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State agency to make Program payments to sponsors.

(4) The Letter of Credit shall include sufficient funds to enable the State agency to make advance payments to sponsors serving areas in which schools operate under a continuous school calendar. These funds shall be made available no later than the first day of the month prior to the month during which the food service will be conducted.

(5) FNS shall make available any remaining Program funds due within 45 days of the receipt of valid claims for reimbursement from sponsors by the State agency. However, no payment shall be made for claims submitted later than 60 days after the month covered by the claim unless an exception is granted by FNS.

(6) Each State agency shall release to FNS any Program funds which it determines are unobligated as of September 30 of each fiscal year. Release of funds by the State agency shall be made as soon as practicable, but in no event later than 30 calendar days following demand by FNS, and shall be accomplished by an adjustment in the State agency's Letter of Credit.

(e) *Adjustment to Letter of Credit.* Prior to May 15 of each fiscal year, FNS shall make any adjustments necessary in each State's Letter of Credit to reflect actual expenditures in the preceding fiscal year's Program.

(f) *Health inspection funds.* If the State agency's approved management and administration plan estimates a need for health inspection funding, FNS shall make available by letter of credit an amount up to one percent of Program funds estimated to be needed in the management and administration plan. Such amount may be adjusted, based on the administrative funding assessment provided for in paragraph (c) of this section, if such assessment is conducted. Health inspection funds shall be used solely to enable State or local health departments or other governmental agencies charged with health inspection functions to carry out health inspections and meal quality tests, provided that if these agencies cannot perform such inspections or tests, the State agency may use the funds to contract with an independent agency to conduct the inspection or

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meal quality tests. Funds so provided but not expended or obligated shall be returned to the Department by September 30 of the same fiscal year.

§ 225.6 State agency responsibilities.

(a) *General responsibilities.* (1) The State agency shall provide sufficient qualified consultative, technical, and managerial personnel to administer the Program, monitor performance, and measure progress in achieving Program goals. The State agency shall assign Program responsibilities to personnel to ensure that all applicable requirements under this part are met.

(2) By February 1 of each fiscal year, each State agency shall announce the purpose, eligibility criteria, and availability of the Program throughout the State, through appropriate means of communication. As part of this effort, each State agency shall identify rural areas, Indian tribal territories, and areas with a concentration of migrant farm workers which qualify for the Program and actively seek eligible applicant sponsors to serve such areas. State agencies shall identify priority outreach areas in accordance with FNS guidance and target outreach efforts in these areas. State agencies shall identify priority outreach areas in accordance with FNS guidance and target outreach efforts in these areas.

(3) Each State agency shall require applicant sponsors submitting Program application site information sheets, Program agreements, or a request for advance payments, and sponsors submitting claims for reimbursement to certify that the information submitted on these forms is true and correct and that the sponsor is aware that deliberate misrepresentation or withholding of information may result in prosecution under applicable State and Federal statutes.

(4) In addition to the warnings specified in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, State agencies may include the following information on applications and pre-application materials distributed to prospective sponsors:

(i) The criminal penalties and provisions established in section 12(g) of the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1760(g)) that states substantially: Whoever embezzles, willfully misapplies,

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steals, or obtains by fraud any funds, assets, or property that are the subject of a grant or other form of assistance under this Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 *et seq.*), whether received directly or indirectly from the United States Department of Agriculture, or whoever receives, conceals, or retains such funds, assets, or property to personal use or gain, knowing such funds, assets, or property have been embezzled, willfully misapplied, stolen, or obtained by fraud shall, if such funds, assets, or property are of the value of \$100 or more, be fined not more than \$25,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both, or, if such funds, assets, or property are of a value of less than \$100, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

(ii) The procedures for termination from Program participation of any site or sponsor which is determined to be seriously deficient in its administration of the Program. In addition, the application may also state that appeals of sponsor or site terminations will follow procedures mandated by the State agency and will also meet the minimum requirements of 7 CFR 225.13.

