

SFSP Offer vs Serve Training

**for School Food Authorities
PY 2026**

WHAT IS OVS?

OVS is short for Offer Versus Serve

- OVS is a meal service option available in SFSP only for use by approved School Food Authorities (SFAs)
- OVS allows children to decline some items offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper
- OVS use is optional at a SFSP SFA site, but must be approved
- OVS is available for SFSP sites approved for non-congregate meal service only under specific and limited circumstances
- Meal pattern requirements must be met for all components served



GOAL OF SFSP OFFER VERSUS SERVE

- Reduces food waste
- Allows participants to decline up to two components
- Lowers food cost if properly implemented

OVS is not a way to circumvent meal pattern requirements or eliminate specific components. All meal components for the planned menu must be available throughout the entire meal service. If a site runs out of a component, no more meals may be claimed for reimbursement, even if the meal would meet the OVS requirement.

OVS AT SFSP RURAL NON-CONGREGATE SITES

- Due to unique service situations at each site, not every NC site location may be appropriate for OVS
- SFAs utilizing OVS must be able to follow the SFSP (or SSO) OVS meal service parameters entirely
- Site staff must still follow appropriate food safety measures
- Sponsors must discuss their interest to use OVS with their Field Specialist and state agency pre-approval is required

OVS AT RURAL NON-CONGREGATE SITES

Best practices when using OVS in non-congregate settings include, but are not limited to:

- Indoor meal service that is set-up as a cafeteria serving line
- Buffet style meal pick-up for daily non-congregate meal service operations
- Pre-ordering or online ordering system where children can choose their meal items prior to meal pick-up or delivery
- Gathering participant feedback and adjusting meal service flexibilities (bulk food items, and multi-day meal issuance) and menus, as needed

IDENTIFYING A REIMBURSABLE MEAL

- Site Staff OVS training must occur prior to start date
- Sites must have clear communication to assist children to identify a reimbursable meal
 - Posters, signs or fact sheets
 - Menus that communicate the available food choices
 - Verbal guidance from staff as children select a meal can help avoid confusion of what makes a complete meal

BREAKFAST : SBP OR SFSP?

SFAs may follow the School Breakfast Program (SBP) or the SFSP meal pattern during the summer, if desired

- OVS rules follow whichever meal pattern is being used-SFSP or SBP
- If electing to continue the SBP meal pattern, OVS rules remain the same as during the school year
- Reminders if using SBP meal pattern OVS
 - SBP meal pattern requires one full cup of fruit offered
 - SBP OVS requires students take at least ½ cup of fruit

SFSP COMPONENT VS ITEM

Component

- **The individual parts, or food groups, that make a complete meal**
 - Meat/Meat Alternate
 - Grain
 - Fruit/Vegetable
 - Milk

Item

- **A specific item offered within the component constituting a reimbursable meal**
 - Piece of toast
 - Whole banana
 - String cheese
 - Carton of milk

SFSP BREAKFAST

OVS Requirements

- Four different food items must be offered
- One additional item must be offered beyond the 3 required meal pattern components (see at right)
 - Fourth food item can be a fruit/vegetable, bread/grain, or meat/meat alternate component
- A child must take at minimum 3 of the 4 food items offered

Breakfast Meal Pattern

- 1 serving grain/bread
- ½ cup fruit or 4 fl oz 100% fruit juice
- 1 cup milk

Additional for OVS

- 1 item from any component except milk

SFSP BREAKFAST AND OVS RULES

Different from SBP, the SFSP meal pattern requires all four items offered at breakfast to be different items.

- **Regardless of size, an item counts as ONE**
- **For example:**
 - Two ½ cup portions of the same fruit cannot count as two items
 - 2oz equivalent grain item counts as 1 item in the SFSP meal pattern

Considerations:

- Even if the grain item offered is 2oz equivalent, an additional item must be added so that the total number of items offered is 4
- Similarly, 2 pieces of toast count as 1 item; the 4 items offered must be different foods
- Combination foods that offer two different components, such as sausage biscuit or pancake wrap, count as 2 items where applicable

SFSP BREAKFAST

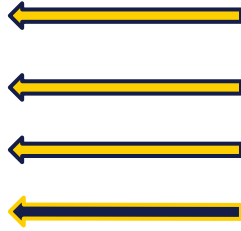
Site Staff documenting meals must understand how SFSP OVS rules differ from SBP OVS rules:

