



School Nutrition Programs

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

This weekly newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is dedicated to providing education, training, and technical assistance opportunities to school nutrition professionals, helping to ensure seamless operations for those participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Child Nutrition Programs. If you are the food service contact for your school or facility, please be certain that everyone on your team has access to this important information.

Tip of the Week

Miss A Newsletter?

Bookmark the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) [newsletter archive webpage](#) to access past School Nutrition Programs emails and refer to past newsletter guidance.

Important Updates

Traditional Verification Period Begins Wednesday, October 1

Sponsors who collect USDA Meal Benefit applications must follow traditional verification requirements. Those with a non-response rate of 20% or greater the previous year must conduct Standard (error-prone) verification. Emails were sent to the verification contact listed on last year's verification summary report yesterday. If you did not receive the information, please review the [Verification Method spreadsheet](#), and identify whether your corporation must conduct Standard verification. Training on the verification process can be found on [Moodle](#) or join one of the remaining verification presentations listed in the training section below.

America's Healthiest Schools 2025

Awardees for the [2025 America's Healthiest Schools](#) by Alliance for a Healthier Generation were announced in late August. This award is an annual recognition program that celebrates schools for implementing best practices to support the health needs of their learning communities.

Congratulations to all Indiana schools chosen for this award!

- Northside Middle School- Bartholomew Consolidated School District
- Discovery Charter School
- Purdue Polytechnic High School, Englewood
- Ernie Pyle Elementary School 90- Indianapolis Public Schools
- Thomas Carr Howe Middle School- Indianapolis Public Schools
- Central Elementary School- MSD of Pike Township
- College Park Elementary School- MSD of Pike Township
- Deer Run Elementary School- MSD of Pike Township
- Eagle Creek Elementary School- MSD of Pike Township
- Eastbrook Elementary School- MSD of Pike Township
- Fishback Creek Public Academy- MSD of Pike Township
- Guion Creek Elementary School- MSD of Pike Township
- Guion Creek Middle School- MSD of Pike Township
- Lincoln Middle School- MSD of Pike Township
- New Augusta Public Academy North- MSD of Pike Township
- New Augusta Public Academy South- MSD of Pike Township
- Pike High School- MSD of Pike Township
- Snacks Crossing Elementary- MSD of Pike Township
- Winslow Elementary School- Pike County School Corporation
- Edgewood High School- Richland-Bean Blossom Community School District
- Edgewood Intermediate School- Richland-Bean Blossom Community School District
- Edgewood Jr High School- Richland-Bean Blossom Community School District
- Edgewood Primary School- Richland-Bean Blossom Community School District
- East Tipp Middle School- Tippecanoe School Corporation

September is National Food Safety Education Month!

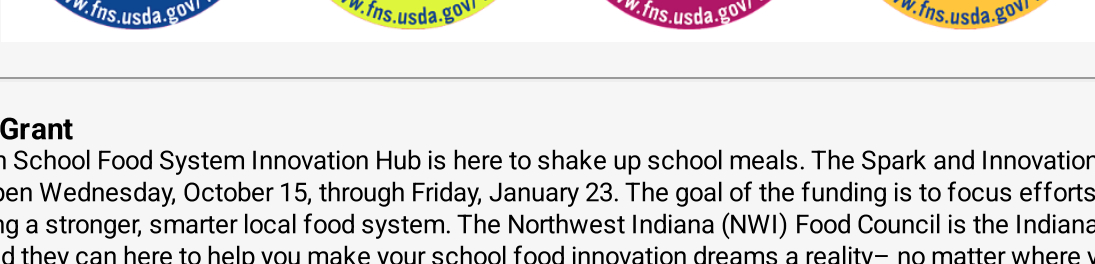
Using a thermometer is the only reliable way to ensure food has reached a high enough internal temperature to kill the germs that lead to foodborne illnesses. Not only that, but taking the temperature of food also ensures even cooking and prevents overcooking, which diminishes the quality of food.

- [Calibrating Thermometers- ice method](#) (video file)
- [Calibrating Thermometers- boiling water method](#) (video file)
- [Calibrating Thermometers fact sheet](#)
- [Use that Thermometer poster](#)

Farm to School

USDA Free Local Food Stickers

Did you know USDA offers free and fun farm to school stickers? Find more information and the link to order [here](#).