(b) *Approval of sponsor applications.* (1) Each State agency must inform all of the previous year's sponsors which meet current eligibility requirements and all other potential sponsors of the deadline date for submitting a written application for participation in the Program. The State agency must require that all applicant sponsors submit written applications for Program participation to the State agency by June 15. However, the State agency may establish an earlier deadline for the Program application submission. Sponsors applying for participation in the Program due to an unanticipated school closure during the period from October through April (or at any time of the year in an area with a continuous school calendar) shall be exempt from the application submission deadline.

(2) Each State agency shall inform potential sponsors of the procedure for applying for advance operating and administrative costs payments as provided for in § 225.9(c). Where applicable, each State agency shall inform spon-

sors of the procedure for applying for start-up payments provided for in § 225.9(a).

(3) Within 30 days of receiving a complete and correct application, the State agency shall notify the applicant of its approval or disapproval. If an incomplete application is received, the State agency shall so notify the applicant within 15 days and shall provide technical assistance for the purpose of completing the application. Any disapproved applicant shall be notified of its right to appeal under § 225.13.

(4) The State agency shall determine the eligibility of sponsors applying for participation in the Program in accordance with the applicant sponsor eligibility criteria outlined in § 225.14. However, State agencies may approve the application of an otherwise eligible applicant sponsor which does not provide a year-round service to the community which it proposes to serve under the Program only if it meets one or more of the following criteria: It is a residential camp; it proposes to provide a food service for the children of migrant workers; a failure to do so would deny the Program to an area in which poor economic conditions exist; a significant number of needy children will not otherwise have reasonable access to the Program; or it proposes to serve an area affected by an unanticipated school closure during the period from October through April (or at any time of the year in an area with a continuous school calendar). In addition, the State agency may approve a sponsor for participation during an unanticipated school closure without a prior application if the sponsor participated in the program at any time during the current year or in either of the prior two calendar years.

(5) The State agency must use the following priority system in approving applicants to operate sites that propose to serve the same area or the same enrolled children:

(i) Public or nonprofit private school food authorities;

(ii) Public agencies and private nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated successful program performance in a prior year;

(iii) New public agencies; and

(iv) New private nonprofit organizations.

(v) If two or more sponsors that qualify under paragraph (b)(5)(ii) of this section apply to serve the same area, the State agency must determine on a case-by-case basis which sponsor or sponsors it will select to serve the needy children in the area. The State agency should consider the resources and capabilities of each applicant.

(6) The following limitations apply on the number of sites and children that may be served per day:

(i) The State agency must not approve any school food authority or public agency to operate more than 200 sites or to serve more than an average of 50,000 children per day. However, the State agency may approve exceptions if the applicant can demonstrate that it has the capability of managing a program larger than these limits.

(ii) The State agency must not approve any private nonprofit organization to operate more than 25 sites. In addition, the State agency must not approve any private nonprofit organization to serve more than 300 children at any one site for any approved meal service. However, the State agency may grant a waiver to allow up to 500 children served at any one site operated by a private nonprofit organization. To be approved for the waiver, the private nonprofit organization must demonstrate that it is fully capable of managing a site with more than 300 children and that there are no other sponsors capable of serving the children in excess of 300.

(7) The State agency shall review each applicant's administrative budget as a part of the application approval process in order to assess the applicant's ability to operate in compliance with these regulations within its projected reimbursement. In approving the applicant's administrative budget, the State agency shall take into consideration the number of sites and children to be served, as well as any other relevant factors. A sponsor's administrative budget shall be subject to review for adjustments by the State agency if the sponsor's level of site participation or the number of meals served to children changes significantly.

(8) Applicants which qualify as camps shall be approved for reimbursement only for meals served free to enrolled children who meet the Program's eligibility standards.

(9) The State agency shall not approve the application of any applicant sponsor identifiable through its organization or principals as a sponsor which has been determined to be seriously deficient as described in § 225.11(c). However, the State agency may approve the application of a sponsor which has been disapproved or terminated in prior years in accordance with this paragraph if the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the State agency that it has taken appropriate corrective actions to prevent recurrence of the deficiencies.

