
STUDENT NUTRITION PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Ministry of Children and Youth Services
July 2008

INTRODUCTION

In partnership with children, youth, parents, community partners and government, the vision of the Student Nutrition Program (SNP) is to provide children and youth access to healthy, nutritious food to support healthy growth and development so that they have the best opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential.

SNP links directly to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' (MCYS) overall objective to create better outcomes for children and youth by helping children and youth to start their day well nourished and ready to learn.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

SNP Program Guidelines outline the key elements of the program and provide direction for communities across Ontario in planning, implementing and delivering the program to children and youth.

The guidelines establish a province-wide standard for program delivery and provide local communities with a framework to assist in meeting the nutrition needs of children and youth. Updated in July 2008, the program guidelines provide direction for the new funding announced in March 2008 for breakfast and morning meal programs in designated neighbourhoods.

CONTEXT

SNP supports communities to provide nutritious food to children and youth. The program supports the healthy growth and development of children and youth by providing universal access to nutritious meals and snacks at each site so students are ready to learn.

The focus of SNP is children and youth. Research has established that when children and youth arrive at school hungry, their capacity to learn is diminished. There are a variety of reasons why young people start their day hungry, including poverty, lengthy commutes, hectic family routines in the morning and children and youth not being hungry upon rising. Regardless of the reason, the program aims to support children and youth to be ready to learn.

Funding for the program supports key government priorities such as poverty reduction. For more information on the government's poverty reduction plan please visit <http://www.growingstronger.ca/en/index.html>

Research highlights the many benefits attributed to participation in a nutrition program including improved academic performance, higher rates of school attendance, fewer classroom disruptions, improved student behaviour and a more nutritious and healthy diet. Participation in a nutrition program can play an important role in maximizing student success and the healthy development of children and youth.

SNP also provides the opportunity to inform children, youth and their families about healthy eating through role modeling. Healthy eating contributes to increased school attendance, positive social interactions and improved classroom behaviour.

Due to the many benefits associated with participation in nutrition programs, MCYS supports universal access to programs by welcoming every child and youth at each SNP site. All children and youth regardless of their age, their parent's ability to pay or their socioeconomic background have the opportunity to participate in a program without being stigmatized or singled out.

SNP is a community-driven initiative. The service delivery model is designed to encourage and facilitate community participation in the development and implementation of the program at the local level so programs can be tailored to meet the individual needs of local children, youth and families. Provincial funding operates within a broader scope of contributors to deliver the program, including parents or caregivers, corporate sponsors, farmers, local charities, community organizations and municipalities.

Long-term benefits for children, youth and families participating in student nutrition programs include:

- An opportunity to establish life-long healthy eating habits;
- A decrease in health risks related to poverty and obesity; and
- An opportunity to learn how to choose, prepare and enjoy nutritious food.

THE PROGRAM

Goal:

The goal of SNP is to provide access to nutritious meals and snacks for children and youth so they are ready to learn. This goal supports Ontario's children and youth to succeed in school.

Principles:

Several principles are in place to guide the effective development and delivery of SNP in Ontario. These include:

Universal access to programs.

- No child or youth shall be turned away from a program;
- The program is available in every region across Ontario; and
- The program adopts a universal approach at each site providing all children and youth with the opportunity to participate in the program regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Nutritious food is served.

- Nutritious and nourishing food is a fundamental component of SNP to enhance children and youth's healthy development and their ability to learn;
- It is not enough to feed children and youth; the food provided must also help children and youth meet the nutritional requirements to ensure their healthy growth and development and learning; and
- Focus of new and expanded funding in 2008-09 is on the delivery of breakfast or a morning meal programs in designated communities.

Community development and capacity building is required for program success.

- Communities work together to share their knowledge, experience and resources to nourish children and youth;
- Every region and community across the province is unique and programs are flexible to address these specific needs;
- Community groups and local stakeholders must be engaged in the design and implementation of the program at the local level;
- Parent/caregiver involvement in, and contributions to, local programs are key elements of success; and
- Local programs are assessed on a regular basis to ensure their effectiveness to deliver the program.

Children and youth are supported to achieve their full potential.

