



## School Nutrition Programs

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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

#### Check-in with Your Field Specialist

Did you know that School Nutrition Program field specialists offer bi-weekly check-ins for food service directors and managers? These informative check-ins recap the weekly newsletters, offer critical program reminders, provide helpful resources, give virtual training on timely topics, and share success stories for making improvements in local school nutrition programs. For more information, contact your assigned field specialist.

### Important Updates

#### SP 03-2026: Incorporating Local Beef into Child Nutrition Program Meals

On Thursday, February 19, USDA released policy memo [SP 03-2026](#) addressing the recently published [USDA Plan to Fortify the American Beef Industry: Strengthening Ranches, Rebuilding Capacity, and Lowering Costs for Consumers](#). This plan outlines actions to protect the domestic beef industry and build supply and demand for American beef. SP 03-2026 addresses how Child Nutrition Programs can incorporate local beef into menus as a nutritious protein option, while also supporting American agriculture and farm-to-school initiatives.

For additional information and resources, view policy memo [SP 03-2026](#) or view the Local Meat in Schools Fact Sheet [here](#).

### Farm to School

#### Indiana Grown for Schools Map Update

The window is still open to update the [Indiana Farm to School and ECE Map](#)! This year, the Northeast Indiana Local Food Network and the Northwest Indiana Food Council are sponsoring a giveaway of four \$50 gift cards to those who participate. Winners will be selected at random. In order to be entered into the drawing, schools and childcare sites must submit one of the following by Saturday, February 28:

- Add a new Farm to School/Early Childcare Education Program to the map [here](#).
- Update existing information by submitting a new survey [here](#).
- Contact the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) [Farm to School team](#) if your information is accurately represented on the map and no change is necessary.

Thank you for your help ensuring the map is up-to-date and informative!

**Note:** To be entered into the drawing, you must answer "yes" to at least one related activity, and you must share at least two sentences in the overview section indicating how that activity is implemented at your site.

#### Local Procurement for Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Summer is the perfect time to bring in local products to your kitchen or cafeteria. All across the state of Indiana farmers are growing menu staples such as cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, and salad greens. Others are growing fruit favorites like melons and berries. Are you planning to participate in the Summer Food Service Program this summer? Join us to learn how to menu local products by partnering with a farmer in your area. Whether you want to host a one-time taste test event or continuously serve local produce each week through the summer, buying local products builds community relationships and supports your local farming economy. The webinar will be held Tuesday, March 3, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

### USDA Foods

#### Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program

As a reminder, schools must enter their DoD Program receipts into the [FFAVORS](#) within two calendar days after the produce is delivered to your school.

#### Direct Delivery "Order By" Reminder

As a reminder, schools must place USDA Foods Direct Delivery (Brown Box) orders in CNPweb by 10 a.m. ET the Monday of the week prior to the delivery period that your school would like to receive the delivery. Orders placed after 10 a.m. ET will not be accepted.

#### USDA Foods Cancellations for SY 2025-2026

100124 Turkey Chilled - Bulk (March 2026)  
100256 Frozen Strawberry Cups (January-September 2026)  
100309 Canned Carrots (Entire School Year)  
111900 Turkey Breast Deli (January-June 2026)

#### USDA Foods Recipe Ideas

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

- [Recipes for Healthy Kids](#)
- [Recipes for Schools - Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#)
- [Team Nutrition Recipes](#)

### Procurement

#### Procurement Information

Do you have questions about procurement click [here](#) or contact the [SCN Procurement mailbox](#) for assistance.

### Training and Webinar Opportunities

#### Upcoming Webinars

- SFSP/SSO Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service Info Series: Serving Up Sun Meals
  - RNC Meal Service: Home Delivery Option, Wednesday, March 4, at 2 p.m. ET
  - Best Practices & Outreach Strategies, Wednesday, March 11, 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

#### Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 Guidance

The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 was signed into law on Wednesday, January 14, expanding milk options to include whole milk, 2% reduced fat milk, 1% reduced fat milk, fat-free milk, lactose-free milk, and nondairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk and meet the USDA nutritional standards for fluid milk substitutes. Fluid milk may be unflavored or flavored and nonorganic or organic options. It is important to note that this law only applies to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), including the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. All other school nutrition programs, including the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and After School Snack Program (ASSP) are not included in this law.

Under the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025, a statement from a parent or caregiver is sufficient for a fluid milk substitute for the NSLP. For other school nutrition programs, if special milk and/or dietary accommodations are requested, a written statement from an authorized healthcare professional, including a registered dietitian, is required.

For further information and guidance, review policy memo [SP 01-2026](#).

#### SP 02-2026 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 – Eat Real Food

USDA released policy memo [SP 02-2026](#) on Wednesday, February 11, addressing the recent updates to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) and the potential impact on school meals. USDA notes that while there are no immediate changes to the child nutrition programs, child nutrition professionals should familiarize themselves with the key changes in the DGAs in anticipation of future updates to guidelines. Specifically, programs are encouraged to review their menus and ensure they are focused on promotion of nutrient-dense, whole foods. For more information, review policy memo [SP 02-2026](#) [here](#).

#### Virtual Culinary Skills Training

Culinary Skills for A+ School Meals, in partnership with the Indiana Department of Education, Division of School and Community Nutrition (IDOE/SCN), is offering a series of free, virtual interactive culinary skills training sessions for all K-12 school nutrition professionals. Training sessions are hosted on select Wednesdays from 2 to 3 p.m. ET.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### Updates from Our Partners

#### National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference Scholarship for Teachers & Volunteers

Indiana Farm Bureau sponsors teachers and volunteers to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference held annually in June. The scholarship includes the cost of a single, early-bird registration for the conference, up to four nights lodging at the conference hotel and a \$550 travel allowance. Meals are not included in the conference registration. Any additional or miscellaneous expenses will be the responsibility of the recipient. This scholarship is valued at approximately \$1,500. Learn more [here](#).

#### School Nutrition Association (SNA) 2025-2026 Celebration Calendar

If you have not already, take a moment to download SNA's Celebration Calendar! The Made with School Lunch Calendar is a resource that connects school meals to the different celebrations and observances throughout the year. This is a great tool for marketing school meals, promoting nutrition, and building excitement around the foods served in school. Some highlights of the calendar include National Pizza Week, World Kindness Week, and School Lunch Hero Day! Check out the calendar and download [here](#).

#### Reaching the Last Mile: Strategies for Serving Ultra-Rural Populations

This webinar, presented by No Kid Hungry, will explore the unique challenges faced by school nutrition professionals in serving ultra-rural populations. They will delve into the specific hurdles and success stories in these areas, often characterized by limited staffing and funding, and highlight the innovative strategies they employ to effectively reach and support these communities.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### Upcoming Dates



Monday, March 2	<a href="#">Final Due Date for December 2025 Claims</a>
Monday, March 2	First Day of National School Breakfast Week!
Tuesday, March 3	<a href="#">Local Procurement for SFSP</a>
Wednesday, March 4	<a href="#">RNC Meal Service: Home Delivery Option</a>
Wednesday, March 11	<a href="#">SFSP RNC - Best Practices &amp; Outreach Strategies</a>
Wednesday, April 1	<a href="#">Final Due Date for January 2026 Claims</a>



### Additional Resources

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

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