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School Nutrition Programs Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



Indiana Department of Education sent this bulletin at 11/27/2024 08:00 AM EST



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

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

New Hire Training Reminder

Staff who began working in the cafeteria after the start of the school year must receive USDA's [required number of training hours](#). These staff members must be civil rights trained and must receive job-specific training as it pertains to the child nutrition programs. Visit [IDOE's professional standards webpage](#) for additional information as well as view training in [Moodle](#) and the [Institute of Child Nutrition's iLearn training platform](#).

Important Updates

Office Closure

State of Indiana government offices will be closed Thursday, November 28, and Friday, November 29, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Training Needs Survey

Help IDOE plan for future training by sharing input on your needs by filling out this [survey](#), which will take fewer than five minutes to complete. We appreciate your input.

Updated: Team Nutrition's "Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast" Training Guide

Team Nutrition's "Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast" training guide has been updated to be consistent with the Final Rule, "[Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)." The final rule allows schools the option to offer grains, meats/meat alternates, or a combination of both at breakfast. This [20-page training guide](#) shows school nutrition professionals how to offer meats and meat alternates at school breakfast by providing menu planning ideas, crediting information, sample menus, and more.

Farm to School

We Want Your Feedback

Did you participate in Indiana Food Day or Indiana Apple Crunch? Please take a few minutes to complete the following feedback forms so we can build better promotional events next year. Find the Indiana Food Day survey [here](#), and the Indiana Apple Crunch survey [here](#).

USDA Fiscal Year (FY) Farm to School Grant Program

In FY 2025, the USDA will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the grant program. Each grant will help eligible entities implement farm to school programming that increases access to local food in eligible schools, connects children with agriculture for better health, and inspires youth to consider careers in agriculture. You can apply for \$5,000 to \$500,000 depending on your funding track. Find more information [here](#). Applications must be submitted by Friday, January 10, 2025.

USDA Foods

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Allocation Requests for School Year 2025-2026

The time has come to submit your school's allocation requests for next school year. Schools must complete the appropriate form that applies to your School Food Authority. The deadline for submission is Friday, December 13, at 5 p.m. ET. Remember that DoD allocations are deducted from your school's USDA Foods entitlement before the annual pre-order survey opens.

- Click [here](#) if your school is currently on the DoD Fresh Program for school year 2024-2025.
- Click [here](#) if your school is NOT currently on the DoD Fresh Program for school year 2024-2025.
- For more information on the DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program, please visit [IDOE's DoD Fresh Website](#) and/or view IDOE's three-part DoD series in [Moodle](#).

Holiday Breaks

Please remember to put a 24-hour access phone number under the Application tab in CNPweb and cross-reference your school calendars and personal calendars with your USDA Foods delivery periods under the Orders tab in FDP link in CNPweb. Schools must ensure that school staff is available to inspect, verify and accept all USDA Foods deliveries. Missed deliveries where school staff is unavailable could result in costs to the school for transportation, fuel, handling, and restocking fees.

Remember to Receipt in FFAVORS

Schools should be receipting their DoD produce receipts into FFAVORS within five calendar days after the produce delivery.

USDA Foods Recipes

Use your USDA [broccoli](#) and [cheddar cheese](#) to prepare this variation of [easy holiday broccoli casserole](#). This recipe must be adjusted to serving sizes and meal patterns.



Training and Webinar Opportunities

Verification Summary Report (VSR) Webinar

Join us for information on how to complete the VSR on Tuesday, December 3, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

Produce Safety University

Applications are now open for the 2025 [Produce Safety University](#). USDA Food and Nutrition Services in collaboration with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Services will host five PSU sessions: one virtual and four in-person sessions February through June. More information and application can be found [here](#).

Reminders

Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements

USDA has released an updated policy memo, [SP 05-2025_CACFP 04-2025_SFSP 02-2025_Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](#). The updated memo provides important information about acceptable manufacturer documentation for meal pattern contribution crediting information. Of note, the memo clarifies the difference between the date of authorization found on the CN label and the "Valid Until" date on the CN Label Verification Report. Additionally, the memo confirms the use of the CN Label Verification System to check if a CN label is valid. Additional USDA resources:

- [Manufacturer Documentation: Child Nutrition Labels and Product Formulation Statements](#)

- [Tip Sheet for Accepting Processed Product Documentation](#)
- [CN Label Verification Report](#)

Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meals Program - Updated Clarification

On November 1, 2024, FNS released [SP 04-2025, Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs](#). This memorandum clarifies the policy related to fees associated with electronic (online) payments in the school meal programs. The memo states that, effective school year (SY) 2027-2028, families with students eligible for reduced price meal benefits in the school meal programs must not be charged any fees for using electronic payment services in the school meal programs. This means that families with students eligible for reduced-price meal benefits are not required to pay any fees, even if the school offers an alternative payment option that normally doesn't require fees.