- Child and youth participation is encouraged;
- Skills development e.g. social, leadership, self-care and self-regulation are fostered in children and youth through peer-to-peer and volunteer-to-child and to-youth interactions and relationships in programs;
- Provides a socially positive environment that engages children and youth.

Service Delivery Model:

Ministry funding is intended to support an increase in the number of children served, improve the nutritional quality of food provided through programs and leverage additional donations from other contributors.

Government investment in the program is not intended to support the entire program but is designed to provide a foundation to enable communities to leverage additional donations from important partners. This approach to funding allows local programs to enhance their funding base and obtain additional contributions to support program delivery and sustainability.

To operate successfully, the program requires support from the community including parents or caregivers, municipalities, schools, farmers, volunteers, local businesses and community organizations to design and implement the program at the local level.

The service delivery model aims to maximize the proportion of provincial funding allocated to healthy food and to minimize the amount of money spent on administration.

Funding Allocation Models (beginning in 2008-09):

Existing programs prior to June 2008

Existing programs¹ and new programs that are not in designated communities will continue to be funded for up to 15 percent of the overall cost of the program with provincial funding. This overall allocation includes funding for the lead agency coordinator.

Programs in designated communities as of September 2008

New and expanded breakfast and morning meal programs in designated communities will receive 15 percent funding for the cost for food to assist these communities to serve nutritious meals that follow the SNP Nutrition Guidelines. In addition to the 15 percent for food, funding is allocated for community development coordinators who are to be employed by community partnership committees and located in the communities they support.

For all programs the remaining 85 percent or more of funding required to offer programs and serve nutritious food is the responsibility of the lead agencies and community partner committees. They will fundraise and develop partnerships with community stakeholders including parents or caregivers, local businesses, local charities, community organizations, farmers and municipalities.

Administration:

SNP is administered through the ministry's nine regional offices. Each regional office has selected one or more lead agency to distribute government funding at the community level through a granting process. There are 15 lead agencies across the province and each is funded to employ one full-time coordinator to oversee and manage the lead agency's responsibilities.

¹ An existing SNP program established and delivered prior to June 2008 that is not in a designated community.

The lead agencies are responsible for:

- Overseeing the administration of the program and developing grant distribution processes at the local level;
- Fundraising and building partnerships with regional and local sponsors; and
- Monitoring local programs in collaboration with MCYS.

Starting in 2008-09, funding is allocated by the lead agency to the community partnership committee to employ local community development coordinators to build designated neighbourhoods' capacity to offer a breakfast or morning meal program.

Ministry funding for the program is administered on a regional basis to promote flexibility in local program delivery. Lead agencies are encouraged to maintain ongoing communication and collaboration with one another to share knowledge and experience in delivering nutrition programs.

Community Participation:

Lead agencies will establish and work with community partnership committees composed of local stakeholders such as existing community partners, farmers, businesses, public health personnel, school staff, volunteers and parents or caregivers to build on their knowledge and expertise in delivering programs. This allows for greater community participation and ownership, an established mechanism for input and feedback in the design and delivery of programs at the local level. The community partnership committees are effective mechanisms for obtaining continual input and feedback from community stakeholders.

Community participation and integration are key to the successful delivery of the program. Lead agencies are required to involve community stakeholders in the implementation of the programs on an ongoing basis to ensure that the programs and processes are responsive to the needs and priorities of local communities.

Responsibilities and Accountabilities for Program Delivery

Ministry of Children and Youth Services

- Provide leadership provincially;
- Provide provincial policy, standards and guidelines;
- Select lead agencies with input from the community;
- Develop and monitor service contracts with lead agencies;
- Allocate annual budget to lead agencies;
- Monitor and evaluate activities, including but not limited to compiling service data for quarterly reporting or as requested; and
- Collect and analyze program data.

