

OSPI Summer Food Service Program Reference Sheet

Point of Service Meal Counting

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) requires meals and snacks to be counted at the Point of Service (POS). Only complete meals and snacks served to eligible children may be claimed for reimbursement. POS counting refers to the process of **accurately counting meals and snacks at the time they are served** to participants, ensuring an accurate count of meals recorded and claimed for reimbursement. Sponsors must have a meal counting system that consistently yields accurate claims. Sponsors must also train all staff involved in meal counting, including substitute staff and/or volunteers, on proper POS counting procedures.

Requirements of POS Counting System:

- Meal counts are required for each day and each meal service in which meals or snacks are served. Counts must be kept on file according to record retention schedules.
- Meals are counted as they are served to participants.
- Ensures only complete meals and snacks are marked off for reimbursement if they meet the required items and components for a reimbursable meal/snack.

POS Meal Count Methods:

- **Meal Tally Form:** Staff check participants off as they receive a reimbursable meal/snack at the end of the meal service line. Meal count forms can be found under [SFSP Requirements and Materials](#).
- **Clicker Count:** Staff stand at the end of the meal service line and click only reimbursable meal/snack. **Sponsor must provide staff training** to ensure that the clicker count is accurately yielding correct count by testing with an alternative method such as paper meal count form. Note that if second meals are offered, they must be recorded using another clicker or other method like paper meal count form. Final clicker count for the day is recorded on a paper meal tally form.
- **Computer:** Staff use a software program, where students use a meal card, an identification number, etc. Staff record complete meals/snacks that are served at the end of the line.
- **Tickets/Tokens:** Staff give participants tickets/tokens at the beginning of the line, and participants return the ticket/token into a container or to a person at the end of the line who verifies the meal/snacks is complete. This method works well when the site is short on staff. Note: A different color ticket/token must be used for second meals.



- **Roster:** Participants sign up for meals in advance and are marked off as complete meals/snacks are taken. Note: camps can only claim meals served to eligible participants.
- **Other methods:** May only be used if an alternative system that provides an accurate count has been approved by the state agency.

Typically, the count is taken at the end of the meal service line to verify that participants received a reimbursable meal/snack. If a sponsor wishes to use a method other than end-of-line counting, they must first obtain approval from the state agency through their site application. If the count is taken at the beginning of the meal service line, a trained staff person must verify the meal/snack is reimbursable at the end of the service line.

Methods that are NOT acceptable:

- Using classroom/attendance counts
- Counting of meals/snacks prior to being served
- Counts taken by number of trays used
- Counts taken at beginning of meal service line with no check for reimbursable meals at end of line
- Back-out systems – Counts claimed by “backing out” meals. For example, counts taken that record only students that were absent that day or did not take a meal.

Reference

- 7 CFR 225.6(e), 225.7(e)(6), 225.15(b), and 225.16

Resources

- [Summer Food Service Program Administration Guide](#)
- [State Government Records Retention Schedules | WA Secretary of State](#)

Acronym Reference

- CFR – Code of Federal Regulation
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SFSP – Summer Food Service Program
- POS – Point of Service