



April 23, 2024

Heather Dennis, Administration Director
Anser of Idaho, Inc.
202 E 42nd
Garden City, ID 83714

Dear Administrator Dennis,

On January 31, 2024, Idaho Department of Education Coordinators Cambria Steffler and Jax Dunham conducted an Administrative Review (AR) of Anser of Idaho, Inc. for the following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- USDA Foods

The site reviewed was Anser Public Charter School.

The State agency (SA) would like to commend Danielle Kieffer and the entire staff of Anser of Idaho for their hard work operating the school nutrition programs.

OVERVIEW

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, amended by the addition of Section 201 to the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, requires a unified accountability system designed to ensure that participating school food authorities (SFA) comply with USDA requirements. The objectives of the AR are to:

- Determine whether the SFA meets program requirements
- Provide technical assistance
- Secure any needed corrective action
- Assess fiscal action and, when applicable, recover improperly paid funds

REVIEW FREQUENCY AND SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act mandates state agencies conduct an AR a minimum of one time during a three-year cycle, however Idaho has received a waiver to conduct reviews on an alternate schedule to evaluate Critical and General Areas of Review, including:

- Performance Standard 1: Meal Access and Reimbursement
- Performance Standard 2: Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality

- General Areas of Review: Resource Management, Food Safety, Local School Wellness Policy, Smart Snacks, Civil Rights, Buy American, Professional Standards, and other areas of general program compliance.

These were the SA determined findings and the SFA response to the findings:

FINDINGS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

Finding 1 – Certification and Benefit Issuance

The SFA must ensure that households are notified when a student is directly certified. The SFA does not currently send a direct certification notification letter to households notifying them of benefits. According to 7 CFR 245.6(c)(6)(ii), the LEA must notify the household, in writing, of eligibility established through direct certification. The Eligibility Manual for School Meals provides details on what elements must be included in household letters. A sample notice of direct certification letter can be found in section 5 of MyIdahoCNP's download forms.

CAP: Upload the template letter the SFA will use to notify households of direct certification eligibility for free meals.

Date: Due February 14, 2024; Completed February 22, 2024

Response: The food service director (FSD) uploaded the template letter they will use to notify households of direct certification.

Finding 2 – Certification and Benefit Issuance

A statistical sample of 106 students resulted in a 1.89% error rate. Two applications, affecting two students, required changes in benefits. These two applications were miscalculated and resulted in changes of reduced to denied and free to reduced. During the review of applications, it was noted that one application had zero income. While the application can be approved with no income listed, it is best practice to contact the household to confirm this is accurate.

CAP: Send household notification of adverse action notifying households that their benefits will be changed in 10 days. After 10 days, update the benefit issuance list. Upload copies of the notification letter and updated benefit issuance list. Follow up with the household that submitted the application with no income and make corrections as applicable.

Date: Due February 15, 2024; Completed February 14, 2024

Response: The FSD uploaded the adverse action letters sent to both households and an updated benefit issuance list with the correct benefit for each student.

Finding 3 – Civil Rights

School Foodservice Authority staff who interact with program applicants or participants (i.e. Cafeteria staff, Free and Reduced Application approval staff) and their supervisors as well as the Hearing Official must have annual civil rights training [(7 CFR 210.30(c)) (FNS Instruction 113-1: Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement)]. The hearing official has not completed civil rights training for the current school year.

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CAP: Upload a certificate or training agenda and sign-in sheet noting that the hearing official has completed the civil rights training. If a sign in sheet is uploaded, ensure that there is an agenda noting what was covered along with the date the training was taken.

Date: Due February 15, 2024; Returned for Correction; Completed April 18, 2024

Response: The FSD uploaded a civil rights training sign in sheet signed by the hearing official.

Finding 4 – Local School Wellness Policy

Per 7 CFR 210.31(e)(2), LEAs must assess their wellness policy at least once every three years on the extent to which schools are in compliance with the district policy, the extent to which the local wellness policy compares to model local school wellness policies, and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the local wellness policy. LEAs must make this assessment available to the public in an easily understood manner (7 CFR 210.31(d)(3)).

CAP: Upload a plan identifying who at the LEA will be responsible for completing the triennial assessment(s), how the assessment(s) will be completed, when the triennial assessment will be completed, what steps will be taken to ensure this requirement is met on a triennial basis, and how this assessment will be made available to the public in an easily understood manner.

Date: Due February 15, 2024; Returned for Correction; Completed April 18, 2024

Response: The FSD submitted an NSLP Corrective Action Procedure Form outlining that the FSD and the executive director will ensure the triennial assessment is completed every three years with the wellness committee. This will be posted on the website for the public to view.