Lead Agency

- Employ a lead agency coordinator;
- Oversee the administration of the program and develop grant distribution processes at the local level in collaboration with community partners;
- Fulfill grant requests and distribute funds to local programs;
- Grant allocations based on the eligibility requirements established by the ministry;
- Flow provincial funds to local programs in an equitable, fair and transparent manner;
- Fundraise and develop partnerships with regional and local sponsors;
- Obtain funds from additional sources to meet program costs (e.g. parents, caregivers, corporate sponsors, charities, volunteers, etc.);
- Carry out activities related to program data collection and evaluation as requested by the ministry;
- Support local programs and community partnership committees with data collection methods;
- Submit quarterly service reports to the regional offices;
- Conduct assessments to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of local programs;
- Involve community partners in the design and implementation of the program at the local level;
- Strengthen the voluntary component of the program and work in partnership with existing volunteers; and
- Link with local health unit or other nutrition education supports identified in the SNP Nutrition Guidelines to support program delivery through education, workshops, consultation, site visits and print resources and participation on community partner committees.

Lead Agency Coordinator

- Encourage new members to join partnership committees;
- Roll-up data requirements and quarterly reports from all communities and forward to regional office;
- Liaise with local health unit(s) for presentations, orientation of volunteers and to access information and services related to nutrition, food preparation, etc;
- Purchase bulk food orders to be distributed to communities as needed;
- Manage in-kind and gift donations and donated foods;
- Encourage and assist all programs to access nutrition expertise from a registered dietician through the local health unit or designate;
- Develop distribution systems and wholesale purchasing agreements to assist communities in need; and
- Share success stories related to individual, school and community program impact.

Community Partnership Committees

- Work with lead agencies to create local guidelines and criteria for grant applications;
- Fundraise and develop partnerships with regional and local sponsors;

- Work together to create the sustainability of local programs through in-kind donations and leveraging activities (e.g. fundraising, awareness, marketing);
- Link with local health unit or other nutrition education supports to access consultation to support program delivery through education, workshops, consultation, site visits and print resources and participation on community partner committees;
- Employ community development coordinator for support of breakfast and morning meal programs offered full-time in designated communities and ensure this coordinator is based out of the community they support.

Local Community Development Coordinator (Ministry funded as of 2008-09)

- Build and support local community capacity for breakfast and morning meal programs in designated communities;
- Recruit, train, monitor and manage SNP volunteers;
- Fundraise at the local level to leverage grants from MCYS and support the sustainability of programs;
- Support programs to implement the SNP Nutrition Guidelines at full-time breakfast and morning meal programs receiving 15 percent of funding for food;
- Network and build partnerships with business and community partners;
- Facilitate parent and student engagement;
- Negotiate corporate sponsorships;
- Negotiate wholesale purchasing agreements with local businesses; and
- Assist communities to build the necessary resources for program sustainability.

Local Program Providers

- Deliver programs to children and youth;
- Submit grant applications to lead agencies that outline their annual program costs;
- Submit data requirements and information as requested to lead agencies;
- Serve nutritious food and refer to the SNP Nutrition Guidelines;
- Establish weekly menus;
- Arrange food shopping; and
- Access training from local health unit.

Some program responsibilities may overlap for the lead agency, the community partnership committees or the coordinators depending on the community. Fulfilling the outlined responsibilities is key for the successful delivery of the program.

Data Requirements from Program Delivery

All government programs and initiatives are outcome-oriented and must identify clear performance measures that will track and monitor the government's progress in achieving improved outcomes for Ontarians. The government is committed to accountability in its funding.

Lead agencies are required to submit data reports to the regional offices on a quarterly basis. Data requirements include the number of children and youth participating or registered at a site and the number of meals/snacks served for each program.

Required data reporting for all programs under both funding models:

- The location of each site including school number (if applicable) and complete address;
- The number of children and youth participating or registered at a site;
- The number and program types offered at a site; and
- The number of meals and snacks offered by each program at a site.

Lead agencies are to provide the ministry with information on an annual basis identifying their additional sources of funding (e.g. parents, caregivers, corporate sponsors, charities, volunteers, in-kind donations). This will assist the ministry in measuring how successful lead agencies and local programs are in leveraging sufficient contributions from other sources to sustain local programs.

In addition programs in designated communities are asked to provide data on:

- Implementation status of new and enhanced breakfast and morning meal program development and implementation in designated communities; and
- Support provided by local community development coordinators for these communities.

