



To: National School Lunch Program Sponsors
From: Brigette Hires, Director, Office of Nutrition
Date: February 15, 2024
Re: Certification of Menu Compliance

Introduction

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) outlines performance-based cash assistance for school food authorities (SFAs) certified compliant with meal pattern and nutrition standards. This rule includes the requirement for the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (hereby known as the Department) to certify that participating Ohio SFAs are in compliance with meal pattern and nutrition standard requirements and eligible to receive performance-based cash assistance for each reimbursable lunch. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Guidance document dated March 11, 2014, SP 26-2014, states that a sponsor may not opt out of the certification of menu compliance.

Policy

New SFAs: New SFAs must submit a complete certification of menu compliance prior to program approval and before submitting a claim for reimbursement. One week of menus for all grade groupings (five school days or seven days for Residential Child Care Institutions) must be included. The SFA may choose from the following options:

- **Option 1** - The SFA must submit one week of menus, including detailed menu worksheets showing food components and quantities for reimbursable meals for these menus, and a nutrient analysis of calories, saturated fats, and sodium from a [USDA Approved Nutrient Analysis Software](#).
- **Option 2** – The SFAs must submit one week of menus, including detailed menu worksheets showing food components and quantities for reimbursable meals for these menus, and a simplified nutrient assessment of calories, saturated fats, and sodium using the [USDA Certification Worksheets](#).

Existing SFAs Not Yet Certified: Existing SFAs not yet certified must submit either Option 1 or Option 2 above within thirty days of the written request by the State agency. Once documentation is submitted, a determination will be made within 30 days of receipt.

If an SFA fails to respond or provide documentation within 30 days of the written request, then the SFA will be sent a Withholding of Payment notice. If incomplete or incorrect menu certification documents are submitted by the 30-day deadline, then the SFA may receive up to an additional 30 days to make corrections, for a maximum limit of 60 days from the date of notification. If the submission is still not acceptable after 60 days, then the SFA will receive a Withholding of Payment notice until menu certification documentation is received and approved.

Although menu certification is generally completed once by an SFA, the State agency retains the right to request recertification when deemed necessary for determining the integrity or quality of programming.

During an **Administrative Review**, SFAs must show menu compliance. This may be done by completing one of the following options:

- **Option 1** - The SFA must complete the *Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool*, and if determined to be low risk, may submit one week of menus, production records, and crediting information. If the *Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool* indicates the SFA is high risk, they must complete Option 2.
- **Option 2** – The SFAs must submit one week of menus, production records, and crediting information. They must also submit detailed menu worksheets showing food components and quantities for reimbursable meals for these menus, and a simplified nutrient assessment of calories, saturated fats, and sodium using the [USDA Certification Worksheets](#) or a [USDA Approved Nutrient Analysis Software](#).

For additional information on Menu Certification, please contact your assigned education program specialist or the Office of Nutrition at (614) 466-2945.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.