(10) If the sponsor's application to participate is denied, the official making the determination of denial must notify the applicant sponsor in writing stating all of the grounds on which the State agency based the denial. Pending the outcome of a review of a denial, the State agency shall proceed to approve other applicants in accordance with its responsibilities under paragraph (b)(5) of this section, without regard to the application under review.

(11) The State agency shall not approve the application of any applicant sponsor which submits fraudulent information or documentation when applying for Program participation or which knowingly withholds information that may lead to the disapproval of its application. Complete information regarding such disapproval of an applicant shall be submitted by the State agency through FNSRO to OIG.

(c) *Content of sponsor application.*

(1) *Application forms.* The applicant shall submit a written application to the State agency for participation in the Program as a sponsor. Sponsors proposing to serve an area affected by an unanticipated school closure during the period from October through April (or at any time of the year in an area with a continuous school calendar) may be exempt, at the discretion of the State agency, from submitting a new application if they have participated in the program at any time during the current year or in either of the prior two calendar years. The State agency

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may use the application form developed by FNS, or it may develop an application form, for use in the Program. Application shall be made on a timely basis in accordance with the deadline date established under § 225.6(b)(1).

(2) *Requirements for new sponsors, new sites, and, as determined by the State agency, sponsors and sites which have experienced significant operational problems in the prior year.*—(i) *Site information sheets.* At a minimum, the application submitted by new sponsors and by sponsors which, in the determination of the State agency, have experienced significant operational problems in the prior year shall include a site information sheet, as developed by the State agency, for each site where a food service operation is proposed. The site information sheet for new sponsors and new sites, and for sponsors and sites which, in the determination of the State agency, have experienced significant operational problems in the current year must demonstrate or describe the following:

(A) An organized and supervised system for serving meals to attending children;

(B) The estimated number and types of meals to be served and the times of service;

(C) Arrangements, within standards prescribed by the State or local health authorities, for delivery and holding of meals until time of service, and arrangements for storing and refrigerating any leftover meals until the next day;

(D) Arrangements for food service during periods of inclement weather;

(E) Access to a means of communication for making necessary adjustments in the number of meals delivered in accordance with the number of children attending daily at each site;

(F) Whether the site is rural, as defined in § 225.2, or non-rural, and whether the site's food service will be self-prepared or vended;

(G) For open sites and restricted open sites, documentation supporting the eligibility of each site as serving an area in which poor economic conditions exist. However, for sites that a sponsor proposes to serve during an unanticipated school closure during the period from October through April (or at any

time of the year in an area with a continuous school calendar), any site which has participated in the Program at any time during the current year or in either of the prior two calendar years shall be considered eligible without new documentation;

(H) For closed enrolled sites, the projected number of children enrolled and the projected number of children eligible for free and reduced price meals for each of these sites;

(I) For NYSP sites, certification from the sponsor that all of the children who will receive Program meals are enrolled participants in the NYSP;

(J) For camps, the number of children enrolled in each session who meet the Program's income standards. If such information is not available at the time of application, it shall be submitted as soon as possible thereafter and in no case later than the filing of the camp's claim for reimbursement for each session;

(K) For those sites at which applicants will serve children of migrant workers, certification from a migrant organization which attests that the site serves children of migrant worker families. If the site also serves non-migrant children, the sponsor shall certify that the site predominantly serves migrant children; and

(L) For a site that serves homeless children, information sufficient to demonstrate that the site is not a residential child care institution, as defined in paragraph (c) of the definition of *school* in § 210.2 of this chapter. If cash payments, food stamps, or any in-kind service are required of any meal recipient at these sites, sponsors must describe the method(s) used to ensure that no such payments or services are received for any Program meal served to children. In addition, sponsors must certify that such sites employ meal counting methods which ensure that reimbursement is claimed only for meals served to children.