In order for lead agencies to provide this necessary information, local program providers are to supply basic data to the lead agency to assist government in tracking and measuring the program's progress.

APPENDIX 1

Ministry program funding:

The provincial investment in the program supports the healthy development of children and youth and assists them to arrive at school ready to learn. Therefore, it is important that a large proportion of government funds be used to support local programs in serving nutritious foods to young people.

Provincial investment in the program does not replace contributions from parents, corporate sponsors, farmers, local charities or municipal governments.

Provincial funding aims to:

- Increase the number of children and youth served;
- Improve the nutritional quality of foods provided by programs; and
- Leverage additional contributions from the community.

Local program providers² and communities contribute to the increase in base funding of local programs through continued fundraising and partnership development work with potential sponsors throughout the province. Working with lead agencies, local programs will obtain the additional funds required for programs from other sources such as parents or caregivers, corporate sponsors and local charities.

Funding models for communities:

Programs existing prior to June 2008

Existing programs and new programs that are outside of designated communities will continue to be funded for up to 15 percent of the overall cost of the program with ministry funding. This includes funding for each lead agency coordinator and funding follows the established funding allocation formula. The funding formula takes into consideration key factors to support children and youth.

Variables incorporated into the formula include:

- Northern and rural areas and the higher cost of food in these regions;
- Vulnerable children and youth;
- Regions with widely distributed populations;
- Varying income levels across the province; and
- Areas expected to experience high population growth.

Programs in designated communities as of September 2008

Ministry funding beginning in 2008-09 for designated communities is allocated for:

- 15 percent of the cost for food for each full-time breakfast and morning meal program; and
- A local community development coordinator employed by the community partnership committee to support these breakfast and morning meal programs.

² Program providers provide support, paid or volunteer, to an SNP, e.g. lead agencies, coordinators, parents, volunteers, school staff and community members.

Separate financial reporting is required for each funding model.

Each fiscal year, regional offices allocate annualized provincial funds to the lead agencies for the delivery of programs. In accordance with the Transfer Payment Accountability Directive, lead agencies are able to spend a maximum of 10 percent of pre-2008 government funding on allocated central administration³. Each lead agency employs one full-time coordinator to manage the agency's roles and responsibilities with SNP. Funding for designated communities provides community development coordinators employed by local community partnership committees.

The remaining portion of the provincial investment must be used to provide funds to local programs for nutritious food grants. Provincial funding may not be used by lead agencies for marketing or nutrition education purposes. Educating children and youth about the benefits of healthy eating is included in the school curriculum and communities can obtain health- and nutrition-related educational resources from local public health units.

One-time grants, when available, are to support start-up and maintenance costs. Start-up costs are allocated for new equipment (e.g. refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, dishes and utensils) and to purchase shelf stable food items (e.g. canned and dry goods) that meet the SNP Nutrition Guidelines.

³ Allocated central administration is the cost associated with governing and operating an organization. It does not include those program administration functions that directly support service to the client. Direct client service consists of functions involving interaction with the client and direct supports to client services such as supervision of direct care staff or front-line workers. Any administration costs that can logically be assigned to a program are considered program administration costs. Central administration costs include salary and benefits of staff, office expenses, needs (e.g. repairs, replacements and upgrades in existing programs).

APPENDIX 2

Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines, July 2008:

SNP Nutrition Guidelines establish a province-wide standard to ensure the nutritional quality of foods provided through programs and to promote healthy eating habits among children and youth. An update to the SNP Nutrition Guidelines was required to reflect the 2007 revisions in the Canada's Food Guide and provide additional resources for volunteers and coordinators to serve nutritious food to children and youth.

The guiding principles of the revised SNP Nutrition Guidelines include:

- Promote healthy eating including serving trans fat free foods;
- Prepare healthy food;
- Respect diversity and individual needs including celebrating cultural diversity;
- Contribute to social development and build student resiliency through welcoming social opportunities with peers and supportive adults;
- Choose Ontario food first;
- Be environmentally conscious; and
- Practice safe food handling and storage.