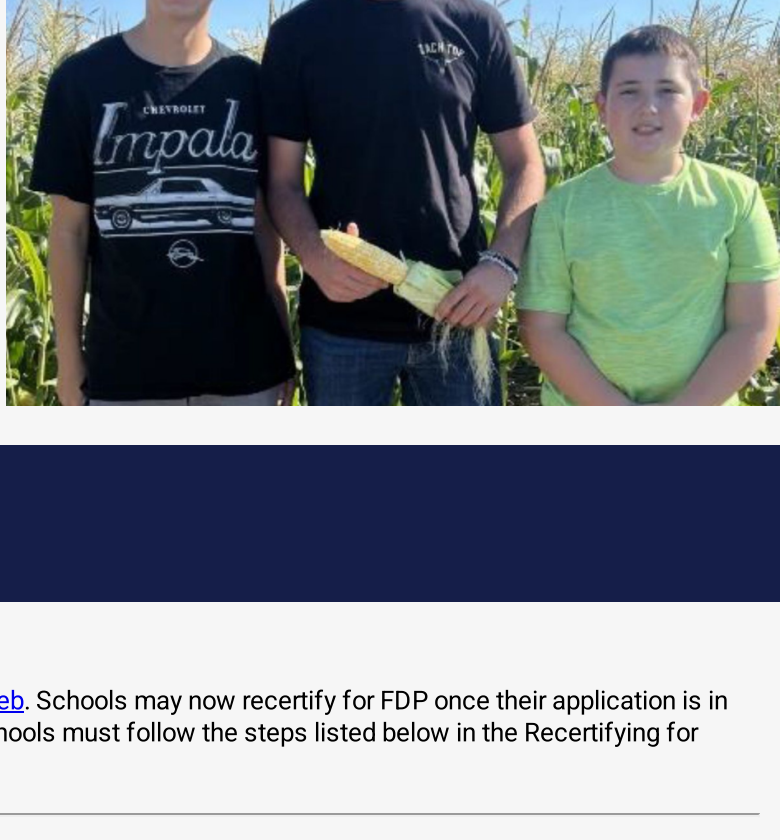


Innovation Hub Grant

The Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub is here to shake up school meals. The Spark and Innovation Awards applications are open Wednesday, October 15, through Friday, January 23. The goal of the funding is to focus efforts on healthier food for kids and building a stronger, smarter local food system. The Northwest Indiana (NWI) Food Council is the Indiana State Lead for the Innovation Hub, and they can here to help you make your school food innovation dreams a reality– no matter where you are in the state! Find more information about this award opportunity [here](#), and contact NWI Food Council Farm to School Coordinator [Veronica Jalomo](#) with additional questions.

School Highlight

The East Allen County Schools Food Service Department has been busy this year expanding their farm to school offerings—and their students are loving it! For Indiana Food Day, they were proud to serve locally grown sweet corn that was planted, cared for, and harvested by three hardworking students from Woodlan K–12 school in Woodburn. Thanks to Kurtz Produce in New Haven, their students enjoyed juicy, locally grown watermelon during their school lunches this past summer. Two of their high schools are now serving fresh lettuce from Amish Aquaponics. Lastly, they plan to offer apples from Cook's Orchard this fall!



USDA Foods

Direct Delivered (Brown Box) USDA Foods

IDOE has opened the Food Distribution Program (FDP) link in [CnpWeb](#). Schools may now recertify for FDP once their application is in pending approval status for the School Nutrition Program (SNP). Schools must follow the steps listed below in the Recertifying for USDA Foods section.

Recertifying for USDA Foods

Your school's SNP application must be in pending approval before you can be approved for FDP.

Login to [CNPweb](#) and go to FDP.

- Read the update and message screen, then scroll to the bottom and click "continue."
- Click "Program Year 2026" in the upper right corner.
- Go to the Applications tab and then click the "Edit" link.
- Verify and/or update the address and contact information.
- Ensure that a 24-hour access phone number (such as a mobile phone number) is entered.
- Scroll down to box 29 in the Verification section and place a checkmark in the box.
- Click the submit button, and your account should be pending approval.
- IDOE will approve your account if all requirements are met.

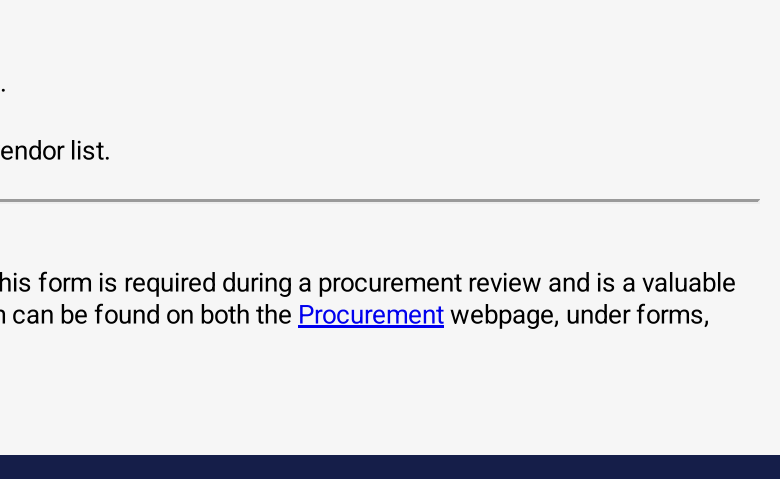
If your account has the following message, "You do not currently have a NSLP information sheet for Program Year 2026 in a Pending Approval or Approved status. You must complete the enrollment process for the National School Lunch Program before your FDP information sheet can be Certified and Approved," your school still has tasks that need to be completed under SNP.

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program

As a reminder, schools must enter their Department of Defense (DoD) Program receipts into the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System ([EFAVORS](#)) within two calendar days after the produce is delivered to your school.

