



Indiana SFSP/SSO Policy 2026-01

Site Caps for Self-Prep and Vended Sites

Purpose

To outline approved level of meals (site cap) requirements and flexibility when participating in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or Sun Meals and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). This policy provides guidance on site cap determinations, cap adjustments and flexibility, second meal requirements, and serving bulk meals, all done to ensure program integrity when serving summer meals to children.

Scope

Sponsors and school food authorities (SFA) currently participating in the SFSP/SSO or new institutions applying to participate in the SFSP/SSO.

Description

To maintain program integrity and ensure each site meets the intended purpose and reflects the needs of the targeted area, initial site caps will be established prior to site approval. Additionally, this policy provides provisions for establishing site caps for rural non-congregate meal service sites. Finally, this policy establishes the procedures that must be taken when a site proposes a potential increase in an established site cap.

For SFAs that are participating in the SSO, 7 CFR 210.34 requires compliance with the SFSP regulations found at 7 CFR 225. [7 CFR 225.6\(h\)\(1\)\(iii\)](#), [SFSP 16-2015](#), and the [Summer Food Service Program Administrative Guide](#) outline the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE) responsibility to set limits in the number of meals each approved site may serve to children, Under [7 CFR 225.2](#), a site means the place where a child receives a program meal. A site may be the indoor or outdoor location where congregate meals are served, a stop on a delivery route of a mobile congregate meal service, or the distribution location or route for a non-congregate meal service. Both the SSO and the SFSP offer the opportunity for congregate and noncongregate meals.

Sponsors and SFAs have two meal service options when participating in SSO or SFSP. Meal service can be in the form of **self-preparation site**, where the sponsor prepares the majority of meals that will be served at the site, or a **vended site**, where the sponsor purchases from a food service management company (FSMC) unitized meals to serve at the site. With either service option, the site must have State agency approval for the number of meals served to participants, otherwise known as a **site cap**.

All SFSP sites are required to have an approved site cap. The purpose of a site cap is to ensure that a site does not purchase and/or produce meals outside the capability of the site and the need of the community, thereby reducing waste and protecting the integrity of the SFSP. When it

comes to establishing caps for sites, IDOE must take different considerations for self-preparation versus vended meals.

Initial site cap approvals

For site caps for proposed self-preparation site, IDOE must ensure that the site is approved to serve no more than the number of children for which its facilities are adequate. 7 CFR 225.6(h)(1)(iii).

For vended meals, the initial maximum approved site cap must be based upon the historical record of the number of meals served at the site if such a record has been established in prior years and the State agency determines that it is accurate. The State agency must develop a procedure for establishing initial maximum approved levels for sites when no accurate record from prior years is available. The State agency may consider participation at other similar sites located in the area, documentation of programming taking place at the site, statistics on the number of children residing in the area, and other relevant information. 7 CFR 225.6(h)(2).

IDOE utilizes the average daily participation (ADP) for the site cap determination. That number is increased by ten percent to determine the site cap. For example, if the ADP for a site is 100 participants, IDOE determines the site cap for the upcoming summer to be 110 participants for that particular site.

For rural sites that are located close to urban site locations, the sponsor/SFA of the rural site must demonstrate to the State agency that the requested site cap is based on service of children who live within the boundaries of the rural area and that duplicate meals will not be served.

Adjustments

The site cap requirement provides protection for sites and sponsors. However, it is sometimes difficult for a State agency working with a sponsor to accurately assess capability and need of a site. An example is an open site, which provides meals for any children that come to the sites, can attract more children than originally anticipated. In such circumstances, sponsors and sites have worked with State agencies to demonstrate that the site cap should be increased. Once satisfied of the need for a site cap increase, the State agencies have approved those sites to provide meal service to those additional children.

Pursuant to 7 CFR 225.6(h), sponsors may request an increase to an established site cap. Such increase is contingent upon IDOE approval. Sponsors/SFAs who wish to increase a site cap (per meal service) must update their site information sheet in CNPweb at any point prior to submitting the claim for the impacted reimbursement period. For example, if a sponsor files a claim for June 2026 on July 15, 2026, the sponsor could have requested an increase to the site cap for June 2026 any time prior to July 15, 2026. To assist in the timely approval of a site cap increase, IDOE recommends that sponsors/SFAs submit their request as soon as the increase is needed and to not delay the request as a claim deadline approaches.

Flexibility Regarding Adjustments to Site Caps

When increases are in excess of 25%, sponsors/SFAs must submit supporting documentation that includes, but is not limited to, the previous week's (5 days) meal count records per meal type, invoices, and purchase or production records as justification for the increase in meals. Any increases in excess of 25% that have not been approved may result in a meal reclaim for the period the meals were claimed. Further, sponsors are reminded that site cap increases are solely contingent upon IDOE's approval.

Second Meals

Fluctuation in participation levels can sometimes make it difficult to estimate precisely the number of meals needed. Between meal estimations and the avoidance of food waste, sponsors may claim reimbursement for a number of second congregate meals served which does not exceed 2 percent of the number of first meals served to children for each meal type (*i.e.*, breakfasts, lunches, supplements, or suppers). IDOE must disallow all claims for second meals if it determines that the sponsor failed to plan and prepare or order meals with the objective of providing only one meal per child at each meal service. Second meals must be served only after all participating children at the site's congregate meal service have been served a meal. Second meals may not be served as part of a non-congregate meal service. 7 CFR 225.15(b)(4).

Bulk

Rural noncongregate sites have the option to distribute bulk meals to participants, however this must be done within the limit of that site's approved site cap. SFSP regulations allow distribution of reimbursable meals within the approved cap for up to a maximum of 10 consecutive days per service. However, IDOE may limit the maximum days on a case-by-case basis and without regard to sponsor type. 7 CFR 225.6(h)(3)(v).

Scope: School Food Authorities, Sponsors, Institutions, Facilities, Responsible Parties and Responsible Individuals participating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

Resources

7 CFR 225.6(h), 7 CFR 225.13, 7 CFR 225.15(b)(4), SFSP 16-2015, SFSP Administrative Guide