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School Nutrition Programs Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



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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

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Pattern and Pre-Kindergarten (PK) Meals

PK students who are not co-mingled with kindergarten through grade five students must be served the [CACFP meal pattern](#) that corresponds to their age. Co-mingled is defined as serving meals to preschool and kindergarten through grade five students in the same service area at the same time. Schools where students are co-mingled may choose to follow the grade-appropriate meal patterns for each grade group, or serve the kindergarten through grade five meal pattern to all. This follows guidance of USDA policy memo [SP37-2017](#).

Important Updates

Comment Period Extended: Summer EBT and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs Interim Final Rule

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is extending the public comment period on the interim final rule, "Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs," published in the Federal Register on December 29, 2023. This action extends the public comment deadline from Monday, April 29, to Tuesday, August 27, to give the public additional time to prepare and submit comments.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 requires the Secretary of Agriculture to make available to states an option to provide summer meals for non-congregate meal service in rural areas with no congregate meal service and to establish a permanent summer electronic benefits transfer for children program (Summer EBT) for the purpose of ensuring continued access to food when school is not in session for the summer.

This interim final rule amends the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option (SSO) regulations to codify the flexibility for rural program operators to provide non-congregate meal service in the SFSP and SSO, collectively referred to as the summer meal programs. This rule also establishes regulations and codifies the Summer EBT Program in the Code of Federal Regulations.

USDA's FNS invites interested persons to submit written comments on this interim final rule. Comments may be submitted in writing by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- Mail: Send comments to Community Meals Policy Division, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314.

All written comments submitted in response to this interim final rule will be included in the record and will be made available to the public. Please be advised that the substance of the comments and the identity of the individuals or entities submitting the comments will be subject to public disclosure. USDA will make the written comments publicly available [here](#).

Indiana SUN Bucks

SUN Bucks Office Hours

IDOE will host SUN Bucks office hours for school employees on Friday, April 19, at 10 a.m. ET to review common questions and answer any new questions. [Click here](#) to join.

SUN Bucks Application Now Available

The [online SUN Bucks application](#) is now open. IDOE will accept and process these applications at the state level. Please keep in mind the following when directing households to the online application.

- Only those who are **not** qualified for free or reduced price meal benefits need to submit the online SUN Bucks application. Please ensure those that you have as qualified for free or reduced status know they should not complete the online application. We are seeing many applications for households who appear to already be automatically enrolled.
- This qualification is based on current year information. For Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) students, either a current year direct certification (DC) status or an approved alternate income application will qualify them to be automatically eligible for SUN Bucks.

SUN Bucks Address Changes

Thanks to those who have already notified households about their SUN Bucks eligibility. IDOE has directed households to ensure that the address filed at their school is correct. Please continue updating student information in Data Exchange (DEX) through Tuesday, April 30. IDOE will pull an enrollment report in early May to issue the first round of SUN Bucks benefit cards. After Tuesday, April 30, schools can direct households to the [SUN Bucks help form](#). Review the [communication plan for schools](#) for address update notification language and graphics for social media or newsletter communications.

SUN Bucks Data Collection - Share with Data Teams

IDOE will gather data for the first round of Indiana SUN Bucks card distribution from school enrollment reports submitted through DEX. Households will receive a SUN Bucks EBT card for each eligible student at the address included in the enrollment report. Schools should ask households to ensure their mailing address is updated with the school by Wednesday, May 1. Please make sure DEX Enrollment Reports are updated and pushed to IDOE by the end of the day on Wednesday, May 1. This will capture updates to the system before the first round of cards are issued. After Tuesday, April 30, please direct households to IDOE's [help form](#) to update addresses.

SUN Bucks Contact

Please designate a SUN Bucks contact for your school/corporation. This person does not have to be the food service director, but needs to be reasonably available throughout the summer in the event that questions surrounding eligibility, enrollment, or custody arrangement situations arise. Complete contact designation form [here](#).