This policy is effective SY 2027-2028, or the school year immediately following the expiration of the SFA's current contract with a payment processing company, if the contract expires after SY 2027-2028. FNS is delaying implementation of this requirement to provide ample lead time to allow SFAs to modify current systems and/or establish new contracts. However, SFAs are encouraged to implement this requirement as soon as they are able and may use funds in the nonprofit school food service account to cover the fees under their current contract.

The following list provides additional clarification for schools that choose to provide electronic payment services.

1. SFAs must provide all families (including families paying the full price for school meals) a free and accessible method of making deposits to the student meal account.
2. SFAs must provide a method of making deposits to the student meal account that does not require computer access to meet the needs of families who do not have access to a computer, do not have a bank account, or who prefer to make their payment by other means. Common methods SFAs use for families to add money to their child(ren)'s meal account(s) that do not require computer access include accepting money (i.e., cash and checks) at the school office or allowing families to mail in checks.
3. SFAs must notify families of available payment options and any associated fees in ways that are easy to find and understand.
4. All families must have access to all payment methods made available by an SFA for adding money to their student(s)' meal account(s). Schools cannot discriminate against children receiving free or reduced price meals, including by limiting their options to pay for the cost of meals in comparison to the options available to other school children. For example, SFAs may not exclude families eligible for reduced price meals from using electronic payment services.

National School Lunch Week Scrapbook

Thanks to those sponsors that submitted photos! So many great ideas and fun across the state. Check out the scrapbook [here](#).

Updates from Our Partners

Health Meals Incentives (HMI) Recognition Awards Informational Webinar

[The HMI Recognition Awards](#) recognize and share best practices from school food authorities (SFA) who made operational changes to improve the nutritional quality of their school meals, as well as SFAs who engage students and families in nutrition education and in the planning and preparation of nutritious school meals. SFAs meeting Recognition Award criteria will receive national and local recognition, as well as an awardee toolkit that includes digital assets, and travel stipends to attend a national Healthy Meals Summit.

Register [here](#) for a webinar on Tuesday, December 10, that will provide information about eligibility, the application process, technical assistance, and more.

'Milk is Local' Kit from American Dairy Association Indiana

Did you know that fresh dairy milk is the one of the most local products that you serve to your students? With an average of 48 hours from farm to cafeteria, the milk that you serve daily is not only local, but fresh. Join the American Dairy Association Indiana in amplifying this message with our 'Milk is Local' Kit. Use the pieces to share the milk is local message to your students while also encouraging them to choose this nutrient dense option for each meal. Turn your cafeteria into a classroom! Order your kit [here](#).

Project SCALES Grant

As part of [USDA's Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative](#), Project SCALES (Supporting Community Agriculture and Local Education Systems) is funding partnership grants that strengthen school meals programs, from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. To apply, you'll need a team of at least three partners, which must include a school food authority and a food industry partner, along with farmers, producers,

distributors, and other organizations. To learn more and apply, visit projectscales.com. The request for applications (RFA) will close on Friday, December 13.

Upcoming Dates



Thursday, November 28, and Friday, November 29	State of Indiana government offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday
Tuesday, December 3, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	VSR webinar
Tuesday, December 10	HMI recognition awards informational webinar. Register here .
Friday, December 13	Project SCALES RFA closes
Friday, December 13, at 5 p.m. ET	Deadline to submit DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program allocation requests for the 2025-2026 school year
January 10, 2025	Application deadline for FY 2025 Farm to School Grants
January 15, 2025	VSR due

Additional Resources

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

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Department News

- 11/12/24 Intentional Investments in Summer Math and Reading Support Show Return on Investment for Students
- 11/08/24 Indiana Schools Recognized for Commitment to Service Members, Veterans and Families

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