(ii) *Other application requirements.* New sponsors and sponsors which in the determination of the State agency have experienced significant operational problems in the prior year shall also include in their applications:

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(A) Information in sufficient detail to enable the State agency to determine whether the applicant meets the criteria for participation in the Program as set forth in § 225.14; the extent of Program payments needed, including a request for advance payments and start-up payments, if applicable; and a staffing and monitoring plan;

(B) A complete administrative and operating budget for State agency review and approval. The administrative budget shall contain the projected administrative expenses which a sponsor expects to incur during the operation of the Program, and shall include information in sufficient detail to enable the State agency to assess the sponsor's ability to operate the Program within its estimated reimbursement. A sponsor's approved administrative budget shall be subject to subsequent review by the State agency for adjustments in projected administrative costs;

(C) A summary of how meals will be obtained (e.g., self-prepared at each site, self-prepared and distributed from a central kitchen, purchased from a school food authority, competitively procured from a food service management company, etc.). If an invitation for bid is required under § 225.15(g), sponsors shall also submit a schedule for bid dates, and a copy of their invitation for bid; and

(D) For each applicant which seeks approval under § 225.14(b)(3) as a unit of local, municipal, county or State government, or under § 225.14(b)(5) as a private nonprofit organization, certification that it will directly operate the Program in accordance with § 225.14(d)(3).

(3) *Requirements for experienced sponsors and experienced sites.*—(i) *Site information sheets.* At a minimum, the application submitted by experienced sponsors shall include a site information sheet, as developed by the State agency, for each site where a food service operation is proposed. The site information sheet for experienced sponsors and experienced sites must demonstrate or describe the information below. The State agency also may require experienced sponsors and experienced sites to provide any of the infor-

mation required in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(A) The estimated number and types of meals to be served and the times of service;

(B) For open sites and restricted open sites, new documentation supporting the eligibility of each site as serving an area in which poor economic conditions exist shall be submitted. Such documentation shall be submitted every three years when school data are used. When census data are used, such documentation shall be submitted when new census data are available, or earlier if the State agency believes that an area's socioeconomic status has changed significantly since the last census. For sites that a sponsor proposes to serve during an unanticipated school closure during the period from October through April (or at any time of the year in an area with a continuous school calendar), any site which has participated in the Program at any time during the current year or in either of the prior two calendar years shall be considered eligible without new documentation of serving an area in which poor economic conditions exist;

(C) For closed enrolled sites, the projected number of children enrolled and the projected number of children eligible for free and reduced price school meals for each of these sites; and

(D) For camps, the number of children enrolled in each session who meet the Program's income standards. If such information is not available at the time of application, it shall be submitted as soon as possible thereafter and in no case later than the filing of the camp's claim for reimbursement for each session.

(ii) *Other application requirements.* Experienced sponsors shall also include on their applications:

(A) The extent of Program payments needed, including a request for advance payments and start-up payments, if applicable, and a staffing and monitoring plan;

(B) A complete administrative and operating budget for State agency review and approval. The administrative budget shall contain the projected administrative expenses which a sponsor expects to incur during the operation

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of the Program, and shall include information in sufficient detail to enable the State agency to assess the sponsor's ability to operate the Program within its estimated reimbursement. A sponsor's approved administrative budget shall be subject to subsequent review by the State agency for adjustments in projected administrative costs; and

(C) If an invitation for bid is required under §225.15(g), a schedule for bid dates. Sponsors shall also submit a copy of the invitation for bid if it is changed from the previous year. If the method of procuring meals is changed, sponsors shall submit a summary of how meals will be obtained (e.g., self-prepared at each site, self-prepared and distributed from a central kitchen, purchased from a school food authority, competitively procured from a food service management company, etc.).

(4) *Free meal policy statement.*

(i) Each applicant must submit a statement of nondiscrimination in its policy for serving meals to children. The statement must consist of an assurance that all children are served the same meals and that there is no discrimination in the course of the food service. A school sponsor must submit the policy statement only once, with the initial application to participate as a sponsor. However, if there is a substantive change in the school's free and reduced price policy, a revised policy statement must be provided at the State agency's request. In addition to the policy of service/nondiscrimination statement described in paragraph (c)(3) of this section, all applicants except camps must include a statement that the meals served are free at all sites.

