

Meal Counting and Claiming

Meal counting methods vary by agency but all meal counting procedures must be pre-approved by the California Department of Education (CDE). Procedures include rosters, head counts, Point of Sale computer programs, and daily meal count sheets. These counts need to be accurate to provide for meal claiming and reimbursement.

Meal counts must be taken at the point of service (POS). The POS is the point at which staff determines that a reimbursable meal has been served to an eligible child or student.

Meal counting procedures must prevent overt identification. Overt identification is when a child is openly or physically identified as receiving a free or reduced-price meal.

All sponsors should have a training plan for all staff involved in meal counting procedures.

The CDE utilizes the Child Nutrition Information and Payment System (CNIPS) for the claim payment component of the School Nutrition Programs.

The online Claims Payment component of the CNIPS allows sponsors to:

- Enter and submit claims in a few easy steps
- Upload claim data from Point of Sale/Service systems
- Review the status of claim submissions online

For more information on Meal Counting and Claiming see the [Quick Reference Guide to Meal Counting and Claiming](#).

After you have reviewed the information contained in the Quick Reference Guide, try the [Apply Your Knowledge](#) self-check.

The School Nutrition Primer can be utilized by food service directors and administrators as a Professional Standards training resource. Reviewing the **Quick Reference Guides** with staff and administering the **Apply Your Knowledge** self-check quiz may count for 15 minute training.

The training topic Meal Counting and Claiming provides the following Professional Standards:

Key Area: Operations (2000); Administration (3000)

Training Topic: Cashier and POS (2300); Financial Management (3300)

Learning Objectives: Count Reimbursable Meals (2310); Use Financial Responsibility at POS (2320); Apply Measures for Overt Identification (2330); Implement System of Checks and Balances for Accurate Meal Counting and Claiming (3310)

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