To meet the requirements in the SNP Nutrition Guidelines, lead agencies and community partnership committees are strongly encouraged to access their local public health unit to assist programs to:

- Choose more nutritious foods, including non-perishable foods;
- Respond to and/or refer queries related to special considerations: unique medical needs, cultural issues, anaphylaxis and identification of specific allergens when shopping, provide strategies when working in unique situations or with a unique issue; and
- Address program specific needs:
 - Plan menus, shopping strategies and maximize budgets;
 - Include culturally appropriate foods;
 - Use food models, visuals and resources related to portion size;
 - Introduce a variety of food ideas;
 - Manage food donations;
 - Food preparation strategies;
 - Recipes; and
 - Safe food preparation and hand washing.

A copy of the SNP Nutrition Guidelines, July 2008 (English and French versions) can be obtained through the lead agency or viewed at the ministry's website: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/>

APPENDIX 3

Criteria for Selecting Lead Agencies:

The following are the criteria used to select the lead agencies responsible for administering and allocating provincial funding for the program at the local level:

- An existing transfer payment agency of government including those of the Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, Education and Health and Long-Term Care;
- An organization currently delivering on key priorities related to improving outcomes for children and youth at the local community level;
- Sound financial management as demonstrated by audited financial statements (from past two to three years) and reference letters from major funders; and
- The current capacity, infrastructure and resources to administer and flow provincial funding to local programs according to ministry guidelines and ability to provide support for a coordinator.

APPENDIX 4

Nutritious Food Grants Eligibility:

Requirements:

Provincial funding for the program is allocated to local program providers for purchasing nutritious food for children and youth. A program, for the purposes of being eligible for government funding, is not site-based, but meal-based. A program is a breakfast or morning meal program, a lunch program or a snack program.

Funding is allocated to local programs that are dedicated to meeting the following criteria:

Universally Accessible

- All children and youth at the SNP site have the opportunity to participate in a program regardless of their socioeconomic background or ability to pay;
- The program does not stigmatize or single out children and youth from low income families; and
- All children and youth are made to feel welcome.

Parental Contributions and Local Fundraising

- The program informs parents of the costs associated with program delivery and will ask parents or caregivers to contribute to as much of the cost as possible based on their ability to pay; and
- Local fundraising and partnership development with community sponsors is required to increase the funding base of the program.

Nutritious Food in a Safe Environment

- The foods offered (whether purchased or donated) are nutritious and follow the SNP Nutrition Guidelines, July 2008;
- The foods offered are inclusive and sensitive to the faiths and cultures of the children and youth and their families; and
- Kitchen facilities follow and respect public health regulations.

Community Partnership Committee

- A local program committee is established to oversee the administration of the program at the local site;
- Membership on the committee is composed of local stakeholders such as existing community partners, farmers, businesses, public health personnel, school staff, volunteers and parents or caregivers and other interested stakeholders to build on their knowledge and expertise in delivering student nutrition programs; and
- The committee will be responsible for organizing fundraising, applying for funding, approving the menus and budget, communicating with parents and coordinating volunteers.

Financial Accountability

- The program is required to have a separate bank account in the local program partnership committee's name;
- The program provides quarterly and annual financial and activity reports on how the grant was spent; and
- The program responds to all requests for additional information as required.

Data Provision

- The program provides data to the lead agency including the number of children and youth registered or participating at a site and the number of meals/snacks served;
- The program provides the lead agency with information identifying additional sources of program funding (e.g. parents, caregivers, corporate sponsors, charities, volunteers, in-kind donations, etc); and
- The program responds to all requests for additional information as required.
- Funding and data reporting for programs for each funding model is separate.

The following programs will not be eligible to receive funding for student nutrition programs:

- Child care facilities because they are mandated to provide meals to the children they serve; and
- Community kitchens.

Budgeting:

Government funding may contribute up to 15 percent of the total costs incurred by the local program for programs outside of designated communities;

In designated communities government funding is allocated for 15 percent of the cost for food and for a local community development coordinator to support the program.

The program demonstrates that additional contributions are being provided by parents or caregivers and other sources of donations such as local charities and corporate sponsors.