(ii) In addition to the policy of service/nondiscrimination statement described in paragraph (c)(3) of this section, all applicants that are camps that charge separately for meals must include the following:

(A) A statement that the eligibility standards conform to the Secretary's family size and income standards for reduced price school meals;

(B) A description of the method or methods to be used in accepting applications from families for Program meals. Such methods must ensure that households are permitted to apply on

behalf of children who are members of households receiving food stamp, FDPIR, or TANF benefits using the categorical eligibility procedures described in §225.15(f);

(C) A description of the method used by camps for collecting payments from children who pay the full price of the meal while preventing the overt identification of children receiving a free meal;

(D) An assurance that the camp will establish a hearing procedure for families wishing to appeal a denial of an application for free meals. Such hearing procedures shall meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (c)(5) of this section;

(E) An assurance that, if a family requests a hearing, the child shall continue to receive free meals until a decision is rendered; and

(F) An assurance that there will be no overt identification of free meal recipients and no discrimination against any child on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.

(5) *Hearing procedures statement.* Each applicant that is a camp shall submit with its application a copy of its hearing procedures. At a minimum, these procedures shall provide:

(i) That a simple, publicly announced method will be used for a family to make an oral or written request for a hearing;

(ii) That the family will have the opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person;

(iii) That the family will have an opportunity to examine the documents and records supporting the decision being appealed both before and during the hearing;

(iv) That the hearing will be reasonably prompt and convenient for the family;

(v) That adequate notice will be given to the family of the time and place of the hearing;

(vi) That the family will have an opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting its position;

(vii) That the family will have an opportunity to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses;

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(viii) That the hearing shall be conducted and the decision made by a hearing official who did not participate in the action being appealed;

(ix) That the decision shall be based on the oral and documentary evidence presented at the hearing and made a part of the record;

(x) That the family and any designated representative shall be notified in writing of the decision;

(xi) That a written record shall be prepared for each hearing which includes the action being appealed, any documentary evidence and a summary of oral testimony presented at the hearing, the decision and the reasons for the decision, and a copy of the notice sent to the family; and

(xii) That the written record shall be maintained for a period of three years following the conclusion of the hearing, during which it shall be available for examination by the family or its representatives at any reasonable time and place.

(d) *Approval of sites.* (1) When evaluating a proposed food service site, the State agency shall ensure that:

(i) If not a camp, the proposed site serves an area in which poor economic conditions exist, as defined by § 225.2;

(ii) The area which the site proposes to serve is not or will not be served in whole or in part by another site, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the State agency that each site will serve children not served by any other site in the same area for the same meal;

(iii) The site is approved to serve no more than the number of children for which its facilities are adequate and;

(iv) If it is a site proposed to operate during an unanticipated school closure, it is a non-school site.

(2) When approving the application of a site which will serve meals prepared by a food service management company, the State agency shall establish for each meal service an approved level for the maximum number of children's meals which may be served under the Program. These approved levels shall be established in accordance with the following provisions:

(i) The initial maximum approved level shall be based upon the historical record of attendance at the site if such

a record has been established in prior years and the State agency determines that it is accurate. The State agency shall develop a procedure for establishing initial maximum approved levels for sites when no accurate record from prior years is available.

(ii) The maximum approved level shall be adjusted, if warranted, based upon information collected during site reviews. If attendance at the site on the day of the review is significantly below the site's approved level, the State agency should consider making a downward adjustment in the approved level with the objective of providing only one meal per child.

(iii) The sponsor may seek an upward adjustment in the approved level for its sites by requesting a site review or by providing the State agency with evidence that attendance exceeds the sites' approved levels.

(iv) Whenever the State agency establishes or adjusts approved levels of meal service for a site, it shall document the action in its files, and it shall provide the sponsor with immediate written confirmation of the approved level.

