Salad Bar Alternatives After the Point of Service

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| **Nutrition Services Division Management Bulletin** | |
| **Purpose:** Policy | |
| **To:** Child Nutrition Program Sponsors | **Number:** USDA-SNP-19-2013 |
| **Attention:** Food Service Directors | **Date:** August 2013 |
| **Subject:** Salad Bars in the National School Lunch Program—State Approved Alternatives for Salad Bars Positioned After the Point of Service | |
| **Reference:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Policy Memo SP 31-2013 | |

On March 27, 2013, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued policy memo SP 31‑2013, **Salad Bars in the National School Lunch Program** (NSLP). This revised memo supersedes SP 02-2011 issued January 21, 2011. The memo, including question and answer section, can be found on the USDA School Meals Policy Memos Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/policy>. This Management Bulletin (MB) addresses the portion of SP 31-2013 related to salad bars positioned after the Point of Service (POS).

Salad bars have the potential to positively impact student consumption of fruits and vegetables, increase the variety of vegetables and fruits offered, and reduce plate waste. The USDA encourages the use of salad bars in the NSLP and many School Food Authorities (SFA) utilize them for breakfast bars as well. In addition, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and his Team California for Healthy Kids (TCHK) initiative address the need to increase consumption of fresh foods, specifically through salad bars.

**Point of Service**

In order to ensure that student selections meet portion requirements for a reimbursable meal, and to credit vegetables offered toward the weekly subgroup requirements, salad bars should be positioned before the POS. However, the physical layout of many school food service areas requires that salad bars are located in areas after the POS. Acknowledging this challenge, the USDA has authorized state agencies to establish approved alternatives for these situations. The California Department of Education (CDE), Nutrition Services Division (NSD), has determined two alternatives that SFAs may implement without prior state approval.

1. **Trained, Dedicated Salad Bar Monitor**: SFAs may position a trained monitor at the salad bar to ensure students select portion sizes that meet the requirements of a reimbursable meal. Monitors must be dedicated to the salad bar and may not leave to re-supply the salad bar or perform other duties. In addition, monitors must be trained in food safety and SFAs must maintain a record of all salad bar monitor training.

SFAs may assign food service staff as monitors. Alternatively, other school staff such as teachers, administrators, and duty aids may be trained and assigned as monitors. SFAs may also consider the training and use of older students or parent volunteers.

1. **Reroute Student Entry to the Food Service Area**: Where feasible, SFAs may alter student entry to the cafeteria to permit students access to the salad bar prior to entering the food service area. This provides students the opportunity to select salad bar items before entering the food service area to select entrées and other components of the reimbursable meal.

Districts should contact their local health department to determine if there are specific guidelines that must be followed for the installation and use of salad bars.

**School Food Authorities Proposed Alternatives**

State agencies may also authorize, on a case-by-case basis, SFA-proposed alternatives for salad bars positioned after the POS. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the state agency for review and approval. To assist SFAs proposing individual alternatives, the NSD developed form SNP 40, Alternative Point of Service Request, available in the Child Nutrition and Information Payment System under Applications, Download Forms.

**Unmonitored Salad Bars Positioned After the Point Of Service**

SFAs must be aware that student selections from unmonitored salad bars **do not** count toward either the reimbursable meal or the weekly vegetable subgroup requirements. Student selections from unmonitored salad bars are considered additional food and must be included in the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and trans fat. However, well-maintained, colorful salad bars, monitored or unmonitored, are popular with students, staff, and parents and have the potential to increase student participation. SFAs are encouraged to market the availability of salad bars to these target audiences.

**Increasing Participation/Controlling Costs**

The NSD realizes that the space and/or layout at many school sites prohibits placement of salad bars before the POS. These salad bars can still play a significant role in increasing student consumption of fruits and vegetables and have the potential to increase student participation in the meal programs. Regardless of the position of your salad bar, marketing to students, parents, and staff is essential. Student and staff awareness of the availability of choices similar to those available at off-campus venues can result in greater participation from both audiences. Parents appreciate knowing that their children have increased access to a variety of nutritious vegetables and fruits at both breakfast and lunch. In addition, student nutrition education—in the classroom and the cafeteria—along with taste testing opportunities and ongoing marketing can help influence student selection of fruits and vegetables.

