



School Nutrition Programs

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

**School Lunch Hero Day is Coming!**  
School Lunch Hero Day is next Friday, May 2. Show support for school food service staff by accessing the School Lunch Hero Day resources on the [School Nutrition Association website](#).



Important Updates

**School Lunch Hero Day Allowable Cost Reminders**  
School Lunch Hero Day is Friday, May 2, and is a designated day to recognize the valuable contributions of school nutrition staff to the child nutrition programs. Here are a few allowable cost ideas for the Nonprofit School Food Service Account.

- Cost of printing and obtaining promotional items for School Lunch Hero Day.
- Decorations for the kitchen and cafeteria are considered allowable costs. Please ensure decorations are school nutrition specific and promote School Lunch Hero Day.
  - Check out [these banners](#) made by West Lafayette Community Schools to promote their local School Nutrition Heroes.
- Gifts for School Nutrition Staff that promote School Lunch Hero Day or optimize their production and serving of reimbursable meals such as aprons, t-shirts/uniforms, new thermometers, pens, clipboards, hats, etc.

As a reminder, the Nonprofit School Food Service Account is considered a federal fund, and all expenditures must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable direct costs to the program to be considered an allowable expenditure. The item(s) purchased must be intended for the sole use, operation, and improvement of the Child Nutrition Programs. The intent of a purchase should always be kept in mind. For more information about allowable costs, including employee recognition expenditures, please read [General Expenditures - Examples of Allowable and Unallowable Costs](#).

Farm to School

**Produce Safety for School Gardens and Hydroponic Towers Webinar**  
Purdue University's College of Agriculture will offer a produce safety crash course webinar on Monday, April 28, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. ET. This webinar is for sponsors with gardens or hydroponic towers that want to learn important safety practices when growing food for consumption. The Indiana Grown for Schools Network wants to equip you with knowledge and skills to be able to grow fresh and safe food for your students. Register [here](#).

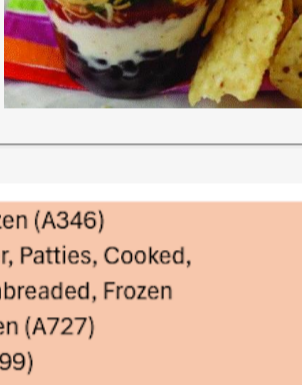
**Season Your Summer**  
Join us for the second Farm to Summer celebration called Season Your Summer! The theme for this year's educational initiative focuses on exploring different locally grown herbs that spice up daily meals. Participation in this initiative is voluntary, easy, and open to anyone operating a summer child nutrition program. All learning activities listed in the Toolkit are geared toward elementary-age students and provide different educational opportunities for young minds. The nutritional component of the initiative will teach students how to grow herbs at home and use them in preparing easy and fresh recipes. Sign up [here](#) today and request free seed packets for your summer sites, while supplies last!

USDA Foods

**Entitlement for School Year 2025-2026**  
IDOE has been receiving questions regarding unused entitlement after the annual pre-order forecast survey closure. IDOE must meet very tight USDA deadlines to receive USDA Foods for the 2025-2026 school year. Unfortunately, there is no pre-determined way to know if there is lack of interest in a particular USDA Food. There is no way to know if USDA truck requirements can be met until after survey closure. This information becomes available once IDOE balances and reconciles the survey data entered by all schools collectively. This data may result in rounding down or taking cases away which causes money to be returned to school entitlement accounts, however due to USDA time constraints there is no way to re-open the survey or allow survey changes. IDOE is always willing to allocate surplus USDA Foods at no charge to entitlement, when available. Remember USDA Foods account for 15-20% of an SFA's school food budget. For more information on what happens after the annual pre-order forecast survey [click here](#).

**USDA Foods and DoD Fresh Orders and Deliveries**  
Schools should begin preparing for the end of the school year. Allocations end on Wednesday, April 30. USDA Foods deliveries (based on delivery periods) and USDA Foods for Processing and DoD orders end Monday, June 30. Schools should make plans for ordering and utilization. USDA Foods for Processing pounds remaining will carry over to school year 2026 depending on usage and availability. DoD Fresh funds will not carry over.

**USDA Foods Recipes**  
Use your USDA Foods [shredded cheddar cheese](#) and [refried beans](#) to prepare this variation of [fiesta parfait](#). These recipes must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



<b>USDA Foods Cancelled or Unavailable for School Year 2025-2026</b> The following USDA Foods are unavailable for school year 2025-2026 due to lack of interest, inability to fill a truck, or because they are not being offered by USDA.	<table><tr><td>Apple Slices, Frozen (A346)</td><td>100258</td></tr><tr><td>Black Bean Burger, Patties, Cooked,</td><td>111860</td></tr><tr><td>Chicken, Fillet Unbreaded, Frozen</td><td>110921</td></tr><tr><td>Ham Cubed Frozen (A727)</td><td>100188</td></tr><tr><td>Orange J Sngl (A299)</td><td>100277</td></tr><tr><td>Sweet Potatoes, Crinkle Cut Fries</td><td>110721</td></tr></table>	Apple Slices, Frozen (A346)	100258	Black Bean Burger, Patties, Cooked,	111860	Chicken, Fillet Unbreaded, Frozen	110921	Ham Cubed Frozen (A727)	100188	Orange J Sngl (A299)	100277	Sweet Potatoes, Crinkle Cut Fries	110721
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Training and Webinar Opportunities

**IDOE Live Webinars**  
Live webinars are now scheduled through May! Read details and register [here](#).

- End of Year Reminders on Thursday, May 1, at 10 a.m. ET
- Record Keeping Reminders on Wednesday, May 7, at 2 p.m. ET
- Annual Financial Report (AFR) End of Year Preparation on Tuesday, May 13, at 10 a.m. ET
- Private Schools Indirect Costs on Thursday, May 15, at 10 a.m. ET

**Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership (ISNL)**  
This summer, in connection with the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), we will be offering two sessions of ISNL, one in-person and one virtual via Zoom. ISNL is intended for new school nutrition program directors and provides an overview of school nutrition programs, defines the role and responsibilities of a director, and reviews the relationship between local policies and State/Federal regulations.

