

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ALTERNATIVES: PROVISION 2 AND COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION

SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY ASSURANCES

Schools listed in the Lunch or Breakfast Program Participation Section of the annual School Approval Information (SAI) of the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) School Approval Module (SAM) are participating in Provision 2 of the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives (7 CFR Part 245.9), hereinafter referred to as Special Assistance Provision 2 or in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Special Assistance Provision 2 was authorized by Congress as a paperwork reduction, therefore cost reduction initiative. No additional federal or state funds are earned by Special Assistance Provision 2 schools.

Section 104(a) of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 amended section 11(a)(1) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1759a(a)(1) (the law) provides an alternative to household applications for free and reduced price meals in high poverty local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools. This alternative is referred to as the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

Instructions: School data entered in Program Participation Section of the annual School Approval Information (SAI) of the annual School Approval Module (SAM) must be completed by the School Food Authority (SFA) for any school to participate in the Special Assistance Provision or CEP during School Year (SY) 2021-2022 and data will be verified by the GaDOE. Indicate agreement with SY 2021-2022 assurances by applying the superintendent's electronic signature to the assurance page in SAM.

FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE PROVISION SCHOOLS, ENSURE THAT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEAL APPLICATIONS ARE ON FILE FOR THE REPORTED BASE YEAR; IF APPLICATIONS ARE NOT ON FILE FOR THE REPORTED BASE YEAR, THE BASE YEAR MUST BE REPEATED FOR SY 2021-2022.

GENERAL ASSURANCES

The SFA agrees to:

1. Implement all requirements of Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7 Part 245.9, Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives, all related federal instructions policy and guidance, and GaDOE procedures.
2. Serve meals to all students at no charge during all years of the cycle, including the base year, and charge for non-program adult meals.
3. Pay, with funds from non-Federal sources, the difference between the cost of serving lunches and/or breakfasts at no charge to all participating children and the Federal reimbursement [7 CFR 245.9 (b)(2)]. State lunch funds are generally adequate to cover this difference.

4. Maintain a positive fund balance. In the event of a negative school nutrition fund balance, as evidenced by the SFA's financial records, the annual DE Form 0046 report or the most current state School Nutrition Cash Resource Management Report, funds to cover the deficit amount **must** be transferred into the school nutrition account before the GaDOE can approve the SFA to continue the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives into a new school year.
5. Demonstrate fiscal solvency by submitting to GaDOE a cost/revenue analysis for the school year for which assurances are being made.
6. Compare revenue and expenses monthly. Use the GaDOE School Nutrition Statement of Revenues and Expenditures report or a comparable report to conduct this analysis. Alter expenditures to eliminate any expenses in excess of revenues (refer to item 4 above).
7. File accurate claim and financial data (DE Form 0106 and 0107) on a timely basis with GaDOE each month. Failure to file accurate claim and financial data on a timely basis may result in termination of a SFA's participation in the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives.
8. Remit to the GaDOE any overpayment resulting from the SFA's filing of inaccurate claims. Inaccurate claims result from inaccurate total reimbursable meal counts, the inaccurate application of approved claiming percentages to total monthly meal counts, failure to establish a new base year as directed, and other errors. SFAs that file consolidated claims will not be approved for Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives.
9. Establish base years as directed by GaDOE. During the base year, certify students' eligibility as free, reduced price, or paid. During the base year, conduct verification in accordance with regulations and count and record meals daily by type – free, reduced price and paid for the purpose of filing claim data and establishing claiming percentages for future years. During the non-base years of a cycle make no eligibility determinations.
10. Retain base year records for the entire time that the SFA is participating in a cycle under the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives (until a new base year is required of the SFA by the GaDOE) plus a period of five years after the cycle ends. Maintain records indefinitely when there are open audits or reviews.
11. Inform the community about the purpose, funding, and benefits of the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives and maintain documentation.
12. Make extraordinary efforts during the base year to identify all eligible students and to encourage student participation by providing equal access and adequate time to eat, without forcing students to participate. Limit any operational changes that could negatively impact program participation by students in any way.
13. Implement Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives only at the beginning of the school year.
14. In all years following the base year, record total daily meal counts of reimbursable student meals at the point of service.

