



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION

Mike Braun, Governor
Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

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

Field Trip Meals

Field trips add fun to the school day, and with a little preparation, meal service can stay simple. Here are a few reminders to help you prepare for field trip meals:

- Meals must meet all meal pattern requirements, including minimum component sizes, and should be documented on the daily production record.
- Field trip meals must be counted at the point of service (POS), which is when the student receives the reimbursable meal. Students may pick up meals before leaving, and can be counted through the regular POS procedures, or staff may distribute at the field trip location, and record counts on a simple paper roster.
- If offer vs. serve (OVS) is not used, students must take all required components, including milk, for the meal to be counted.
- Staff involved in field trip meal counting should be trained on POS procedures, reimbursable meals, and civil rights requirements.
- For multi-day field trips, only first-day meals may be reimbursable, so schools will need to plan alternative meal options for any additional days.

For more information, view the [Field Trip Meals Fact Sheet](#) and contact your assigned field specialist with any questions.

Important Updates

National School Lunch Week (NSLW)

National School Lunch Week celebrates the importance of healthy school meals in helping students learn and thrive. This year's theme, "Cafeteria Circus: Where Healthy Choices Take Center Stage," highlights the creativity and dedication behind every school meal. While NSLW is observed Monday, October 12 through Friday, October 16, schools may celebrate any week that works best, including shifting festivities if fall break overlaps. Find promotional materials, graphics, activity ideas, and more from the School Nutrition Association [here](#).

Professional Standards

School Nutrition Program (SNP) staff must meet annual professional development requirements to ensure they have the knowledge and skills needed to operate the SNPs effectively. Training must align with each employee's job duties and level of responsibility.

Professional standard reminders:

- Track all staff training throughout the year using any manual or electronic tracker. School Food Authorities (SFAs) may use [IDOE's training tracker template](#).
- When conducting staff training, keep a dated agenda for each training that includes the name of the trainer, topics covered, a copy of any handouts provided, staff signatures, and the total time spent on the training. A training agenda template can be found [here](#).
- Non-food service staff with duties related to SNPs must receive annual training related to their responsibilities, including meal counting, free and reduced eligibility, offer vs serve, civil rights, etc. Though non-food service staff are not required to meet a specific number of annual training hours, training documentation must still be maintained.
- All professional standards training documentation will be reviewed by your field specialist during an administrative review.

Visit IDOE's [Professional Standards webpage](#) for more resources.

Farm to School

Local Procurement 101: A Refresher for School Year (SY) 2026–2027

USDA's Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) will host a Harvest to Hallways webinar focused on simple, effective ways to incorporate more local foods into school meals. The session provides a quick overview of local procurement basics, geographic preference, and farm to school resources, along with practical tips for sourcing fresh, local ingredients. Local Procurement 101 will be held on Tuesday, September 15, at 2 p.m. ET. Click [here](#) to register.

Culinary Skills for Farm to School Training

Gain hands-on culinary skills to incorporate more local foods into school meals. This training will cover farm to school basics, using fresh and local herbs, making common vegetable substitutions, and practicing several kid-friendly recipes. Sessions will be held in the afternoon in Logansport on Tuesday, September 22, and Wednesday, September 23, and in Daviess County on Thursday, September 24, and Friday, September 25. Space is limited, and applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Click [here](#) to register.

School Garden Grant Opportunity

The Indiana Thriving Schools Challenge is offering another round of funding this year for student-led sustainability projects, including school gardens. This grant provides up to \$5,000, and is open to all K-12 schools in Indiana. Click [here](#) to apply by Thursday, September 13.

USDA Foods

K12 Foodservice On Target Forecast Planner Virtual Training

For SFAs with processors that report pound and balance information through K12 Foodservice, IDOE is hosting a virtual training for Recipient Agencies (RAs) on Wednesday, October 21, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET. [K12Foodservice.com](#) now offers a commodity planner that helps RAs identify needs, collaborate with partners, and track progress. The K12 On Target Planner provides real-time updates to improve entitlement use. Join the webinar using [this link](#).

Presentation Available: USDA Foods Program Updates and PrimeroEdge Transition Webinar

The [presentation slides](#) are available from the live webinar on Thursday, September 3. Catch up on the latest USDA Foods updates, including best practices for inventory management, tips to improve ordering accuracy, and strategies to maximize your USDA Foods utilization.

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program

Schools must enter receipts in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) **within two calendar days** of delivery to avoid account suspension and ensure that vendors are paid. Schools should monitor and use DoD Fresh funds in FFAVORS to prevent sweeping or loss of funds. Funds must be used in full by June 30, 2027 and will not rollover.