Per ICN guidelines, these sessions will be capped at 40 participants. Therefore, we ask that only those with three or fewer years of director/program management experience, and who have never attended ISNL register to attend. Please register for only one option below. The training layout has changed from years past with 24 hours of live training with additional self-paced online lessons taken on the ICN ILEARN platform. Attendees are expected to be in attendance at the times listed below each option.

- In-Person: Lebanon Community High School
  - Monday, June 23, through Wednesday, June 25, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET
  - Register [here](#)
- Virtual Option via Zoom
  - Tuesday, July 15, through Friday, July 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET
  - Register [here](#)

**Back to School Training - IN the Mix, Prepped for Success**  
Join IDOE for in-person training as you prepare for the 2025-2026 school year. All food service personnel are invited to attend this day-long session. We had a great turnout last year and are looking forward to seeing more of you this year!

- **When:** Tuesday, July 8, from 8 a.m to 3:30 p.m. ET
- **Where:** Renaissance Indianapolis North Hotel, 11925 N Meridian St, Carmel
- **Additional Details:** This training is free to attend, and the cost of travel to the training is an allowable expenditure of food service funds. View a draft of the agenda [here](#). Attendees will receive credit toward annual professional standards training hours.

Register [here](#).  
  
Please complete one registration form for each attendee.

Reminders

**Academic Summer School Meal Options**  
Beginning in summer 2025, school corporations are required to provide summer school to students who do not pass IREAD. Because this is a required offering, the program is considered academic summer school. If you had previously been advised that your program did not qualify for meal service, but will be offering summer school as a result of this requirement, please reach back out to the Office of School and Community Nutrition for further guidance.

- Sites that wish to be closed to the public or do not qualify for the summer meals programs can extend NSLP meal service. Meals served on NSLP can only be offered to students enrolled in academic summer school. Students on campus for other reasons are not eligible to participate in meal service. NSLP must operate as usual with money for reduced and paid students collected. The non-profit food service account cannot absorb the cost of reduced and paid student meals.
- Sites that would like to be open to the public and qualify by area eligibility to operate a summer meal program could operate under SFSP or SSO. Site locations for SFSP and SSO must sit in an area where at least 50% of the students qualify for free or reduced price meals or is census area eligible. Academic summer school sites under SFSP and SSO must be advertised to and operate as open to the general public.

Unsure if your program qualifies as academic summer school? See [this resource](#). Contact your assigned field specialist with any questions.

**FY 2024 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant**  
Applications for the [2024 National School Lunch Equipment Grant](#) are being accepted until Friday, May 16. Indiana has received \$229,328 from USDA to award Equipment Assistance Grants for fiscal year 2024 (this award is always one year behind the current program year). Public school districts, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCI) are eligible to apply if they participate in the NSLP. Priority will be given to schools where at least 50% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and have not previously received an equipment grant.

Additional information and application tools can be found on [this resource](#). Questions can be sent to [scnfinance@doe.in.gov](mailto:scnfinance@doe.in.gov) with "equipment grant" in the subject line.

**School and Corporation Profile Amendment Window**  
The school and corporation profile amendment submission window for the 2025-2026 school year is open until Sunday, August 31. In order to ensure IDOE maintains accurate information, all schools and school corporations must provide notice when changes are made that affect school openings, closures, and reconfigurations. If school or corporation names or numbers are changing, please notify us in the [CNPweb Help Form](#) so we can update your sponsor and/or site applications in CNPweb.

Updates from Our Partners

**April STAR Webinar from Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)**  
Please join ICN for the April STAR webinar titled Strategies for Navigating Bids and Vendor Selections in School Nutrition. This webinar will equip school nutrition professionals with effective strategies for navigating the bid process and vendor selections. Gain insights on securing high-quality food and competitive prices and to learn practical tips for successful procurement. The session will also cover best practices for creating clear bid specifications—ensuring compliance with procurement regulation—and assessing vendors, with a focus on maintaining effective communication, sustainability, and sourcing local, fresh foods. Thursday, April 24, at 3 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

Upcoming Dates



Thursday, April 24, at 3 p.m.	<a href="#">April STAR Webinar from ICN</a>
Monday, April 28, at 2 p.m.	<a href="#">Farm to School Produce Safety for School Gardens Webinar</a>
Tuesday, April 29	<a href="#">February Final Claim Due Date</a>
Wednesday, April 30	Summer Food Service Program application and SFSP USDA Foods request deadline
Thursday, May 1, at 10 a.m ET	<a href="#">End of Year Reminders Webinar</a>
Thursday, May 1	Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Application and Information Updates Deadline
Wednesday, May 7, at 2 p.m. ET	<a href="#">Record Keeping Webinar</a>
Tuesday, May 13, at 10 a.m. ET	<a href="#">AFR End of Year Preparation Webinar</a>
Thursday, May 15, at 10 a.m. ET	<a href="#">Indirect Costs for Private Schools Webinar</a>
Friday, May 16	<a href="#">Equipment Grant Application Deadline</a>

### Additional Resources

- [School Nutrition Programs Calendar](#)
- [IDOE's Nutrition Webpage](#)
- [CNPweb](#)