- Students must take 3 of the 4 items offered, but may take all 4 items if desired
- The fourth item offered can be grain, fruit/vegetable or meat/meat alternate but must be different than the other three items on the menu
- Items are counted individually and there are no 2oz equivalent grain options that count as 2 items
- Combination foods may be counted as 2, if two different components are represented in the combination food
Example: sausage biscuit, egg sandwich (Meat and grain)

SFSP BREAKFAST

Menu Example

1. 1 piece of toast
2. ½ cup grape juice
3. 1 cup milk
4. ½ cup applesauce



Required breakfast meal
pattern items

Additional 4th item for OVS

This menu is acceptable to use for OVS because it offers 4 items from the required meal pattern components.

SFSP BREAKFAST

Menu Example:

1. 1 piece of toast
2. 1 bowl of cereal
3. ½ cup peaches
4. 1 cup chocolate milk

The child may take any 3 of the 4 items offered but can take all 4 if desired.



SFSP BREAKFAST

Menu Example

1. 1 piece of toast
2. 1 cheese stick
3. ½ cup orange juice
4. 1 cup milk

This menu is acceptable because it offers 4 items. The 1 serving grain requirement is met with the toast and the cheese stick is counted as a fourth item.

SFSP BREAKFAST

Menu Example

1. 1 biscuit
2. ½ cup carrots
3. ½ cup fruit punch (100% juice)
4. 1 cup of milk

This menu is acceptable because it offers 4 items.

***Note that in SFSP meal pattern, the fruit and vegetable are combined as one component.**

SFSP BREAKFAST

Menu Example - Not acceptable for OVS

- 1. 2 pieces of toast**
- 2. ½ cup pineapple**
- 3. 1 cup milk**

This menu is not acceptable for SFSP OVS because the 2 pieces of toast are the same food item. The four offered items must be different foods.

SFSP BREAKFAST

Menu Example - Not Acceptable for OVS

1. 1 fruit filled crescent roll (2oz grain equivalent)
2. ½ cup orange juice
3. 1 cup milk

While 3 items meet the minimum SFSP meal pattern requirement, the above menu would not be acceptable for SFSP OVS because each menu item is counted separately, regardless of grain/bread equivalent contribution. Adding a fourth item, such as ½ cup strawberries or a hard-boiled egg, would make this menu allowable for OVS use.

SFSP BREAKFAST

Menu Example - Does not meet SFSP meal pattern, even with 4 items

- 1. 1 boiled egg**
- 2. ½ cup grapes**
- 3. ½ cup orange juice**
- 4. 1 cup of milk**

This menu is not acceptable because it does not include a grain item, which is required to meet the breakfast meal pattern requirement. Adding a pancake or toast in place of the orange juice would make it acceptable for SFSP meal pattern and OVS use.

SFSP BREAKFAST: IS THIS A MEAL?

Here's the SFSP menu:

Frudel- Cherry
(2 oz. CN Label grain contribution)



1 oz. Cheese Stick



4 oz. 100% Orange Juice



1 cup of milk



SFSP BREAKFAST OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Selected:

Fruitel- Cherry
(2 oz. CN Label grain contribution)



1 oz. Cheese Stick



SFSP BREAKFAST OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

No!

Under SFSP meal pattern rules, even if the ounce contribution is 2 oz equivalent according to the CN label, each food item must be counted separately. An additional item must be selected to count as a SFSP meal.



SFSP BREAKFAST OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Here's the SFSP menu:

Breakfast Pizza (2 items)
(1 oz. grain, 1 oz. m/ma)



1 cup of milk



½ cup of strawberries



SFSP BREAKFAST OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Selected:

Breakfast Pizza (2 items)
(1 oz. grain, 1 oz. m/ma)



1 cup of milk



SFSP BREAKFAST OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Yes!

- **Although only 2 items were selected, the pizza counts as 2 items because it is a combination food containing foods from two different components. Additionally, students are not required to take a fruit at breakfast under SFSP OVS rules.**

LUNCH: NSLP OR SFSP?

