

Important Note: This activity was developed for the original Green Lunchroom Challenge program, a voluntary pledge program for K-12 schools to improve the sustainability of their food service



operations. The project was coordinated by the [Illinois Sustainable Technology Center Technical Assistance Program](#) with funding from US EPA Region 5.

The following page(s) represent the content of this activity as it appeared on the original project web site, complete with available points and instructions for submitting documentation. **The project is no longer funded and as of June 2018 schools may no longer submit activity documentation to earn points and recognition as described.** The activity is presented for your information to guide your organization's sustainability efforts.

If your school or district implements the suggested activity and wishes to share its experiences, please email [Joy Scrogum](#). Your story may be incorporated into a blog post on this web site, the main ISTC site, or shared on social media to foster networking and inspiration among peer institutions.

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Provide fewer menu options to avoid over-preparation and/or high volumes of leftovers

Activity Category: Menu Planning and Food Preparation

Activity: Provide fewer menu options to avoid over-preparation and/or high volumes of leftovers

Rationale: Some items available in school lunchrooms which are considered “extra foods” of “minimal nutritional value” are not creditable in offer versus serve (OVS) programs (see the separate activity on offer versus serve on the [main “Activities” page](#)). Eliminating such offerings can reduce confusion in pricing and record keeping. Providing less menu items creates less waste, can help prevent over-preparation of food or high volumes of leftovers, and helps to focus efforts on the improvement of food items being served.

Activity Description: If your school offers “extra foods,” multiple entrees, or a la carte items, experiment with the reduction of offerings during the Challenge period and note any effects on amounts of leftovers and/or waste. In doing so, please be sure to continue to provide the proper number of meal components to meet nutritional and reimbursable meal guidelines.

Earn Challenge Points (100 points): During the Challenge period, provide two meal services that are identical in every way except for the elimination of one offering during one of the services. Keep a log for both meal services (see the sample production log in the “ISBE Menu Planning and Meal Pattern Requirements” or the “US EPA Food Waste Logbook” in the “Resources” section below). In one 2-4 page Word or PDF file, submit copies of the logs for both of the meal services, along with observations and conclusions drawn on whether the elimination of one offering resulted in fewer leftovers and/or waste being produced. Is this a strategy that your organization may use in the future? Why or why not? Email your document to Joy Scrogum at jscrogum@illinois.edu.

Resources:

 [ISBE Menu Planning and Meal Pattern Requirements](#)



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 [US EPA Food Waste Logbook](#)

 [OVS and "Extra Foods"](#)

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