Controlling the cost of salad bars is also important. Procuring produce from local sources can greatly assist in keeping costs down, while at the same time supporting local agriculture. In addition, selecting produce based upon seasonality also helps in reducing salad bar costs.

**Future Training and Technical Assistance**

The NSD has convened an internal workgroup to address SFA training and technical assistance needs related to salad bars. Future training opportunities may include in‑person workshops, Webinars, best practices, and online resources. A future MB will detail the NSD salad bar training plan.

**Resources**

The following resources are available to support the successful implementation of salad bars.

* **Salad Bars**
  + **Farmers’ Market Salad Bar**—The Riverside Unified School District (RUSD) Farm to School Program is a practice-based intervention designed to promote healthy eating in children by increasing the availability of fruits and vegetables in school lunches and providing nutrition education to increase knowledge of and improve attitudes toward eating a variety of locally grown produce. Information and **how-to** instructions are available on the RUSD Farmers’ Market Salad Bar Web page at <http://www.rusdlink.org/Page/614>.
  + ***Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Bar Guide***—The Iowa Department of Education developed the *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Bar Guide* to support the implementation of salad bars. Topics include food safety, creating the bar, what to include, portion sizes, production records, portion control, menu planning, bar recipes, and resources. The guide can be accessed through the Iowa Department of Education Fruit and Vegetable Bar Guide Web page at <https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/nutrition-programs/quick-links-nutrition/learning-tools-nutrition/fruit-and-vegetable-bar>.
  + **Salad Bars: A Successful Menu Planning Tool**—This archived Webinar and supporting resources from the University of California, Davis California Professional Nutrition Education and Training Center is designed to assist SFAs in meeting the New Meal Pattern requirements. The Webinar can be accessed on the Center’s Training Opportunities Web page at <http://cns.ucdavis.edu/training/index.cfm>.
* **Salad Bars in School Nutrition Programs**—This Webinar from the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) identifies resources for planning successful salad bars, food safety standards, and financial planning for efficient use. The Webinar can be accessed on the NFSMI Salad Bars in School Nutrition Programs Web page at <http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=407>.
* **Salad Bar Funding Opportunity**
  + **Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools**— Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools is an initiative of the Food Family Farming Foundation, National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, United Fresh Produce Association Foundation, and Whole Foods Market to support First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative. The initiative’s vision is to significantly increase salad bars in schools across the country until every child has the choice of healthy fruits and vegetables every day at school. This comprehensive grass roots public health effort is designed to mobilize and engage stakeholders at the local, state, and national level to support salad bars in schools. An array of salad bar resources can be accessed on the Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools Web site at [https://www.saladbars2schools.org/](http://www.saladbars2schools.org/). Select the Application Guidelines tab to apply for your salad bar.  
      
    Increasing access to, and consumption of, fresh fruits and vegetables is one of the three goals of the Superintendent’s TCHK initiative. In order to increase access to fruits and vegetables, TCHK is partnering with Let's Move Salad Bars to California Schools, a special campaign of the United Fresh Foundation under the umbrella of the national Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools initiative. The aim is to increase student consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables through the donation of salad bars to California schools. To be eligible for the Let’s Move Salad Bars to California Schools, you need to complete the full application for the Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools. To download the TCHK Fresh Foods Fact Sheet, visit the CDE’s TCHK Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/factsheetfrshfd.pdf>.
* **Nutrition Education**
  + **California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom**—The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC) Web site provides a wealth of resources, including a number of lesson plans aligned to common core standards. The resources, which are designed to increase awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students, are available on the CFAITC Web site at <http://www.cfaitc.org/>.
  + **Harvest of the Month**—The Network for a Healthy California’s Harvest of the Month (HOTM) provides knowledge- and skills-based strategies designed to motivate and empower students to increase consumption and enjoyment of a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables. A wealth of materials and resources are available on the HOTM Web site at <http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/>.
  + **MyPlate Kids’ Place**—This Web page contains games, activities, recipes, videos, and songs, as well as resources for parents and educators that can be accessed on the ChooseMyPlate MyPlate Kids’ Place Web page at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids/>.

**Contact Information**

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