USDA Foods Reminders

- Select your distributors in [K12 Foodservice](#) and/or [ProcessorLink](#) to deliver processed end products to your school food authority (SFA).
- Verify processor pounds have been loaded.
 - Use carryover pounds first.
- Incorporate USDA foods into your school menu as much and as often as possible.

USDA Foods Cancellations for SY 2026-2027

- 100256 Frozen Strawberry Cups (January-September 2026)
- 100258 Frozen Apple Slices
- 110721 Sweet Potato Fries
- 110921 Frozen Chicken Fillet, Unbreaded

Did You Know?

USDA Foods deliveries follow predetermined delivery periods from the state assigned warehouse, helping schools plan staffing and storage in advance. SFAs should cross-reference delivery periods with school and personal calendars to avoid missed deliveries.

USDA Foods Recipe Spotlight

Looking for recipes to use your USDA Foods? Check out these resources:

- [Nutrition.gov](#)
- [Smart Swaps Recipes](#)
- [Wild Blueberry Recipes](#)
- [Recipes for Healthy Kids](#)
- [Recipes for Schools - Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#)
- [Team Nutrition Recipes](#)

Procurement

Procurement Review Open Support Calls

IDOE's Office of School and Community Nutrition is pleased to announce a series of Friday support sessions for schools selected for a Procurement Review. These sessions are designed to help you prepare, ask questions, and ensure a smooth review process. The last session will be held on [Friday, September 11 at 10 a.m. ET](#).

Each session will provide guidance, walk-throughs of required documentation, and time for individual questions. We encourage all selected schools to attend.

Procurement Documentation Must Include Required Clauses

SFAs must ensure all procurement documents contain the federally required clauses, including the appropriate contract provisions and a written code of conduct. These elements help maintain transparency, support ethical purchasing practices, and ensure all procurements made with nonprofit school food service funds meet federal standards.

For more details on this and other procurement topics, see our [Procurement Information Sheet](#). Questions about procurement? Click [here](#) or contact the [SCN Procurement mailbox](#) for assistance.

Training and Webinar Opportunities

Culinary Skills for A+ School Meals: Fall 2026 Virtual Training Series

Join for free, interactive sessions featuring live chef demonstrations, practical recipes, efficient techniques, and nutritional insights. Each class earns one training hour and includes exciting giveaways!

Enhance your culinary skills and learn tips and tricks from school nutrition pros. Classes are held Thursdays, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET. For more details, click [here](#) to register.

- Thursday, October 1: Harvest to Lunchroom for Indiana Food Day
- Thursday, October 8: Prep Like a Pro: Knife Skills for School Kitchens
- Thursday, October 15: Slice, Dice & Serve: Vegetable Cutting Skills for School Meals
- Thursday, October 22: Mastering Fruit Prep: Cutting Techniques for K12 Foodservice
- Thursday, October 29: Making the Most of USDA Foods in School Kitchens
- Thursday, November 5: Stirring Up Success: Soups Kids Will Love

Questions? Contact [Cathy Powers](#) for additional information.

Speed Scratch Simplified Webinar

Join Chef Sam Cowens Gasbarro and Cathy Powers on Tuesday, September 29, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET for a free, interactive webinar on using core speed-scratch items to boost efficiency and menu flexibility. Learn practical ways to customize student-favorite recipes, add more vegetables and lean proteins, and create a restaurant-style experience in your cafeteria. Click [here](#) to register.

Upcoming Webinars

Check out the upcoming webinar list [here](#), as new events are added regularly. Click the link below for more details and to register.

- [Maximizing Direct Certification \(DC\)](#) - Thursday, September 10, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET

Back to School: Program Year (PY) 2027 Reminders and Resources

Start the new school year with important updates, reminders, and resources to support smooth operations in PY 2027. Join the Back to School session on Tuesday, September 15, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET for guidance on key requirements, timelines, and tools that help sponsors begin the year confidently. Click [here](#) to register.

Verification Series

This year's Verification Series provides focused sessions to support sponsors through each step of the verification process.

- **Verification for Cause** - Join us on Thursday, September 17, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET. to gain an understanding of Verification for Cause, including when it applies and how to review questionable applications such as zero-income, SNAP/TANF, foster, and other cases needing additional documentation. Click [here](#) to register.
- **Verification Preparation** - Join us on Thursday, September 24, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET to learn what verification is, review the annual timeline, and understand the different verification methods available to sponsors before Thursday, October 1. Click [here](#) to register.
- **Verification in Action** - Join us on Thursday, October 1, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET. as we walk through a full verification scenario step-by-step from selecting the sample and completing confirmation reviews to requesting documentation and using direct verification. Click [here](#) to register.