(v) Upon approval of its application or any adjustment to its maximum approved levels, the sponsor shall inform the food service management company with which it contracts of the approved level for each meal service at each site served by the food service management company. This notification of any adjustments in approved levels shall take place within the time frames set forth in the contract for adjusting meal orders. Whenever the sponsor notifies the food service management company of the approved levels or any adjustments to these levels for any of its sites, the sponsor shall clearly inform the food service management company that an approved level of meal service represents the maximum number of meals which may be served at a site and is not a standing order for a specific number of meals at that site. When the number of children attending is below the site's approved level, the sponsor shall adjust meal orders with the objective of serving only one meal per child as required under § 225.15(b)(3).

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(e) *State-Sponsor Agreement.* A sponsor approved for participation in the Program must enter into a written agreement with the State agency. If the sponsor is a school food authority that operates more than one child nutrition program (e.g., the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, or the Child and Adult Care Food Program) under a single State agency, a single permanent agreement that includes all the child nutrition programs must be executed with the State agency, as described in §210.9(b) of this chapter. All sponsors must agree in writing to:

(1) Operate a nonprofit food service during the period specified, as follows:

(i) From May through September for children on school vacation;

(ii) At any time of the year, in the case of sponsors administering the Program under a continuous school calendar system; or

(iii) During the period from October through April, if it serves an area affected by an unanticipated school closure due to a natural disaster, major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes, or, when approved by the State agency, a similar cause.

(2) For school food authorities, offer meals which meet the requirements and provisions set forth in §225.16 during times designated as meal service periods by the sponsor, and offer the same meals to all children;

(3) For all other sponsors, serve meals which meet the requirements and provisions set forth in §225.16 during times designated as meal service periods by the sponsor, and serve the same meals to all children;

(4) Serve meals without cost to all children, except that camps may charge for meals served to children who are not served meals under the Program;

(5) Issue a free meal policy statement in accordance with §225.6(c);

(6) Meet the training requirement for its administrative and site personnel, as required under §225.15(d)(1);

(7) Claim reimbursement only for the type or types of meals specified in the agreement and served without charge to children at approved sites during the

approved meal service period, except that camps shall claim reimbursement only for the type or types of meals specified in the agreement and served without charge to children who meet the Program's income standards. The agreement shall specify the approved levels of meal service for the sponsor's sites if such levels are required under §225.6(d)(2). No permanent changes may be made in the serving time of any meal unless the changes are approved by the State agency;

(8) Submit claims for reimbursement in accordance with procedures established by the State agency, and those stated in §225.9;

(9) In the storage, preparation and service of food, maintain proper sanitation and health standards in conformance with all applicable State and local laws and regulations;

(10) Accept and use, in quantities that may be efficiently utilized in the Program, such foods as may be offered as a donation by the Department;

(11) Have access to facilities necessary for storing, preparing, and serving food;

(12) Maintain a financial management system as prescribed by the State agency;

(13) Maintain on file documentation of site visits and reviews in accordance with §225.15(d)(2) and (3);

(14) Upon request, make all accounts and records pertaining to the Program available to State, Federal, or other authorized officials for audit or administrative review, at a reasonable time and place. The records shall be retained for a period of 3 years after the end of the fiscal year to which they pertain, unless audit or investigative findings have not been resolved, in which case the records shall be retained until all issues raised by the audit or investigation have been resolved;

(15) Maintain children on site while meals are consumed; and

(16) Retain final financial and administrative responsibility for its program.

(f) *Special Account.* In addition, the State agency may require any vended sponsor to enter into a special account agreement with the State agency. The special account agreement shall stipulate that the sponsor shall establish a special account with a State agency or

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Federally insured bank for operating costs payable to the sponsor by the State. The agreement shall also stipulate that any disbursement of monies from the account must be authorized by both the sponsor and the food service management company. The special account agreement may contain such other terms, agreed to by both the sponsor and the food service management company, which are consistent with the terms of the contract between the sponsor and the food service management company. A copy of the special account agreement shall be submitted to the State agency and another copy maintained on file by the sponsor. Any charges made by the bank for the account described in this section shall be considered an allowable sponsor administrative cost.

(g) *Food service management company registration.* A State agency may require each food service management company, operating within the State, to register based on State procedures. A State agency may further require the food service management company to certify that the information submitted on its application for registration is true and correct and that the food service management company is aware that misrepresentation may result in prosecution under applicable State and Federal statutes.

