reimbursement must meet the meal pattern requirements of the program that you are approved for, SFSP or SSO.

13. Question: Is Offer Versus Serve (OVS) allowed?

Answer: Maybe. OVS is **not** available for non-SFAs. OVS is only allowed for SFAs with prior approval, and if all meal components or food items are offered, and the participants have the opportunity to select a reimbursable meal.

14. Question: How many meals per child may be provided through GNG?

Answer: Daily, up to two meals or one meal and one snack **per child** may be offered in any combination except lunch and supper. With prior approval, unitized (individual) packed meals may be provided up to a 10-day period. With prior approval, bulk distribution is allowed and is limited to a 5-day period.

15. Question: Are second meals reimbursable for GNG?

Answer: No. No second meals are reimbursable at GNG sites.

16. Question: Can congregate (normal) meal counts be combined with GNG meal counts?

Answer: No. Congregate (normal) sites must submit meal counts separately from GNG meal counts.

17. Question: Are the other normal SFSP and SSO requirements still in effect at GNG sites?

Answer: Yes, all other normal program requirements remain in effect, such as, participant eligibility, site caps, meal service times, health and food safety, civil rights, special diet modifications, student eligibility confidentiality, and announcing summer feeding sites. Many GNG options are only allowed with specific approval from CANS, which includes multiple meals served at one time, bulk meals, home delivery, and parent/guardian pick-up.

- For more information on Summer Food Service Program operations visit: <https://doe.sd.gov/cans/sfsp.aspx>
- For more information on Seamless Summer Option operations visit: <https://doe.sd.gov/cans/snp.aspx> under the “School Meal Programs Resources” section.

18. **Question: Are SFAs and Sponsors required to post the “And Justice for All” (AJFA) poster at their GNG site, including any home delivered meals?**

Answer: Yes. The poster must be prominently displayed.

19. **Question: Where can I find more information about Grab and Go meal service?**

Answer: A full listing of questions and answers and resources from the USDA can be found on the USDA Food and Nutrition Service [website](#).

- USDA [memo SFSP 07-2024, SP 13-2024 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas Questions and Answers](#).
- USDA memo [SFSP 03-2024, SP 05-2024](#) - Implementation Guidance for the Rural Non-congregate Option Provisions of the Interim Final Rule, Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs
- [SFSP Interim Final Rule: Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs](#).