

**Comparison of Food Programs: Summer Food Service Program/Seamless
Summer Option/ National School Lunch Program**
Illinois State Board of Education—Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division
800.545.7892 or 217.782.2491

The purpose of the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) is to encourage more school food authorities (SFAs) to provide meals in the summer and other times when school is not in session. The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) combines features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SSO can reduce some paperwork and administrative burden, making it easier for SFAs to feed children in low-income areas during the summer months or during the extended breaks of a year-round school schedule.

This side-by-side comparison of the Programs serves to highlight the similarities between SSO, SFSP, and NSLP/SBP.

Topic	SFSP	SSO
Times of Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May–September for traditional school calendar areas • October–April during unanticipated school closures (i.e., emergencies, strikes) • During student vacations for schools on a continuous year calendar 	Same as the SFSP
Meal Service Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camps • Churches • Community centers • Housing projects • Libraries • Migrant centers • Parks • Playgrounds • Pools • Schools 	Same as the SFSP
Meal Cost for Children	<p>All meals are free*</p> <p><i>*Although camps are only reimbursed for children who qualify for free/reduced-price meals, camp sponsors may, and usually do, provide meals free of charge to all children.</i></p>	Same as the SFSP
Establishing Site Eligibility	<p><u>Open sites</u>: 50 percent or more of the children in an area qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on school or census data.</p> <p><u>Enrolled sites</u>: 50 percent or more of the children in an area qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on school or census data or 50 percent or more of enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals determined by approved application or certified by school district.</p> <p><u>Migrant sites</u>: Certification by a migrant organization that the site(s) serves children of migrant farm workers.</p> <p><u>Camps</u>: Offer a regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children. Must have an income application on file for each camper or verified by school.</p>	Same as the SFSP

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Type of Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast • Lunch • Snack (a.m. or p.m.) • Supper <p>Except for camp and migrant sites, lunch and supper cannot be reimbursed for the same day by the same site.</p>	Same as the SFSP
Maximum Number of Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two for most sites • Three for migrant sites and camps 	Same as the SFSP
Meals—Seconds	Reimbursed up to 2 percent of the first meals served	Not reimbursable
Commodities	<p>1.5¢ per meal for school sponsors, sponsors who contract with schools, and self-prep sponsors for the previous fiscal year or estimated for the current year.</p> <p>May also receive bonus commodities</p>	Same as the NSLP
Reimbursement Rates	SFSP rates	NSLP and SBP applicable free rates
Reimbursement Method	<p>Maximum level for all sites except camps = total meals by type X administrative and operating rates.</p> <p>Maximum level for camps = total meals by type for eligible children X administrative and operating rates.</p>	<p>Total meals by type x NSLP/SBP free rates—plus 6¢ for certification.</p> <p>Additional NSLP funding including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra 2¢ per lunch if 60 percent of lunches in second preceding year were free/reduced-price • Severe-need breakfast rate • Total after-school snacks x free rate in eligible areas <p>(No administrative reimbursement provided)</p>
Monitoring Required by the School Food Authority (SFA)	<p>Pre-Operational Visits—before a new or problem site can operate the summer program. May be waived</p> <p>Site visits during the first week of operation—can be waived for returning sites that operated successfully during the previous year and had no serious deficiency findings or if the sponsor is a SFA.</p> <p>Site reviews during first four weeks of operation—followed by a reasonable level of monitoring (based on how long a program is operating) or the site had many issues and the sponsor returns for a follow-up review.</p>	Each year, SFAs are required to review sites at least once during the site’s operation. The SFA must review the site’s compliance with meal counting, claiming, and meal pattern requirements.
Monitoring Required by State	Review every three years; more frequently based on program size and prior problems identified by the SA.	Administrative Review (AR) in a three-year cycle must include at least one SSO site in the AR of an SFA participating in the option.
Meal Pattern	Meal pattern must meet 7 CFR Part 225.16(d) standards. However, SFAs may substitute NSLP/SBP meal patterns.	Same as the NSLP/SBP

Topic	SFSP	SSO
Eligible Participants	Persons 18 years of age or younger and persons 19 years of age or older (up to age 21; the day before the student's 22 nd birthday) with a physical or mental disability, as defined by the SA.	Same as the SFSP
Public Notification	The State Agency sends a statewide program announcement so a sponsor is not required to send a public notice to their local media outlet.	Public media notice may be done but is not required. The SFA must state in application how each site (excluding closed-enrolled sites) will advertise availability of meals to the neighborhood community.
Budget	Annually submit a budget with the application. (After one year in the program, this requirement may be waived for experienced SFA sponsors; however, an Administrative Labor Worksheet must still be completed).	Same as NSLP—None
Management Plan	Sponsors who operate more than 25 sites or who have received over \$100,000 in reimbursement the previous year. (Requirement may be waived for experienced SFA sponsors).	Same as NSLP—None