



## USDA Meal Pattern Requirement Certification Specifications

### Background:

The meal pattern requirement certification specifications developed by the Food and Nutrition service (FNS) will be used to certify school food authorities (SFAs) who demonstrate compliance with the updated meal pattern requirements to receive the additional 6 cent lunch reimbursement. Since it is a performance-based reimbursement, it is expected to encourage SFAs to implement the updated requirements as quickly as possible. FNS developed a Certification Tool to assist SFAs and State agencies in measuring compliance.

By assessing daily and weekly meal pattern requirements as well as nutrient requirements, these tools provide certification documentation for SFAs to submit to State agencies. State agencies must review the documentation and make certification determinations within 60 days. SFAs must submit the following documentation:

- **Menus and menu worksheets** – One week of each menu offered, by age grade group, and a detailed menu worksheet for each menu showing food components and quantities by reimbursable meal. For example, if the SFA serves an elementary, middle, and high school menu, the SFA must submit three menus and three menu worksheets. If an SFA has two distinct menus for its high schools, and one each for middle and elementary schools, it must submit four menus and four menu worksheets.
- **Nutrient analysis or a simplified nutrient assessment** – A nutrient analysis, using FNS-approved software, or a simplified nutrient assessment, following standards set by FNS, for each menu. The Simplified Nutrient Assessment is considered a proxy for a complete nutrient analysis.
- **Attestation** – SFAs must attest in writing that the documentation submitted for certification is representative of the ongoing meal service within the SFA, and that the minimum required food quantities for all meal components are available to students in every serving line.

The Certification tool consists of two modules; the Menu Worksheet and the Simplified Nutrient Assessment.

### New Meal Pattern Requirements:

The final rule, “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs” was published by FNS on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. This final rule updates the meal patterns and nutrition standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to align them with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The final rule can be found at the link below:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>

### **Materials needed to complete the Certification Tool:**

SFAs will need the following to complete the assessment:

- 1 week menu (5 days)
- Portion sizes for all reimbursable menu items
- Contribution information for each menu item (CN Label, USDA Food Fact Sheet)
- Standardized Recipes
- Production Records
- Food Buying Guide
- The unit of measurement is the reimbursable meal.
  - Each reimbursable meal consists of all required food components: any grain/meat/meat alternates in a main dish and/or side dish, total amount of fruit offered with each meal, total amount of vegetables in a main dish and/or side dish, and amount of milk. The vegetable subgroups and types of milk will be recorded on a different tab.

### **Menu Worksheet Specifications:**

#### *Daily Requirements:*

Based on the quantity information entered for each reimbursable meal, the assessment checks to ensure the daily requirements are met for fruit, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternate, and milk.

- The milk type is checked on a daily basis to ensure a variety of milk types are served and low-fat (1%) flavored, reduced fat (2%) or whole milk is not offered.

#### *Weekly Requirements:*

- The minimum quantity of fruit, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternative, and milk offered for the reimbursable meals offered each day is used to sum across the week to ensure the weekly minimums for the above components are met.
- For grains and meat/meat alternate, the maximum quantity offered in a reimbursable meal for each day is summed to determine if the sum of maximum quantities is within the required weekly range.
- Vegetable subgroup information is entered each day to assess the weekly requirements. The largest amount of each vegetable subgroup available (in cups) to a single child is selected to indicate the greatest combination of vegetables available for a student to select.
  - For example: If two different entrees are offered, such as a spinach pizza and a broccoli casserole, the amounts of spinach and broccoli would NOT be added together as the student cannot take both of those food items. This would also apply if more than one

side dish with dark green vegetables is offered and students are instructed to take one choice.