(h) *Monitoring of food service management company procurements.* (1) The State agency shall ensure that sponsors' food service management company procurements are carried out in accordance with §§ 225.15(g) and 225.17 of this part.

(2) Each State agency shall develop a standard form of contract for use by sponsors in contracting with food service management companies. Sponsors which are public entities, sponsors with exclusive year-round contracts with a food service management company, and sponsors whose food service management company contract(s) do not exceed \$10,000 in aggregate value may use their existing or usual form of contract, provided that such form of contract has been submitted to and approved by the State agency. The standard contract developed by the State agency shall expressly and without exception provide that:

(i) All meals prepared by a food service management company shall be unitized, with or without milk or juice, unless the State agency has approved, pursuant to paragraph (h)(3) of this section, a request for exceptions to the unitizing requirement for certain components of a meal;

(ii) A food service management company entering into a contract with a sponsor under the Program shall not subcontract for the total meal, with or without milk, or for the assembly of the meal;

(iii) The sponsor shall provide to the food service management company a list of State agency approved food service sites, along with the approved level for the number of meals which may be claimed for reimbursement for each site, established under § 225.6(d)(2), and shall notify the food service management company of all sites which have been approved, cancelled, or terminated subsequent to the submission of the initial approved site list and of any changes in the approved level of meal service for a site. Such notification shall be provided within the time limits mutually agreed upon in the contract;

(iv) The food service management company shall maintain such records (supported by invoices, receipts, or other evidence) as the sponsor will need to meet its responsibilities under this part, and shall submit all required reports to the sponsor promptly at the end of each month, unless more frequent reports are required by the sponsor;

(v) The food service management company must have State or local health certification for the facility in which it proposes to prepare meals for use in the Program. It must ensure that health and sanitation requirements are met at all times. In addition, the food service management company must ensure that meals are inspected periodically to determine bacteria levels present in the meals and that the bacteria levels found to be present in the meals conform with the standards set by local health authorities. The results of the inspections must be submitted promptly to the sponsor and to the State agency.

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(vi) The meals served under the contract shall conform to the cycle menus and meal quality standards and food specifications approved by the State agency and upon which the bid was based;

(vii) The books and records of the food service management company pertaining to the sponsor's food service operation shall be available for inspection and audit by representatives of the State agency, the Department and the U.S. General Accounting Office at any reasonable time and place for a period of 3 years from the date of receipt of final payment under the contract, except that, if audit or investigation findings have not been resolved, such records shall be retained until all issues raised by the audit or investigation have been resolved;

(viii) The sponsor and the food service management company shall operate in accordance with current Program regulations;

(ix) The food service management company shall be paid by the sponsor for all meals delivered in accordance with the contract and this part. However, neither the Department nor the State agency assumes any liability for payment of differences between the number of meals delivered by the food service management company and the number of meals served by the sponsor that are eligible for reimbursement;

(x) Meals shall be delivered in accordance with a delivery schedule prescribed in the contract;

(xi) Increases and decreases in the number of meals ordered shall be made by the sponsor, as needed, within a prior notice period mutually agreed upon;

(xii) All meals served under the Program shall meet the requirements of § 225.16;

(xiii) In cases of nonperformance or noncompliance on the part of the food service management company, the company shall pay the sponsor for any excess costs which the sponsor may incur by obtaining meals from another source;

(xiv) If the State agency requires the sponsor to establish a special account for the deposit of operating costs payments in accordance with the condi-

tions set forth in § 225.6(f), the contract shall so specify;

(xv) The food service management company shall submit records of all costs incurred in the sponsor's food service operation in sufficient time to allow the sponsor to prepare and submit the claim for reimbursement to meet the 60-day submission deadline; and

(xvi) The food service management company shall comply with the appropriate bonding requirements, as set forth in § 225.15(g) (6)–(8).

(3) All meals prepared by a food service management company shall be unitized, with or without milk or juice, unless the sponsor submits to the State agency a request for exceptions to the unitizing requirement for certain components of a meal. These requests shall be submitted to the State agency in writing in sufficient time for the State agency to respond prior to the sponsor's advertising for bids. The State agency shall notify the sponsor in writing of its determination in a timely manner.