Finding 5 – Professional Standards

The United States Department of Agriculture has established minimum Professional Standards for school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (7 CFR 210.30). The standards provide annual training requirements for all school nutrition professionals. It is required that some form of documentation be kept on file to show Professional Standards compliance. Employee training tracking Logs must include the key area/topics and training subjects completed with certificates, agendas, and sign-in sheets retained for backup. The SA has made available a template tracking log prompting this information and Professional Standards Learning Objectives and Topics with Codes which can be found on the USDA Professional Standards Website.

CAP: Complete a professional standards training tracking log for each employee and upload log to MyIdahoCNP.

Date: Due February 15, 2024; Returned for Correction; Completed April 18, 2024

Response: The FSD uploaded a completed Professional Standards Training Tracking Log for each employee.

Finding 6 – Professional Standards

All food service line staff must receive annual food safety and OVS training when OVS is implemented (7 CFR 210.30(c)). All staff training must include an agenda and sign-in sheet or certificates of completion, and training documentation must be maintained on file at the SFA for three years plus the current year. Food safety training is available from the Institute of Child Nutrition. OVS training is available through the [Idaho CNP training portal](#) and a training log is available in MyIdahoCNP Download Forms.

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CAP: Food service breakfast and lunch line staff must complete the separate breakfast and lunch OVS training and food safety training. Upload certificates of completion or an agenda and sign in sheet for all food service staff.

Date: Due February 15, 2024; Returned for Correction; Completed April 22, 2024

Response: The FSD uploaded an agenda and sign in sheet for OVS breakfast, lunch and food safety.

Finding 7 – Offer versus Serve

While on site, it was noted that no Offer vs Serve signage was posted for breakfast. Section 7 CFR 220.8(a)(2) of the SBP regulations require that SFAs must post signage to identify the planned reimbursable meals (i.e., all offered full meals), including the components and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each component/item. This signage must be located near or at the beginning of each serving line.

CAP: Request the "What's for Breakfast" posters from the SA. Once the breakfast posters have been posted and filled out completely, upload a picture showing that this has been implemented.

Date: Due April 15, 2024; Returned for Correction; Completed April 22, 2024

Response: The FSD uploaded a picture of the signage posted in the cafeteria.

COMMENDATIONS

- The kitchen staff at Anser Public Charter School had a great rapport with the students. The students were excited to receive their meals, and the kitchen staff ensured that students felt welcome in the cafeteria.
- The FSD was well prepared and was quick to answer the SA's questions. The FSD was also open to the SA's feedback and guidance during the review.
- The staff at Anser Charter School helped to create a warm and welcoming environment. The staff show genuine interest in operating a compliant program.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)

Certification and Benefit Issuance

- When obtaining the SA Direct Certification (DC) list, be sure to save it in a format that captures the appropriate heading to validate the date and where the list came from. The SFA recommends using the PDF download option to capture the required heading information.

Verification

- All verified applications must be readily retrievable on an individual school basis. All documents submitted by the household for the purpose of confirming eligibility, reproductions of those documents, or annotations made by the determining official indicating which documents were submitted by the household and the date of submission also must be retained, along with all relevant correspondence between the

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households selected for verification and the school or LEA [7 CFR 245.6a(h)]. This documentation, including documentation concerning any appeals, must be kept by the LEA to demonstrate compliance with the verification requirements when LEAs are reviewed by State or Federal officials. The documentation must be kept for a minimum of three years, after the date of the fiscal year to which they pertain. Copies of the original notification of verification letters along with copies of the 2nd attempt letter were not on file.

Meal Counting and Claiming

- Make sure that students are leaving the service line before placing items into the share box. For the meal to be considered reimbursable, all required components need to be on the student's tray as they leave the service line. Some students were observed putting their fruit in the share box immediately before reaching the end of the service line. It is suggested to move the share box a few feet away from the service line, so students don't put their food immediately into the box.

Meal Components and Quantities

- Independent contractor CN Resource completed the menu review and provided the following TA:
 - Production records are a written record demonstrating that a reimbursable meal was served. They also provide valuable information for planning and forecasting menus. The submitted production records did not provide adequate information. It is a requirement of the federal regulations to maintain complete and accurate production records.
 - The initial production records submitted did not include planned serving sizes and planned numbers for all menu items. The production records were updated and re-submitted to include these details.
 - The requirement for fruit is 1 cup to be offered daily, with the option of students selecting only ½ cup with Offer versus Serve. The production records indicated ½ cup fresh fruit daily, however the sponsor confirmed students may choose more than one serving of fruit to total 1 cup. Ensure at least 1 cup total fruit is planned daily for all students and reflected on the production records.
 - Add a note to reference the salad bar production records on the daily production records for the specific types of fruit and vegetables offered. The fruit is referenced as fresh fruit on the daily production records, however there are canned fruit options available on the bar. Replace wording with "fruit bar" to cover all fruit types and attach the daily food bar records to indicate specific types offered.
 - The planned production records for 12/12/23 and 12/15/23 did not document the fruit bar as planned. The sponsor indicated the fruit bar is offered daily, ensure this is documented as served on all production records each day.

