

## GLOSSARY

**a la carte sales:** Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs. For more information, see “competitive foods” in this section.

**behavioral economics:** The science of how environmental cues – such as the packaging, order and placement of food items on the cafeteria line – influence decision-making and help promote healthy choices in school lunchrooms.

**Child Nutrition Programs:** The USDA’s federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, see the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) Web page.

**competitive foods:** Any foods and beverages sold to students anytime on school premises other than meals served through the USDA school meal programs. Competitive food sales include, but are not limited to, cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores and fundraisers. For more information, see “a la carte sales” in this section, and the CSDE’s [Competitive Foods](#) Web page.

**Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS):** State nutrition standards developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education per Section 10-215e of the Connecticut General Statutes. These standards address the nutritional content of all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals. They focus on limiting fat, saturated fat, sodium and added sugars, eliminating trans fat, moderating portion sizes and increasing consumption of nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats and legumes. All schools in any district that chooses to comply with Healthy Food Certification under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes must follow the CNS for all sources of food sales to students, including school cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers and any other sources. The CNS also apply to all snacks served in the ASP. For more information, see the CSDE’s [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) Web page.

**creditable food:** A food or beverage that can be counted toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods](#) Web page.

**dining area:** Anywhere food is eaten in a school setting, such as the cafeteria, dining hall, hallway, parking lot, classroom, student lounge and school bus.

**food components:** The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the NSLP (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and meat/meat alternates) and the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts in the SBP (grains with optional meat/meat alternate substitutions, fruits with optional vegetable substitutions and milk). For more information on the individual food components, see the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods](#) Web page.

**grab and go:** A type of meal service that offers preassembled reimbursable meals that can be easily and quickly selected by students. Grab-and-go meals may include traditional entrees (meat/meat alternates and grains) with fruits, vegetables and milk, or any meal components that together meet the requirements of a reimbursable meal.

**Healthy Food Certification:** A state statute (Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes) that requires each board of education or governing authority for all public schools participating in the NSLP to certify annually to the CSDE whether they will follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals. Districts that choose to implement the Connecticut Nutrition Standards receive 10 cents per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches (paid, free and reduced) served in the district in the prior school year. For more information, see the CSDE’s [Healthy Food Certification](#) Web page

**meal pattern:** The required food components and minimum serving sizes that schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. For more information, see the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns](#) Web page and *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals*.

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, see the CSDE’s [National School Lunch Program](#) Web page.

**noncreditable foods:** Foods and beverages that cannot credit toward the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, such as condiments, pudding, bacon and cream cheese. These foods often contain little nutritional value and are high in fat, sugars and sodium. Some examples include maple syrup on pancakes, salad dressing on tossed greens and condiments such as ketchup or mustard on sandwiches and other entrees. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Noncreditable Foods](#).

**nutrient-dense foods:** Foods that provide substantial amounts of naturally occurring vitamins, minerals and other nutrients with relatively few calories. Nutrient-dense foods include lean sources of protein and/or complex carbohydrates that are low in total fat and saturated fats. Examples include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, eggs and beans. Foods and beverages that are not nutrient dense supply calories (from fat, added sugars and processed carbohydrates) but relatively small amounts of nutrients (and sometimes none at all), unless fortified.

**point of service (POS) meal count:** The point in the food service operation where staff can accurately determine that a reimbursable free, reduced-price or paid lunch has been served to an eligible child.

**pre-plating:** A type of meal service where servers assemble some or all meals components ahead of time, such as portioning vegetables on some trays.

**production record:** A working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods used to prepare school meals. Production records must demonstrate how meals contribute to the required food components, food items or menu items for each day of operation. In addition, these records must provide sufficient documentation to determine how school meals contribute to meeting the weekly dietary specifications. The USDA regulations require that all schools in the NSLP, SBP and ASP must complete daily menu production records for all meals.

**reimbursable meals:** Meals or snacks that meet the requirements of the USDA regulations for Child Nutrition Programs.

**service area:** Anywhere food is sold in schools, such as the lunchroom, hallway, classroom, school bus or parking lot.

**servicing line:** The traditional serving area in the cafeteria where school meals are served to students.

**serving size or portion:** The weight, measure or number of pieces or slices of a food or beverage. Schools must provide the minimum serving sizes specified in the USDA meal patterns for meals and snacks to be reimbursable.

