



# Standards for Alternative Point of Service Meal Counts

## Overview

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations require *Point of Service* meal counts in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). *Point of Service* refers to the location in the serving line where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price or full paid meal has been served to an eligible student. **The majority of *Point of Service Meal Counts* occur at the end of the line. This is preferable.**

## Using Alternative Points of Service

A POS meal count means "that point in the foodservice operation when a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price or paid lunch has been served to an eligible child."

**Any alternate counting/collection procedure must meet the following criteria:**

1. A trained employee should be stationed at the end of the serving line to monitor the meals selected to ensure that each meal claimed for reimbursement meets meal pattern requirements.
2. The procedure must provide a method for removing any meal that is not reimbursable from the proper category of the count used for claiming reimbursement. The above is also true of any system that stations the cashier/ticket taker/ counter at the beginning of the line.
3. If the monitor is a food service worker on the end of the serving line and is serving food, you must ensure that the line is stopped if the food service worker steps away from the line to replenish food.

If the counting/collection procedure deviates from these requirements, please contact the State Agency at [mde.fns@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.fns@state.mn.us), 651-582-8526 or 800-366-8922 (Minnesota Toll-free) to discuss implementing the alternate point of service.

**NOTE: Using attendance counts, the number of tickets sold/issued, head counts, tray counts and counts obtained by "backing into" the numbers of lunches or breakfasts served are not allowable alternate point-of-service counts.**

## Considerations

Before making a change in the *Point of Service* meal count location, the following considerations should be evaluated:

1. Impact of the Offer vs. Serve Provision and the number of different menu choices offered. This may increase the difficulty of effectively monitoring reimbursable meals.
2. The speed of each meal line. Will students be leaving the service line too quickly for the monitor to ensure all trays have been accurately checked for reimbursable meals?