One-Time Funding Eligibility:

To establish and sustain programs, one-time grants are occasionally made available through the ministry.

One-time grants may be used to purchase essential equipment (e.g. fridge, stove, dishwasher, sink, food preparation utensils and reusable dishes) and non-perishable foods that follow the SNP Nutrition Guidelines, July 2008.

APPENDIX 5

GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

Allocated Central Administration:

Allocated central administration is the cost associated with governing and operating an organization. It does not include those program administration functions that directly support service to the client. Direct client service consists of functions involving interaction with the client and direct supports to client services such as supervision of direct care staff or front-line workers. Any administration costs that can logically be assigned to a program are considered program administration costs. Central administration costs include salary and benefits of staff, office expenses, needs (e.g. repairs, replacements, and upgrades in existing programs).

Breakfast:

A meal served to children and youth prior to the start of the school day.

Community-based program:

SNP program that is established within the community or offered by a service club or community organization but not a school (e.g. a community centre, faith or cultural centre).

Community development coordinator:

The community development coordinator hired by the local community partnership committee and is responsible for supporting program development and community capacity within designated communities. The community development coordinator is located and works within the communities they provide support to.

Community partners:

Businesses, public health, community agencies, farmers, service clubs, corporations and others.

Community partnership committee:

Local committee comprised of community partners, sharing planning and accountability for SNP programs in their community with the lead agency.

Designated communities:

Communities identified by the ministry where children and youth are known to have a high needs for the program. Breakfast and morning meal programs are to be offered in these communities starting in Fall 2008 and are supported by community development coordinators.

Morning meal:

A meal served to children and youth in the first part of the school day once school has officially started. The meal is delayed due to bussing, school start times, extracurricular activities, etc. A morning meal is not a snack program.

Meal⁴:

A meal (i.e. breakfast and lunch) contains at least one serving from a minimum of three out of the four food groups of *Canada's Food Guide* with at least one serving from the vegetables and fruit food group and at least one serving from the milk and alternatives food group.

New and enhanced funding:

In 2008-09 new funding was made available for the program to provide breakfast or morning meals to children and youth in designated communities.

This funding is for food grants, new community development coordinators, and includes one-time grants for equipment etc. to establish and enhance breakfast and morning meal programs and build community capacity to offer the program.

These breakfast and morning meal programs are offered everyday that children and youth attend school and receive 15 percent funding for food.

Number of children and youth participating or registered at a site:

The number of children and youth who have participated or are registered at a site during the year.

It is a cumulative number and a child or youth is reported once per site. Each child is counted once only during the year.

Number of meals/snacks served:

The number of meals and snacks served to children and youth as part of the program. 'Meals and snacks' are defined in the SNP Nutrition Guidelines and these definitions must be used when reporting this data.

For example, if breakfast was served to 15 children on 10 occasions, then this would be counted as 150 meals served. This is a cumulative number.

⁴ As outlined in SNP Nutrition Guidelines, July 2008.

Program:

A Student Nutrition Program which includes a breakfast program, a morning meal program, a lunch program and/or a snack program. Each program is identified and counted separately when submitting local data.

*Note: Beginning with the 2008-09 school year, multi-meal programs are no longer a data collection category. Each meal and snack program, even if offered at the same site, is counted separately.

Program frequency:

The number of days per week each program is offered.

Program site:

The location that offers program(s) to children and youth.

Each site reports on:

- The school identification number (if applicable) and complete address;
- The number of children and youth participating or registered at the site;
- The number and program types offered at the site; and
- The number of meals and snacks served by each program at the site.

One site may offer more than one program (i.e. a school that offers a lunch and snack program is one site with 2 programs).

School based program:

A program offered and supported within a local community school to meet the needs of children and youth at that school site.

Snack⁵:

A snack contains at least one serving from a minimum of two food groups of *Canada's Food Guide* with at least one serving from the vegetables and fruit food group. Nutritional value of a snack is improved by offering choices from three of the four food groups.

Universal access:

Every child and youth is welcomed to attend the program at the site regardless of his or her family's ability to contribute financially.

⁵ As per SNP Nutrition Guidelines July 2008.
Ministry of Children and Youth Services