

John R. Kasich, Governor
Paolo DeMaria, Superintendent of Public Instruction

To: Ohio Recipient Agencies Participating the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods Program

From: Andrea Denning, Director
Office for Child Nutrition

Date: November 8, 2017

Re: Planned Assistance Level (PAL) Sweeps

Purpose

To establish the policy and timeline of sweeps of unused PAL by schools.

The PAL is the amount of money available to pay for the USDA Foods that the government purchases and makes available to schools. Only when the PAL is used to purchase USDA foods can the value be considered entitlement dollars.

As such, the value of requested USDA foods is not deducted from PAL until products are delivered to the school.

Schools that do not adequately utilize their PAL may be subject to a sweep of PAL and redistribution of PAL amounts to participating schools in Ohio.

Policy

As the state distributing agency (SDA), the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) Office for Child Nutrition (OCN) is responsible to administer and monitor the program in Ohio. Per federal law, schools participating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) all sponsors are allocated PAL to use towards the purchase of USDA foods. A school's PAL is determined by the entitlement rate and the total lunches served the previous school year.

It is at the discretion of ODE to administer the program to the best of its ability and ensure that Ohio's PAL is utilized efficiently and effectively. ODE uses the Commodity Allocation Tracking System (CATS) to track and monitor PAL and entitlement. Schools are encouraged to utilize PAL and participate in the USDA Foods program.

Schools that fail to utilize their PAL may be subject to a sweep of all or a portion of their PAL/entitlement dollars. These dollars are then redistributed to participating schools.

OCN sends monthly notifications of PAL usage to the school food authority (SFA), treasurer and other business officials. The school's assigned education program specialist is copied on this email.

In December, OCN identifies schools that have used less than 70% of their PAL and emails the school food director, treasurer and superintendent on record in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) application. This email is to alert the school that if the school chooses not to utilize its PAL or remaining entitlement, the remaining value will be subject to a sweep by OCN at the end of December. If the school still wishes to participate, the school must submit a plan of action to OCN indicating PAL/entitlement usage. The school's assigned education program specialist can assist in the development of a plan. This plan must be received by December 15. If a corrective action plan is not submitted and the school does not wish to utilize PAL, PAL will be swept on December 31.

Swept PAL is offered to schools which have utilized more than 70% of their PAL. The school must submit a plan of action indicating how it will utilize the dollars before being disbursed.

The swept school will be placed on hold in CATS and unable to request any commodities. At the start of the new school year, all schools will be considered active in the program.

Timeline

Year-Round	Office for Child Nutrition provides monthly notifications of PAL usage to schools.
November 15	OCN identifies schools that have used less than 70% of PAL and informs the Superintendent, Treasurer and Food Director of their at-risk status.
December 1	OCN education program specialist staff contacts at-risk schools and offers assistance to develop a corrective action plan by December 31.
December 31	Sweep of entitlement dollars for schools that fail to submit a plan of action. Offering of additional entitlement dollars to schools with more than 70% of usage.
January 31	Disbursement of additional entitlement dollars to schools which submit a plan of action indicating how PAL will be spent for the remainder of the school year.