

Meals/Snacks

Grantees must adhere to the Child and Adult Care Food Program nutritional guidelines: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/ProgramBasics/Meals/Meal_Patterns.htm.

In addition, all programs must follow guidelines of the DHS Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing. Foods served should reflect the home and community cultures and be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. GSRP requires Part-Day programs minimally provide a snack. School-Day programs minimally must provide snacks and lunch. All children should eat the same foods unless there is a documented allergy or special need for individualization. The program incurs the cost for individualization at meals unless changes are part of a special education Individualized Education Program (IEP).

School cafeterias are problematic areas for GSRPs to utilize as snack/meal sites due to time for transitioning, size of tables/chairs/serving materials, auditory and visual over-stimulation, and the loss of quality time for adult/child interactions. All meals/snacks must occur in licensed space, and must occur in the GSRP classroom unless there is documented approval from the fiscal agent. Adults in the classroom sit at the table, eat the same foods children do, and participate in child-initiated conversation. All GSRP meals/snacks must be delivered family-style, supporting children to do things for themselves. Refer to resources for this section for more detail on delivery of GSRP family style meals.

Paying for Meals and Snacks. Parents are to incur no costs for meals or snacks.

GSRP funds may only be used to cover the costs of classroom meals and snacks when the item entered into the GSRP budget represents the difference between the estimated cost of providing meals and snacks and the estimated reimbursement from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP) and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) as applicable. GSRP grantees **must** use NSLP, SBP and/or CACFP to recoup the maximum reimbursement available to them before expending GSRP funds for the provision of meals and snacks. The cost of meals for the GSRP teaching team members, who are expected to join the children in family style meals, may be included in the GSRP portion of the meal/snack budget item.

National School Lunch Program. According to the USDA Eligibility Manual For School Meals (October, 2011), children enrolled in State-funded pre-kindergarten classes using identical or more stringent eligibility criteria than the Federal Head Start Program are categorically eligible to receive free meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), where applicable.

GSRP students are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) where applicable. GSRP students in Michigan are not, however, categorically eligible to receive free meals through these programs due to an income requirement less stringent than that of the Federal Head Start Program. Rather, the fiscal agent, in collaboration with the consortium member(s) implementing the grant, is required to retain the appropriate eligibility documentation (i.e., Free and Reduced Meal Family Application).

Students that qualify for reduced price or full-paid meals based on income determination must not be charged for any portion of the meal. The difference between the federal reimbursement rate and the actual cost of the meal may be charged to the GSRP program budget as is the cost of the meal for students that do not qualify for reduced price or full-paid meals.

Qualifying breakfasts and lunches served to GSRP children may be claimed for Federal reimbursement. In order to claim for reimbursement, each fiscal agent must identify, through the consortium option detailed above, districts/buildings where NSLP and SBP are available to GSRP students.

- Allow individual districts to independently serve, count and claim for Federal reimbursement qualifying breakfasts and lunches to GSRP students through their existing State Agency-approved sponsorship of NSLP and SBP.

Child and Adult Care Food Program. GSRP Students are eligible to participate in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) where applicable. GSRP students in Michigan are not, however, categorically eligible to receive free meals through the CACFP due to an income requirement less stringent than that of the Federal Head Start Program. Rather, the fiscal agent, in collaboration with the consortium member(s) implementing the grant, is required to retain the appropriate eligibility documentation (i.e., Free and Reduced Meal Family Application) and must claim the participants in the appropriate category on monthly claims per the Free and Reduced Meal Family Application.

Students that qualify for reduced price or full-paid meals based on income determination must not be charged for any portion of the meal. The difference between the federal reimbursement rate and the actual cost of the meal may be charged to the GSRP program budget as is the cost of the meal for students that do not qualify for reduced price or full-paid meals.

Qualifying breakfasts, lunches and snacks served to GSRP children may be claimed for Federal reimbursement in the CACFP. In order to claim these meals and snacks reimbursement, each fiscal agent must enter into an agreement to become a State Agency-approved sponsor of the CACFP. The approved sponsor should:

- Establish all individual buildings serving qualifying meals and snacks to GSRP students on the sponsor application as 'sites'.
- Collect and retain GSRP meal and snacks counts and related records for individual sites per CACFP regulations.
- File consolidated monthly claims for all participating sites for reimbursement of meals and snacks served to GSRP participants.

Reporting. It is the responsibility of the fiscal agent to ensure that each GSRP student is accurately reported in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS). So long as they are reported, such reporting may be done by either the district in which the student is receiving services or the ISD, which acts as the administrator and fiscal agent to the Great Start Readiness Program.

The Center for Education and Performance Information (CEPI) uses the Supplemental Nutrition Eligibility (SNE) component to report the student's status as eligible for free or reduced-price milk or meals through the National School Lunch Program. Multiple State of Michigan offices use these data in the determination of sub-groups and as the poverty indicator for districts. If the student is participating in meal services through the National School Lunch Program, they are to be reported in the SNE field as a part of the Fall General Collection in MSDS. Conversely, if they are *only* participating in meal services through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, they are *not* to be counted in the SNE field.