

Per Meal Cost Calculation Worksheet Answer Sheet

Analyze this situation:

School food service staff members concerned about the plate costs in their school decided to analyze per meal costs on a daily basis. On this particular day, the school food service operation served 200 student lunches, 23 adult lunches, 96 breakfasts, 54 snacks in the afterschool care program, and had \$110.00 in a la carte and extra milk sales. There was \$619.55 in expenditures for the day. Using the following steps, calculate the per meal cost based on the number of meal equivalents served.

Step 1—Expenditures

Food Costs	\$ 252.50
USDA Commodities Used*	49.00
Labor Costs	179.50
Benefits Costs	60.50
General Supplies/Paper Supplies	36.60
Other Costs	
Small and Large Equipment	4.00
Repairs, Maintenance	4.55
Professional Development (travel, conferences, training, etc.)	2.60
Overhead (utilities, telephones, postage, waste management, etc.)	29.60
Indirect (charges from the district)	.70
Total Costs for the Day	\$619.55

*USDA Commodity cost is the value of the commodities used for the specified meal or period of time. Processing costs associated with the commodity are included in the *food costs*.

Step 2—Calculate all meals and meal equivalents

Refer to the meal conversion formulas reviewed on the Meal Equivalency Worksheet and calculate all meals and meal equivalents

Breakfast Meal Equivalents	96 x .66	=	63
Snack Meal Equivalents	54/3	=	18
A la Carte Meal Equivalents**	\$110/\$2.4125	=	45. 59 or 46
Student Lunches + Adult Lunches	200 + 23	=	223

**Free lunch reimbursement is \$2.24 and commodity value is \$.1725.

Step 3—Add all meal equivalents and lunches together

When the number of meal equivalents or lunches for each type of service has been determined add them together to get the total meal equivalents served for the period being analyzed.

<u>63</u>	Breakfast equivalents
<u>18</u>	Snack equivalents
<u>46</u>	A la carte equivalents
<u>223</u>	Lunch meal equivalents
= <u>350</u>	Total meal/lunch equivalents

Step 4—Calculate the per plate meal cost

Divide the total expenditures for the period by the total meal equivalents. This tells the school food service director the cost of producing a meal on a per plate basis for the period of time being analyzed.

$$\text{Meal Cost} = \frac{\text{Total Expenditures}}{\text{Total Meals/Lunch Equivalents}} = \frac{\$619.55}{350} = \underline{\$1.77}$$

The meal cost of \$1.77 for the day may be compared to other meal costs for this school food service program. The previous week's daily plate or meal costs were as follows:

Monday	\$1.68
Tuesday	1.65
Wednesday	1.62
Thursday	1.67
Friday	1.69

Is the meal cost just analyzed for the day higher or lower than the previous week's meals?

Answer: The meal cost of \$1.77 is \$.08 more than the highest cost for the previous week's meals.

If it is higher, it may be a red flag for the school food service director to investigate the reason for the increase or the need to balance high cost with low cost meals in line with established cost guidelines. This data may be used for future menu planning.