15. Extend the current four-year cycle by an additional four years only as authorized provided the GaDOE determines that currently available socioeconomic data approved by the USDA indicates that the income level of the school population has not improved above a specified threshold since the base year.
16. Follow special GaDOE procedures for the timely and accurate reporting of free and reduced price eligible students for participating schools during the fall count of Full Time Equivalent (FTEs).
17. Use the current school year's free and reduced price meal eligibility data for lunch, as reported during the fall count of FTEs, as the basis for extending into another cycle for the schools participating in the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives for breakfast only.
18. Review the meal count data monthly to ensure the accuracy of the claim by comparing the total daily meal counts to the school's total enrollment adjusted by attendance factor.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ALTERNATIVE ASSURANCES

PROVISION 2 (if applicable)

The SFA shall:

1. Adhere to USDA's *Provision 2 Guidance*.
2. Operate on a four-year cycle, which can be extended indefinitely.
3. Apply the annual percentages from the base year (located on the end-of-the-year school level Breakfast and/or Lunch Participation & Cost Report in the 9-5 summary line of columns 12, 13, and 14) to each school's monthly count of total meals for the purpose of claiming meals for reimbursement. Monthly claims must reflect the consistent use of annual meal count percentages.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If an SFA wants to use district-wide percentages or percentages for a subgroup of schools, they must make special application to the GaDOE. A prerequisite for approval would be to have all schools participating in the same Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternatives for the same meal(s) using the same base year.

PROVISION 2

On behalf of _____ (SFA) I agree to comply with the above assurances.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Superintendent)

The Superintendent's electronic signature applied on the Provision 2 Assurances Sign-off page of the GaDOE SAM, School Nutrition Online program is the SFA certifying agreement with all the above assurances and is required prior to annual approval.

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION

Universal Meal Service in High Poverty Areas

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a 4-year reimbursement option for eligible high poverty SFAs and schools. An SFA may participate in the CEP for all schools in the SFA or only some schools, depending on the eligibility of the individual schools and financial considerations based on the anticipated level of Federal reimbursement and other non-Federal support that may be available. The claiming percentages established for a school in the first year of its participation are guaranteed for a period of four school years and may be increased if direct certification percentages rise in that school. Participating schools that continue to meet the minimum direct certification percentage may immediately begin another 4-year cycle after the initial cycle concludes. For participating schools that fall below the minimum percentage at the end of their 4-year cycle, there is the possibility to continue to participate for a “grace year.” A participating SFA or school may stop participating in the CEP during the 4-year cycle by notifying the State Agency no later than June 30 of the school year prior to when they want to return to normal counting and claiming procedures. This will allow sufficient time for the SFA to prepare for the certification process for the coming school year. Reimbursement for a school in the first year under the CEP is based on the percentage of identified students as of April 1 of the school year prior to the first year of electing benefits.

The percentage of identified students is multiplied by a factor of 1.6 to determine the total percentage of meals reimbursed at the Federal free reimbursement rate. (The percentage derived from this calculation must not exceed 100 percent.) The remaining percentage of meals, equaling up to 100 percent, is reimbursed at the Federal paid reimbursement rate. Schools apply the claiming percentages to the total number of meals served to determine the reimbursement amount.

SFA LIST OF ASSURANCES FOR COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION

The SFA agrees to:

- Serve all children in the participating schools free breakfasts and free lunches for four successive school years. Please note that both breakfast and lunch must be served.
- Have a percentage of enrolled students who were identified students as of April 1 of the year prior to participating in the CEP that is greater than or equal to 40 percent. For School Year (SY) 2021-2022 participation, the percentage of identified students is determined as of April 1, 2020.
- Pay, from sources other than Federal funds, the costs of serving breakfasts and lunches that are in excess of the Federal assistance received, including Federal cash reimbursement.
- Not collect free and reduced price applications from households in participating schools during the period of participation in the CEP.
- Count total breakfasts and lunches served to students.
- NOT be a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI) as that term is set forth in the definition of “School” in 7 CFR 210.2.

The SFA will submit a completed Community Eligibility Participation Worksheet listing each participating school and the corresponding Identified Student Percentage along with the signed assurances.

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION

On behalf of _____ (SFA), I agree to comply with the above assurances.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Superintendent)

The Superintendent’s electronic signature applied on the CEP Assurances Sign-off page of the GaDOE SAM, School Nutrition Online program is the SFA certifying agreement with all the above assurances and is required prior to annual approval.