DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF
EDUCATION

# PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

"Public notification" is the term used to describe how a School Food Authority (SFA) will fulfill the public outreach requirements of notifying the community (the public) about the availability of free and reduced price meals and free milk for students who qualify. Proof of completing the public notification requirements each year must be submitted with the SFA's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) application.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that the public notice be sent out through the local media and allows for the State Agency (OSSE) to complete this on behalf of each participating Local Education Agency (LEA). To fulfill this requirement, OSSE issues a press release at the beginning of each school year that lists all SFAs participating in the NSLP, the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) and/or Special Milk Program (SM). Therefore, SFAs are not required to issue a press release or notify the local media of their participation in these programs. However, there are additional requirements under public notification that the SFA must complete in order to be in compliance with federal and local regulations. These requirements differ for SFAs that charge for student meals (pricing) and SFAs that do not charge for student meals (non-pricing) and are detailed below. For fiscal year 22, if you are implementing SSO, you will follow the non-pricing requirements.

## Pricing

An SFA is considered "pricing" if they collect free and reduced priced meal (FARM) applications from families and charge all students who do not qualify for free meals (either through direct certification or applications) a fee for meals served.

Pricing SFAs are required to:

1. Post language on the SFA's website that notifies the public of their participation in Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). This language must include which CNP the SFA participates in (NSLP, SBP, ASP and/or SM), the USDA non-discrimination statement (listed below), and the SFA contact person for more information.

2. Send letters home to inform families about the availability of free and reduced price meals and free milk. LEAs are encouraged to inform households that all school-aged children in income eligible households can receive school meal benefits regardless of a child's immigration status. In addition, the letter may inform households that LEAs do not release information for immigration related purposes in the usual course of operating CNPs. Letters should be sent before the beginning of the school year, but may not be sent during the previous school year. USDA prototype letters for SFA use can be found on the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) website. The template should be customized before sending out to families. More information about requirements around sending these letters can be found in the USDA FNS Eligibility Manual for School Meals.

3. Ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to provide access to the program, and information about the program, by persons with limited English proficiency. More information and resources can be found here. SFAs may contact their OSSE program specialist with additionalquestions.

4. Document and submit the following within the annual NSLPapplication:
    a. A screen shot documenting the full posting of the SFA's participation in CNPs, including the USDA non-discrimination statement, and the SFA contact person for more information on the SFA webpage, as well as the web address to access the page. b. A copy of the SFA's finalized letter tohouseholds.

### Non-pricing

An SFA is considered "non-pricing" if they do not charge students for meals. SFAs that participate in SSO or in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) at all sites, or who elect to provide all students free meals regardless of their eligibility status are non-pricing.

Non-pricing SFAs are required to:

1. Post language on the SFA's website that notifies the public of their participation in CNPs. This language must include which CNPs the SFA participates in (NSLP, SBP, ASP and/or SM), the USDA non-discrimination statement (listed below), and the SFA contact person for more information.

2. Ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to provide access to the program, and information about the program, by persons with limited English proficiency. More information and resources can be found here. SFAs may contact their OSSE program specialist with questions.

3. Document and submit the following within the annual NSLPapplication:
    a. A screen shot documenting the full posting of the SFA's participation in CNPs, the USDA non-discrimination statement, and the SFA contact person for more information on the SFA webpage, as well as the web address to access thepage.

## Civil rights

### USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

The following is the non-discrimination statement that must be used in the above communications. In addition, this non-discrimination statement should be used on all other materials developed for the school meal programs. The text may not be altered when posting to your website or in written communications. Font and font size must remain the same. To access the non-discrimination statement in other languages, please visit the USDA website.

### District of Columbia Human Rights Act

Following the USDA non-discrimination statement is an excerpt from the District of Columbia Human Rights Act that must be included in the above communications. It should appear after the USDA non discrimination statement. The text may not be altered when posting to your website or in written communications. Font and font size must remain the same.

Both statements should be posted as shown on the following page:

**USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Also, the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, approved December 13, 1977 (DC law 2-38; DC official code §2-1402.11(2006), as amended) states the following:

It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice to do any of the following acts, wholly or partially for a discriminatory reason based upon the actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, genetic information, disability, matriculation, or political affiliation of any individual. To file a complaint alleging discrimination on one of these bases, please contact the District of Columbia's Office of Human Rights at (202) 727-4559 or ohr@dc.gov.



*For Residential Child Care Institutions only:*

Residential child care institutions which are not licensed to accept individuals with certain kinds of disabilities and therefore, feel they are unable to make this statement, may add the following phrase as clarification:

> This institution is primarily a special agency for (state the services that you provide) and geared only to take care of those types of conditions. Individuals with other disabilities will be referred to another institution with appropriate services.

1050 First St. NE, Washington, DC 20002 • Phone: (202) 727-6436 TTY: 711 • osse.dc.gov