(4) Each State agency shall have a representative present at all food service management company procurement bid openings when sponsors are expected to receive more than \$100,000 in Program payments.

(5) Copies of all contracts between sponsors and food service management companies, along with a certification of independent price determination, shall be submitted to the State agency prior to the beginning of Program operations. Sponsors shall also submit to the State agency copies of all bids received and their reason for selecting the food service management company chosen.

(6) All bids in an amount which exceeds the lowest bid shall be submitted to the State agency for approval before acceptance. All bids totaling \$100,000 or more shall be submitted to the State agency for approval before acceptance. State agencies shall respond to a request for approval of such bids within 5 working days of receipt.

(7) Failure by a sponsor to comply with the provisions of this paragraph or § 225.15(g)(1) shall be sufficient

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grounds for the State agency to terminate participation by the sponsor in accordance with § 225.18(b).

(i) *Meal pattern exceptions.* The State agency shall review and act upon requests for exceptions to the meal pattern in accordance with the guidelines and limitations set forth in § 225.16.

[54 FR 18208, Apr. 27, 1989, as amended at 55 FR 13467, Apr. 10, 1990; ; 64 FR 72484, Dec. 28, 1999; 64 FR 72896, Dec. 29, 1999]

§ 225.7 Program monitoring and assistance.

(a) *Training.* Prior to the beginning of Program operations, each State agency shall make available training in all necessary areas of Program administration to sponsor personnel, food service management company representatives, auditors, and health inspectors who will participate in the Program in that State. Prior to Program operations, the State agency shall ensure that the sponsor's supervisory personnel responsible for the food service receive training in all necessary areas of Program administration and operations. This training shall reflect the fact that individual sponsors or groups of sponsors require different levels and areas of Program training. State agencies are encouraged to utilize in such training, and in the training of site personnel, sponsor personnel who have previously participated in the Program. Training should be made available at convenient locations. State agencies are not required to conduct this training for sponsors operating the Program during unanticipated school closures during the period from October through April (or at any time of the year in an area with a continuous school calendar).

(b) *Program materials.* Each State agency shall develop and make available all necessary Program materials in sufficient time to enable applicant sponsors to prepare adequately for the Program.

(c) *Food specifications and meal quality standards.* With the assistance of the Department, each State agency shall develop and make available to all sponsors minimum food specifications and model meal quality standards which shall become part of all contracts be-

tween vended sponsors and food service management companies.

(d) *Program monitoring and assistance.* The State agency shall conduct Program monitoring and provide Program assistance according to the following provisions:

(1) *Pre-approval visits.* The State agency shall conduct pre-approval visits of sponsors and sites, as specified below, to assess the applicant sponsor's or site's potential for successful Program operations and to verify information provided in the application. The State agency shall visit prior to approval:

(i) All applicant sponsors which did not participate in the program in the prior year. However, if a sponsor is a school food authority, has been reviewed by the State agency under the National School Lunch Program during the preceding 12 months, and had no significant deficiencies noted in that review, a pre-approval visit may be conducted at the discretion of the State agency. In addition, pre-approval visits of sponsors proposing to operate the Program during unanticipated school closures during the period from October through April (or at any time of the year in an area with a continuous school calendar) may be conducted at the discretion of the State agency;

(ii) All applicant sponsors which, as a result of operational problems noted in the prior year, the State agency has determined need a pre-approval visit; and

(iii) All sites which the State agency has determined need a pre-approval visit.

(2) *Sponsor and site reviews—(i) General.* The State agency must review sponsors and sites to ensure compliance with Program regulations, the Department's non-discrimination regulations (7 CFR part 15) and any other applicable instructions issued by the Department. In determining which sponsors and sites to review, the State agency must, at a minimum, consider the sponsors' and sites' previous participation in the Program, their current and previous Program performance, and the results of previous reviews of the sponsor and sites. When the same school food authority personnel administer this Program as well