- The sum of all offerings of fruit juice (in cups) is summed for all meals offered during the week to assess if the fruit juice limit is met (no more than 50% of total fruit can come in the form of fruit juice).
- The sum of all offerings of vegetable juice (in cups) is summed for all meals offered during the week to assess if the vegetable juice limit is met (no more than 50% of total weekly vegetables can come in the form of vegetable juice).
- The total amount (in ounce equivalents; however grain/bread servings may also be used as a unit of measure for SY 2012-2013 only) of grain offerings for each day is summed across the week as is the total amount of whole grain-rich offerings to ensure that at least 50% of total grain offerings are whole grain-rich.
- The number of grain-based desserts is tracked with the reimbursable meals to determine if no more than 2 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts are offered during the course of the week.

**Table 1: Menu Worksheet Component Requirement Measurement Specifications Summary**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Daily Requirement</b>	<b>Weekly Requirement</b>
Fruit Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be $\geq$ daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column J) $\geq$ daily requirement.	Minimum fruit for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be $\geq$ weekly requirement (age grade group) Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column J) = weekly minimum
Vegetable Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be $\geq$ daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column M) $\geq$ daily requirement	Minimum vegetable for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be $\geq$ weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column M) = weekly minimum
Milk Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be $\geq$ daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column P) $\geq$ daily requirement	Minimum milk for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be $\geq$ weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column P) = weekly minimum
Daily Milk Variety	More than one of the following must be checked: Skim/fat-free unflavored, Skim/fat-free flavored, Low-fat (less than 1%), unflavored.	N/A

	The following may NOT be checked: Low-fat (1% or less), flavored or Reduced fat (2% fat) or whole, unflavored and flavored	
Meat/Meat Alternate Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be $\geq$ daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column D) $\geq$ daily requirement	Minimum meat/meat alternate for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be $\geq$ weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column D) = weekly minimum
Meat/Meat Alternate Maximum	N/A	Maximum meat/meat alternate for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be $\leq$ weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Maximum (Daily tab column D) = weekly maximum
Grains Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be $\geq$ daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (Column F) $\geq$ daily requirement	Minimum Grains for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be $\geq$ weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab Column F) = weekly minimum
Grains Maximum	N/A	Maximum Grains for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be $\leq$ weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Maximum (Daily tab Column F) = weekly maximum
Fruit Juice Limit	N/A	Sum of Maximum(daily tab column L) /sum of maximum (daily tab column J) must be $\leq$ 50%
Vegetable Juice Limit	N/A	Sum of Maximum(daily tab column O) /sum of maximum (daily tab column M) must be $\leq$ 50%
Whole Grain-Rich	N/A	Sum of total grains offered each day and sum of whole grain rich offerings each day.

		Sum (Monday through Friday column H)/Sum (Monday through Friday column f) must be $\geq 50\%$ .
Grain-based desserts	N/A	Sum of maximum offering of grain based desserts each day. Sum (maximum daily tab column l) must be $\leq 2$ .
<b>Vegetable Subgroups</b>		
Dark Green	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column E plus daily tab cell AD7 (largest amount of dark green to select)
Red/orange	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column K plus daily tab cell AJ7 (largest amount of red/orange to select)
Beans/peas	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column Q plus daily tab cell AP7 (largest amount of Beans/peas to select)
Starchy	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column W plus daily tab cell AV7 (largest amount of Starchy to select)
Other	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column AC plus daily tab cell BB7 (largest amount of Other to select)

**Simplified Nutrient Assessment Specifications:**

This part of the Certification Tool is only required for those SFAs that do not submit a full nutrient analysis as part of their certification application. SFAs that have FNS approved nutrient analysis software, may submit a nutrient analysis showing the calories and saturated fat for the week. The Simplified Nutrient Assessment is meant to be a proxy for a full nutrient analysis.

Similar to the Menu Worksheet, SFAs must submit a Simplified Nutrient Assessment for each menu type.

### ***Fruit, Milk, and Vegetable Subgroup Assessment***

SFAs will answer a series of questions pertaining to the frequency of adding fats and sugars in the preparation and offering of fruit, milk, and vegetable subgroups for the week of menus submitted for the certification process.

