

NSLP Snack vs. CACFP At-Risk Afterschool (Ages 6 to 18)



USDA's 2024 Final Rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, aligned National School Lunch Program (NSLP) afterschool snack meal pattern requirements for K-12 children with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack meal pattern requirements. Beginning 2025-2026, any schools participating in the NSLP Afterschool Snack Service will have to follow the CACFP meal pattern. As schools will already be following CACFP meal patterns, there is an opportunity for eligible schools to enroll in the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool (ARAS) program. By participating in CACFP ARAS, schools have the potential to better meet the needs of the children in their afterschool programs by serving a full supper in addition to, or instead of, a snack after school.

| | NSLP Snack (Old) | NSLP Snack (New) | CACFP ARAS Snack | CACFP ARAS Supper |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Reimbursement | | | | |
| Days of Operation | Regular school days throughout the school year | Regular school days throughout the school year | School days, weekends, holidays, vacation periods or school release days throughout the regular school year | School days, weekends, holidays, vacation periods or school release days throughout the regular school year When operating on non-school days, operators can choose to serve a breakfast or lunch instead of supper |
| Determination | Snacks served in programs that are area eligible will be reimbursed at the free rate Snacks served in programs that are not area eligible will be reimbursed at the free, reduced price and paid rate, depending on each individual child's eligibility status | Snacks served in programs that are area eligible will be reimbursed at the free rate Snacks served in programs that are not area eligible will be reimbursed at the free, reduced price and paid rate, depending on each individual child's eligibility status | Snacks served in programs that are area eligible will be reimbursed at the free rate | Supper served in programs that are area eligible will be reimbursed at the free rate |
| 2025 - 2026 Rates | N/A | Free = \$1.26 Reduced = \$0.63 Paid = \$0.12 | Free = \$1.26 | Free = \$4.60 |
| Meal Service | | | | |
| Meal Component | Two different meal components out of four components (grains, meats/meat alternates, fruits/vegetables and fluid milk) | Two different meal components out of five components (grains, meats/meat alternates, fruits, vegetables and fluid milk) | Two different meal components out of five components (grains, meats/meat alternates, fruits, vegetables and fluid milk) | All five meal components are required to be served (grains, meats/meat alternates, fruits, vegetables and fluid milk) |
| Cooking Methods | No requirements for deep-fat fried foods | Deep-fat frying on-site is not allowed | Deep-fat frying on-site is not allowed | Deep-fat frying on-site is not allowed |
| Offer Versus Serve (OVS) | OVS is not permitted | OVS is not permitted | OVS is not permitted | All five meal components at lunch and supper must be offered (fluid milk, vegetables, fruits, grains and meats/meat alternates) and children must select at least three meal components |
| Grains | | | | |
| Whole Grain-rich | No requirements | At least 80% of weekly grains offered in NSLP snacks must be whole grain-rich based on ounce equivalents of grains offered | Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day when grains are served | Must serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day when grains are served |
| Grain-based Desserts | No requirements | Grain-based desserts do not count towards the grains requirement | Grain-based desserts do not count towards the grains requirement | Grain-based desserts do not count towards the grains requirement |
| Added Sugars | No added sugar limits | Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce | Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce | Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce |

| Meats/Meat Alternates | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Added Sugars | No added sugar limits | Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces | Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces | Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces |
| Fruits and Vegetables | | | | |
| Components | Fruits and vegetables are part of a single meal component | Fruits and vegetables are two separate meal components | Fruits and vegetables are two separate meal components | Fruits and vegetables are two separate meal components A second, different vegetable can be served in place of the entire fruits component at supper |
| Full-Strength (100%) Juice | No juice limits | No more than half (50%) of the weekly fruit and vegetable offerings in NSLP snacks can be in the form of juice | Juice may count towards the entire vegetables or entire fruits component no more than once per day | Juice may count towards the entire vegetables or entire fruits component no more than once per day |
| Crediting | All fruits and vegetables are credited based on volume served with the exception of tomato paste and tomato puree, which credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs | All fruits and vegetables are credits based on volume served with these exceptions: Dried fruits credit as twice the amount served (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruit) Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable) Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide | All fruits and vegetables are credits based on volume served with these exceptions: Dried fruits credit as twice the amount served (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruit) Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable) Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide | All fruits and vegetables are credits based on volume served with these exceptions: Dried fruits credit as twice the amount served (¼ cup dried fruit = ½ cup fruit) Raw leafy greens credit for half the amount served (1 cup of raw leafy greens = ½ cup vegetable) Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on yields found in the Food Buying Guide |
| Fluid Milk | | | | |
| Fat Content | No requirements | Milk must be fat-free or low-fat | Milk must be fat-free or low-fat | Milk must be fat-free or low-fat |
| Flavored Milk | No requirements | May be unflavored or flavored | May be unflavored or flavored | May be unflavored or flavored |
| Site Eligibility | | | | |
| Participation Requirements | Must participate in the NSLP lunch meal service in order to operate the NSLP Afterschool Snack Service | Must participate in the NSLP lunch meal service in order to operate the NSLP Afterschool Snack Service | No requirement | No requirement |
| Services | Must provide regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment | Must provide regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment | Must provide regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment | Must provide regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment |
| Income Eligibility | 50% or more of children at the school or in the attendance area are eligible for free or reduced-price meals Programs not located in eligible areas receive the “free,” “reduced-price” or “paid” rate, depending on each child’s family income | 50% or more of children at the school or in the attendance area are eligible for free or reduced-price meals Programs not located in eligible areas receive the “free,” “reduced-price” or “paid” rate, depending on each child’s family income | 50% or more of children at the school or in the attendance area are eligible for free or reduced-price meals | 50% or more of children at the school or in the attendance area are eligible for free or reduced-price meals |

Check with your State agency for State-specific requirements.

For detailed Information, read the most up-to-date guidance:

- [Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- [Implementation Timeline for School Meals](#)
- [CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Care Handbook](#)