USDA Foods Recipe Ideas

Use your USDA Foods [111881 pulled chicken](#), or [100101 diced chicken](#) and [100012 shredded cheddar cheese](#) for this [BBO chicken wrap](#) recipe. This recipe may need to be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



Procurement

Procurement Review

It's Procurement Review season. If your school is scheduled to participate in an Administrative Review this school year, you will be contacted by the IDOE Procurement team for a procurement review. A Procurement Review is a process where state agencies evaluate a sponsor's procurement practices to ensure compliance with program regulations.

Procurement Review Tips

- Prepare early
- Be sure you are documenting and keeping organized records.
- Have a copy of your school's procurement plan.
- Complete the procurement tool and submit it with your paid vendor list.

New Monthly Reconciliation Form

IDOE has a new [USDA Foods Monthly Reconciliation Report form](#). This form is required during a procurement review and is a valuable tool for recording USDA Foods activities and transactions. This form can be found on both the [Procurement](#) webpage, under forms, templates and examples, and the [Forms and Checklists](#) websites.

Training and Webinar Opportunities

September and October Webinars

- Harvest to Lunchroom for Indiana Food Day, Thursday, September 25, at 2 p.m. ET.
- Traditional Verification Methods, Tuesday, September 30, at 10 a.m. ET.
- Verification Processing, Tuesday, October 7, at 2 p.m. ET.
- Basic Knife Skill Technique, Thursday, October 16, at 2 p.m. ET
- Verification Processing (repeat session), Tuesday, October 21, at 10 a.m. ET.
- Essential Knife Skills for Veggie Prep, Thursday, October 23, at 2 p.m. ET
- Knife Techniques to Enhance Fruits, Thursday, October 30, at 2 p.m. ET

Read more about these topics and register [here](#).

Please note: Artificial Intelligence (AI) notetakers must be disabled when attending an online training webinar or meeting hosted by IDOE's School and Community Nutrition team.

Reminders

October Opportunities

October is a big month for school nutrition programs. Check out all the options below to celebrate the work you do every day!

- National School Lunch Week (NSLW) 2025 is Monday, October 13, through Friday, October 17. This year's theme is Taste the World: Your School Lunch Passport. Start planning now for incorporating global flavors into your menus that week. The School Nutrition Association has [graphics and other resources](#) available to help celebrate.
- October is [Farm to School Month](#)! Highlight local products in your menus. [Indiana Grown for Schools](#) also has resources available to help enhance your program.
- [Great Apple Crunch](#) is also celebrated in October. Purchase locally grown apples and have students crunch into them together!
- [Indiana Food Day](#) can be celebrated any day, but Farm to School Month is a great connection. This year, we are celebrating corn! Any form of locally grown corn can be celebrated! Also check out the [cool Food Day apparel](#) available to purchase!

If you are already planning a celebration, please let your field specialist know.

September is National Food Safety Education Month

Keeping food out of the temperature danger zone is important at all points of the production cycle. From receiving to service, foods must remain at acceptable temperatures. The Institute of Child Nutrition has many resources available for ensuring staff understand their role in keeping food temperature safe.

- [Temperature Danger Zone](#)
- [Cooking Foods](#)
- [Hot Holding](#)
- [Cold Holding](#)
- [Thawing Foods](#)
- [Methods for Cooling Foods](#) (video link)

Updates from Our Partners

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) September STAR Webinar

Farm to School initiatives offer valuable opportunities to boost the nutritional quality of school meals while supporting local agriculture and promoting sustainability. This webinar will cover effective tips for sourcing and integrating more locally grown or raised foods into your school menus. Participants will hear real-world insights on successfully implemented Farm to School initiatives, including tips on what can be purchased locally, procurement strategies, communicating with farmers or vendors, and increasing student appeal. Whether you're just starting or looking to expand your current Farm to School efforts, join this session to hear how you can enhance the nutritional quality and sustainability of your school menus. Thursday, September 25 at 3 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

Grant Season with American Dairy Association Indiana (ADAI)

ADAI is offering the Mobile Yogurt Parfait Bar grant this fall! Take advantage of this opportunity to help increase your daily participation at breakfast AND lunch! Stay relevant and on trend with this "build your own" (BYO) opportunity which showcases nutrient packed yogurt parfaits! If you aren't ready for BYO, this card can be used to increase accessibility of Grab N Go options or Second Chance Breakfast. Let us help you fuel your students for success! Click [HERE](#) for more information and to begin the application. The deadline to apply is Friday, October 3. Those who previously applied and were not awarded this grant, are encouraged to apply again if still interested!

Indiana School Nutrition Association (ISNA) Annual Conference

ISNA is excited to be hosting the 2025 Annual Conference Wednesday, November 5, through Friday, November 7, at the French Lick Resort in beautiful southern Indiana! This year's conference will feature a great lineup of engaging speakers to equip you with the tools and knowledge to excel in school food service. You do not have to be a member to attend! Find more information and register [here](#).