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- The detailed serving size, including weight of individually packaged products should be documented on the production records to confirm the serving size and crediting.
- The Child Nutrition (CN) Label submitted for the beef patty showed an expired CN number (issue date 2014). The CN number was verified as active on the USDA CN Label Verification Report.
- A Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statement was not submitted for the corn dog, scrambled egg, egg patty, maple and sausage turkey wrap, or Uncrustable. The CN label was secured to confirm meal pattern crediting. This documentation was uploaded to our website where the files may be accessed. A sponsor should maintain this documentation on file to document meal pattern requirements as met.
- A standardized recipe is a recipe that has been carefully adapted and tested to ensure that it will produce a consistent product each time it is prepared. The recipes submitted were not always written in standardized format with complete information.
 - The granola recipe did not include the yield and serving size. This information was confirmed by the sponsor. Please note, the weight of oats was calculated at 1 oz. eq. grain per serving, however according to the Food Buying Guide Exhibit A, a 1/8 cup serving of granola credits at only 0.5 oz. eq. grain. Review the recipe for yield accuracy and consider serving a ¼ cup serving to ensure a full 1 oz. eq. grain per serving.

Offer versus Serve

- Prior to meal service, staff should discuss the crediting amount of food items and what is required for a reimbursable meal under OVS. The crediting amount listed on the production record will guide this conversation.

Food Safety

- Though the SFA has a current HACCP manual available for staff, the manual is missing an employee exclusion standard operating procedure (SOP) that is required by Idaho Food Code. A sample employee exclusion SOP is available in the Download Forms section of MyIdahoCNP.
- Buy American documentation was on file for all noted products sourced from outside of the United States, and there appears to be a good process in place. However, some of the products from outside of the United States were missing the Buy American Exception form to pair with the backup documentation noting why the exception was needed. Ensure that this form accompanies all documentation all products sourced from outside the United States.

Professional Standards

- Consider implementing a process that ensures the required trainings – food safety, OVS, and civil rights- are conducted at the beginning of each school year and adequately

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documented. When new employees are hired, ensure necessary training is received within the first 30 days.

School Breakfast and SFSP Outreach

- SFAs must cooperate with Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors to distribute materials to inform families of the availability and location of free SFSP meals for students when school is not in session [7 CFR 210.12 (d)(2)]. SFAs should promote locating summer meal locations by advertising the Summer Meal Site Finder (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids>) or texting the word “FOOD” or “COMIDA”; to 304-304 to see nearby options. Best practice is to include SFSP promotion and ways to locate meals on the SFA’s website.

Smart Snacks

- All fundraisers, including exempted and compliant, must be tracked. Only foods sold in school and intended for consumption during the school day (from midnight until 30 minutes after the end of school) fall under Smart Snacks regulations. Per state policy, a maximum of 10 exempt fundraisers per school per year may be approved by the school administrator. A fundraiser can be for a maximum of four consecutive school days. All exempted fundraisers beyond 10 must be pre-approved by the State agency (7 CFR 210.11). Smart Snacks information and resources, including a sample site tracking form, can be found at the Idaho SDE Child Nutrition Programs Smart Snacks website.

Resource Management

- Non-Profit Revenue Tool must show food cost percentages being above the industry standard of 40%. Use USDA Memo SP20-2016 for guidance. The State agency must ensure that all non-reimbursable foods sold by the school food service, including, but not limited to, a la carte food items, adult meals, and vended meals, generate at least the same proportion of school food authority revenues as they contribute to school food authority food costs, as required in 7 CFR §210.14(f)

FISCAL ACTION

Due to benefit issuance errors, fiscal action results in \$139.90 for NSLP and \$24.35 for SBP. However, since this amount falls under the \$600 threshold for each program, the fiscal action will be disregarded, and no financial adjustment will occur.

YOUR REVIEW IS NOW CLOSED.

If you wish to discuss any of these findings, please contact me at (208) 332-6820.

Thank you for your continued support of the Child Nutrition Programs.

Sincerely,

Cambria Steffler
Cambria Steffler, MS, RD
NSLP Coordinator

cc: Lynda Westphal, MHS, SNS, Director, Idaho Child Nutrition Programs
Danielle Kieffer, Child Nutrition Director, Anser of Idaho, Inc.

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1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

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