#### ***Fruit:***

- The number of total weekly servings is based on sum of the minimum quantity offered through the reimbursable meals offered each day. This value is from the weekly report (cell G5).
- User indicates how frequently fruit is offered through the week with added fat as well as added sugar, based on total volume (cups):.
  - If fruit is offered less than 30% of the time with added fat/sugar.
  - If fruit is offered 30% to 70% of the time with added fat/sugar.
  - If fruit is offered more than 70% of the time with added fat/sugar.
- Each selection has a calorie and saturated fat value determined by averaging calories and fat from commonly used sugars and fats per serving and taking a percentage of the serving size based on frequency. Calorie and saturated fat values for common additives are based on food items in the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference.
- The values increase as the frequency of using added sugar and/or fat increases.
- The average serving size offered in the menu is determined by taking the average of the fruit quantities offered through reimbursable meals over the course of the week.
- The average amount of calories and saturated fat offered per serving based on the preparation is determined by multiplying the value by the average serving size.
- The total calories and saturated fat for the weekly fruit is determined by multiplying the calories per serving by the sum of the daily fruit quantity minimums.
- Average weekly calories and saturated fat is determined by dividing the total calories and saturated fat calculated above by 5.

#### ***Milk***

- The number of total weekly servings is based on sum of minimum quantity served each day.
- User indicates the two types of milk offered most during the week:
  - Nonfat unflavored & nonfat flavored
  - Nonfat unflavored & low-fat (1%) unflavored
  - Low-fat (1%) unflavored & nonfat flavored
- Each selection has a calorie and saturated fat value determined by averaging the milk types.
- There is a value associated with each type of milk, based on USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference and commercially available products.

- The average serving size offered in the menu is determined by taking the average of the milk quantities offered over the course of the week.
- The average amount of calories and saturated fat offered per serving based on the preparation is determined by multiplying g the value by the average serving size.
- The total calories and saturated fat for the weekly milk is determined by multiplying the calories per serving by the sum of the daily milk quantity minimums.
- Average weekly calories and saturated fat is determined by dividing the total calories and saturated fat calculated above by 5.

### *Vegetable Subgroups*

- The maximum weekly amount of each subgroup is the sum of the largest amount of each subgroup to select on each day.
- User indicates how vegetable subgroups are usually offered, based on total volume (cups):
  - If [vegetable subgroup] is offered less than 30% of the time with added fat.
  - If [vegetable subgroup] is offered 30% to 70% of the time with added fat.
  - If [vegetable subgroup] is offered more than 70% of the time with added fat.
- The frequency of added sugars must also be selected for the red/orange vegetable subgroups.
- Each selection has a calorie and saturated fat value determined by averaging calorie and fat values from commonly used fats per serving and taking a percentage of the serving size based on frequency.
- The values increase as the frequency of using added fat (and/or added sugar for red/orange vegetables) increases.
- The total calories and saturated fat for the weekly subgroups is determined by multiplying the calories per serving by weekly maximum quantities.
- Average weekly calories and saturated fat is determined by dividing the total calories and saturated fat calculated above by 5.

**Table 2: Commonly added fats and sugar sources for fruits, vegetables, and milk**

<b>Common Sources for Added Fats</b>	<b>Common Sources for Added Sugars</b>
Butter	Brown or white sugar
Margarine	Honey
Vegetable oil (soybean, canola, olive, nut based)	Maple and/or fruit syrup (juice concentrate)
Salad dressing	Pie filling
Mayonnaise	Crumb topping
Cream/whipped cream/sour cream	
Shortening	
Bacon crumbles	