Sponsors may elect to operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal pattern during the summer

- OVS rules follow the meal pattern that is being used - SFSP or NSLP
- If electing to continue the NSLP meal pattern, OVS rules remain the same as during the school year

Reminders

- NSLP meal pattern separates vegetables and fruits into two separate components and requires one of each
- NSLP OVS requires students take at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable, but a full $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetable/fruit must be offered

SFSP LUNCH/SUPPER

The SFSP lunch/supper meal pattern:

- 1- serving bread/grain
 - 2 oz meat/meat alternate
 - 2 servings of different fruits/vegetables totaling $\frac{3}{4}$ cup or more
 - 1- 8oz serving of milk
-
- **Five different food items must be offered to meet the meal pattern requirements.**
 - **Ensure that two different fruit/vegetable offerings are made and, when combined, total at least $\frac{3}{4}$ cup or more.**

SFSP LUNCH/SUPPER

Participants must take 3 food components from the 5 food items offered

- OVS requirements at lunch refer to components and not items (different from breakfast)
- The 2 servings of fruit/vegetable only count as 1 component
 - A child cannot take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pineapple, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup carrots and a package of crackers to count as a meal because the pineapple and carrots are the same component
- If serving a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup portion of fruit/vegetable along with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to meet the daily requirement, children only need to select one option to fulfill the fruit/vegetable component. They do not have to take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup but must take the planned portion.
- Children are not required to take a fruit/vegetable portion under SFSP OVS requirements.

SFSP LUNCH OR SUPPER

Menu Example:

- 1 PBJ sandwich (2 slices of bread, 4T peanut butter, and jelly)
- ½ cup of broccoli
- ¼ cup frozen fruit juice bar
- 1 cup of milk

If the child were to select only the PBJ and milk would this count as a meal? Yes, because the sandwich counts as 2 components (grain and meat/meat alternate) and the milk is the third. Children are not required to take a fruit or vegetable in SFSP.

SFSP LUNCH OR SUPPER

Menu Example:

- 1 PBJ sandwich (2 slices of bread, 4T peanut butter, and jelly)
- 1/2 cup of broccoli
- 1/4 cup frozen fruit juice bar
- 1 cup of milk

If the child were to select the broccoli, juice bar and milk, would this count as a meal? No, the child has taken 3 items, but only 2 components. Fruit/Vegetable is only considered one component in the SFSP meal pattern.

SFSP LUNCH OR SUPPER

Menu offered:

- **1 oz roasted chicken**
- **½ cup of black beans (credit as meat/meat alternate component)**
- **1 cup of rice**
- **½ cup of broccoli***
- **½ cup of apple Slices***
- **1 cup of milk**

If the child were to select the chicken, beans and milk, would this be a meal? No, the beans are clearly marked as part of the meat/meat alternate component. By selecting the beans and chicken with the milk, the child has selected only 2 components. Menu planners must clearly define beans as either a vegetable or meat/meat alternate. They cannot count as both in the same meal.

SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Here is the SFSP menu for today:

Turkey Sandwich (2 items)
(1 hoagie roll, 1oz turkey, 1 oz cheese)



¼ cup of fresh broccoli



½ cup of applesauce



1 cup of milk



SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Turkey Sandwich (2 items)
(1 hoagie roll, 1oz turkey, 1 oz cheese)



Selected:

½ cup of applesauce



1 cup of milk



SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Yes!

This is an acceptable meal because the child has selected 4 of the 5 offered items and at least 3 of the 4 components.



SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Here is the SFSP menu for today:

Turkey Sandwich (2 items)
(1 hoagie roll, 1oz turkey, 1 oz cheese)



¼ cup of fresh broccoli



½ cup of applesauce



1 cup of milk



SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Selected:

¼ cup of fresh broccoli



½ cup of applesauce



1 cup of milk



SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

No!

While the child selected 3 items, only 2 different components were selected.



SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Here is the SFSP menu for today:

Macaroni and Cheese (2 items)
(2 oz. Cheese, 2 oz. bread/grain)



½ cup of peaches



½ cup of green beans



1 cup of milk



Selected:

Macaroni and Cheese (2 items)
(2 oz. Cheese, 2 oz. bread/grain)



1 cup of Milk



SFSP OVS: IS THIS A MEAL?

Yes!

The child has selected 3 items from 3 components. Participants are not required to take a fruit or vegetable if you are following the SFSP meal pattern.



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