Pricing Program – Policy Statement Requirements [7 CFR 226.23(c)]

Independent centers and sponsoring organizations of centers which charge separately for meals shall develop a policy statement for determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals which shall include the following:

1. The specific criteria to be used in determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. The institution's standards of eligibility shall conform to the USDA's income standards;
2. A description of the method or methods to be used in accepting income eligibility applications from families for free and reduced-price meals. These methods will ensure that income eligibility applications are accepted from households on behalf of a foster child and children who receive SNAP, FDPIR, or TANF assistance, or for adult participants who receive SNAP, FDPIR, SSI, or Medicaid assistance;
3. A description of the method or methods to be used to collect payments from those participants paying the full or reduced price of the meal which will protect the anonymity of the participants receiving a free or reduced-price meal;
4. An assurance which provides that the institution will establish a hearing procedure for use when benefits are denied or terminated as a result of verification:
    a. A simple, publicly announced method for a family to make an oral or written request for a hearing;
    b. An opportunity for the family to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person in presenting its appeal;
    c. An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, the documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal;
    d. That the hearing shall be held with reasonable promptness and convenience to the family and that adequate notice shall be given to the family as to the time and place of the hearing;
    e. An opportunity for the family to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting its position;
    f. An opportunity for the family to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses;
    g. That the hearing shall be conducted and the determination made by a hearing official who did not participate in making the initial decision;
    h. The determination of the hearing official shall be based on the oral and documentary evidence presented at the hearing and made a part of that hearing record;
    i. That the family and any designated representatives shall be notified in writing of the decision of the hearing official;
    j. That a written record shall be prepared with respect to each hearing, which shall include the decision under appeal, any documentary evidence and a summary of any oral testimony presented at the hearing, the decision of the hearing official, including the reasons therefor, and a copy of the notification to the family of the decision of the hearing official; and
    k. That such written record of each hearing shall be preserved for a period of three years and shall be available for examination by the family or its representatives at any reasonable time and place during such period;

5. An assurance that there will be no overt identification of free and reduced-price meal recipients and no discrimination against any participant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap;

6. An assurance that the charges for a reduced-price lunch or supper will not exceed 40 cents, that the charge for a reduced-price breakfast will not exceed 30 cents, and that the charge for a reduced-price snack will not exceed 15 cents.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by: **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.