**Table 3: Values associated with added fats and sugars**

<b>Meal Pattern Component</b>	<b>Calories/cup</b>	<b>Sat Fat/cup</b>
<b>Fruit plus FAT</b>		
Less than 30%	132.59	0.34
30% to 70%	154.99	1.06
Over 70%	177.39	1.78
<b>Fruit (SUGAR only, not including fruit values)</b>		
Less than 30%	3.68	0.00
30% to 70%	12.25	0.00
Over 70%	20.83	0.00
<b>Milk</b>		
Nonfat unflavored & nonfat flavored	114.65	0.36
Nonfat unflavored & low-fat (1%) unflavored	92.50	0.84
Low-fat (1%) unflavored & nonfat flavored	124.15	1.06
<b>Dark Green Vegetables (FAT)</b>		
Less than 30%	40.60	0.31
30% to 70%	63.00	1.03
Over 70%	85.40	1.74
<b>Red/Orange Vegetables (FAT)</b>		
Less than 30%	109.43	0.36
30% to 70%	131.83	1.07
Over 70%	154.23	1.79
<b>Red/Orange Vegetables (SUGAR only, not including vegetable values)</b>		
Less than 30%	3.68	0.00
30% to 70%	12.25	0.00
Over 70%	20.83	0.00
<b>Beans/Peas Vegetables (FAT)</b>		
Less than 30%	246.00	0.55
30% to 70%	268.40	1.27
Over 70%	290.80	1.98
<b>Starchy Vegetables (FAT)</b>		
Less than 30%	161.03	0.51
30% to 70%	183.43	1.22
Over 70%	205.83	1.94
<b>Other Vegetables (FAT)</b>		
Less than 30%	47.78	0.37



30% to 70%	70.18	1.09
Over 70%	92.58	1.81

**Main Dish Simplified Nutrient Data Entry:**

- This section is pre-populated with the meals entered in the “All Meals” tab in the Menu worksheet.
- SFAs must enter calories and saturated fat for each meal offered during the week.
- Only include the calories and saturated fat for the main dish and any components included as part of the main dish. The vegetables and fruit have already been accounted for in the Fruit, Milk, and Vegetable Subgroup Simplified Nutrient Selection section.
- The number of planned servings must include all servings across all sites serving the menu type (if more than one school served per menu type, aggregate data across schools).
- For each main dish the number of calories/serving and saturated fat/serving is multiplied by the number of planned servings for the week.
- The number of calories and saturated fat offered over the week are calculated by summing the number of calories and saturated fat offered for all main dishes calculated above.
- The number of planned servings for the week for all meals is calculated by summing the number of planned servings for each meal.
- The average daily calories and saturated fat are calculated by dividing the total calories and saturated fat for the week (for all meals) by the total weekly number of servings calculated in the step above.

**Other items: Sides, Desserts, and condiments Nutrient Data Entry:**

- The calories and saturated fat per serving must be entered for all sides (not vegetables and fruit), desserts, and condiments.
- The number of planned servings must include all servings across all sites serving the menu type.
- For each side, dessert, and condiment, the number of calories/serving and saturated fat/serving are multiplied by the number of planned servings for the week.
- The number of calories and saturated fat offered over the week are calculated by summing the number of calories and saturated fat offered for all sides, desserts, and condiments calculated above.
- The average daily calories and saturated fat are calculated by dividing the total calories and saturated fat for the week (for all meals) by the **total weekly number of planned servings for main dishes**.

**Daily Amounts based on the average for a 5-day week (Simplified Nutrient Assessment results):**

*Calories:*

- The estimated average daily calories for fruit, milk, and vegetable subgroups, the average daily calories for all main dishes, and the average daily calories for all sides, desserts, and condiments is summed to determine the average daily calories for the weekly menu.
- There is a 25 calorie window on each end of the range to allow for State agency follow up. The calories do not fall within the range but the SFA may follow up with the State to determine why the estimated average daily calorie limit is above or below the required range.
- Estimated average daily calories outside of the 25 calorie window are flagged for not meeting the requirement.

*Saturated Fat:*

- The estimated average daily calories for fruit, milk, and vegetable subgroups, the average daily calories for all main dishes, and the average daily calories for all sides, desserts, and condiments is summed and then multiplied by 9 to calculate the total calories of saturated fat.
- The total calories of saturated fat are divided by the average daily calories for the week to calculate the percent of daily calories that are saturated fat.
- There is a 0.5% window to allow for State agency follow up.
- Estimate percent of saturated fat calories outside of the 0.5 (10.5%) window are flagged for not meeting the requirement.