If there is a specific topic you would like to see covered, let us know by filling out [this form!](#)

Farm to School

IDOE, in partnership with the Indiana Grown for Schools Network, hosts and shares several webinars and events to support school nutrition programs. Stay up to date on the upcoming events page [here](#).

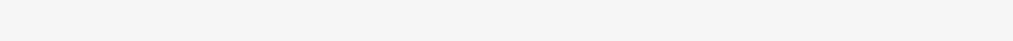
- [Farm to School Office Hours](#)- Wednesday, September 16, from 4 to 5 p.m. ET
- [Farm to School Office Hours](#)- Wednesday, October 7, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. ET
- [Farm to School Office Hours](#)- Wednesday, November 18, from 4 to 5 p.m. ET

Reminders

PrimeroEdge Opening for USDA Foods is Postponed

The transition from CNPweb to PrimeroEdge has been postponed. For the 2026-2027 school year, CNPweb will continue to be utilized for the Food Distribution Program (FDP) and USDA Foods. SFAs should complete all required FDP steps in CNPweb for FDP approval. See below:

1. The SFA's School Nutrition Program (SNP) application must be in Pending Approval status on the CNPweb SNP.
2. Then in CNPweb FDP, on the RA summary page, click the Applications tab and then click the Edit button. Be sure you are in PY 2027.
3. Verify and/or update the address and FDP contact sections are correct.
4. Scroll down to section 29, the Verification section, and click the box to the left. If you see the message in red below, your school still has steps to complete in the SNP portion of CNPweb:



5. If you do not see the above message, proceed and scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the submit button.
6. Once submitted, IDOE will receive this information, review, and approve the application.

Questions or technical requests can be submitted through the [CNPweb Help Form](#). PrimeroEdge training will resume later in the school year and will be announced via this newsletter.

Annual Nonprogram Food Revenue Requirement

The nonprogram food revenue (NFR) tool for PY 2027 must be completed by sponsors selling nonprogram foods such as adult meals, a la carte items, and catered foods. SFAs must ensure all nonprogram food revenue goes to the Nonprofit School Food Service Account (NSFSA) and does not subsidize reimbursable meals.

If the NFR tool shows additional funds are needed, nonprogram food prices must be increased or non-federal funds deposited into the account to cover the difference. Administrative reviews can detect incomplete or inaccurate data entered into the NFR tool as well as missing price adjustments or transfers (when required). These findings require immediate corrective action, sometimes including multi-year price increases.

To view the recorded webinar on NPR, click [here](#). Policies and a basic NPR tool can be found here but it is recommended to utilize the [Five Day Reference Period Nonprogram Revenue Tool](#). Contact SCN finance or your field specialist for additional questions or assistance.

Updates from Our Partners

Indiana School Food Summit

School nutrition professionals, cafeteria teams, school administrators, public health professionals, and others working to strengthen school food across Indiana are invited to the Indiana School Food Summit on Tuesday, October 13, at Pike High School in Indianapolis. Hosted by A Longer Table, this is a hands-on day of learning, cooking, and collaboration will explore culinary skills and scratch cooking, emerging nutrition research, school food policy, procurement and farm-to-school, breakfast, food safety, and more. Learn more, explore sessions, and register at [schoolfoodsummit.org](#).

2026 Indiana School Nutrition Association (ISNA) Annual Conference

School nutrition professionals from across Indiana will gather in South Bend for the 2026 ISNA Annual Conference, held Wednesday, November 4, through Friday, November 6. Guided by the theme, "Leading Together: Nourishing Communities, Empowering Futures", the event will feature engaging speakers, collaboration, and resources that support strong and healthy school nutrition programs. For more information, including the agenda and registration, click [here](#).

Revamping the Cafeteria Tray

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has announced a \$32.5 million initiative to help schools replace highly processed foods with nutrient-dense, real food. The Developing Evidence for Programs to Ensure Nutrition for Development (DEPEND) project, led by [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#) and [National Institute of Health \(NIH\)](#), will offer grants ranging from \$75,000 to \$2.5 million to support innovative approaches in areas such as food purchasing, workforce and food production, student demand, and operational improvements. More information is available [here](#), with applications expected to open in mid-September.

Upcoming Dates



Date	Event
Tuesday, September 29	Final Due Date for July Claim
Thursday, October 1	Verification Opens
Friday, October 30	Final Due Date for August Claim

Additional Resources

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