USDA Foods

End of School Year Reminders Video

This [video](#) is a useful reminder to schools about tasks that need to be completed before summer break. IDOE will sweep all Direct Delivery (Brown Box) USDA Foods remaining in school inventories in CNPweb as of Monday, July 1.

SY 2023-2024 Direct Delivery USDA Foods Allocations Ended

Direct Delivery USDA Foods allocations into SFA inventories have ended and all deliveries to warehouses are completed for SY 2023-2024. SFAs can continue to order through the Monday of the week before the school's last delivery period, on or before Sunday, June 30. Any USDA Foods remaining in school inventories after Sunday, June 30 will be swept and transferred to surplus.

SY 2024-2025 USDA Foods Direct Delivery Warehouses

IDOE has executed new contracts with two warehouses for SY 2024-2025. Dilgard Frozen Foods will cover the counties in northeastern region and Stanz-Troyers Foodservice will cover the remaining counties in the state. Click [here](#) for a map and list of county and regional assignments.

USDA Frozen Broccoli Cancelled

USDA Foods frozen broccoli 110473 has been cancelled for the remainder of SY 2023-2024. IDOE will not receive any more of this item for this school year. Allocations of this product should resume in SY 2024-2025. Please plan your menus accordingly.



USDA Foods Recipes

Two Indiana schools are finalists in JTM Food Group's [2024 Crave Fan Favorite Finalists Contest](#). Floyd County Schools' recipe is Beef Pot Roast Bites, using beef, veggies, and gravy.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis' St. Lawrence School's recipe is Cajun Chicken Pasta, which has diced chicken, veggies, and pasta. Both recipes can be made with USDA Foods and must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



Training and Webinar Opportunities

Back to School Training: IN the Mix, Prepped for Success

IDOE is happy to announce the return of in-person back to school training. All food service personnel are invited to attend this day-long session in preparation for the 2024-2025 school year.

- When: Wednesday, July 10, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET
- Where: Renaissance Indianapolis North Hotel, Carmel, Indiana
- 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, with learning tracks by job duties, [here](#). Attendees will receive credit toward annual professional standards training hours. Lunch will be provided for attendees through the support of the American Dairy Association, Indiana.
- [Register here](#). Please ensure each attendee has registered.

The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) will present pre-conference training opportunity for managers and directors on Tuesday, July 9. Managing Personalities and Conflict will be from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. ET at the Carmel-Clay Education Service Center. Learn more and register [here](#).

Spring Webinars from IDOE

- End of Year Updates and Reminders: Join us for important reminders and updates to help wrap up your school year and prepare for the next school year. Thursday, May 2, at 1 p.m. ET - [register here](#).
- Professional Standards: This webinar will cover best practices for annual professional standards training requirements for all school nutrition professionals and discuss hiring standards for new school nutrition program directors. Thursday, May 9, at 2 p.m. ET - [register here](#)
- Wellness Policies: Join us to discuss the ins and outs of wellness policies with tips on outreach and organizing a wellness committee for the next school year. Thursday, May 16, at 2 p.m. ET - [register here](#)

Reminders

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Election Period Open Through Sunday, June 30

CEP applications are now being accepted. CEP schools agree to serve both breakfast and lunch to all students free of charge. The qualifying school's meal reimbursement reflects the percentage of identified students (students who are directly certified for free meals). A school district may implement community eligibility in any school or group of schools where 25% or more of the student population is directly certified. However, the district should conduct a thorough financial analysis based on anticipated claiming percentages prior to deciding to opt into CEP.

Additional information, including the school year (SY) 2024-2025 application, is available on the [CEP website](#). Determination of eligibility must be made using Direct Certification and enrollment data collected at the beginning of April. The application deadline to participate in CEP for SY 2024-2025 is Sunday, June 30. A validation of the submitted information will take place prior to final approval. Contact your assigned school nutrition programs field specialist with any questions.

Innovate School Food Grant Opportunities

Illinois Public Health Institute's Lake Michigan Innovation Hub will provide grants through two Request for Applications (RFAs) to spark innovation and strengthen the Lake Michigan kindergarten through grade 12 food system, improving schools' access to nutritious, local, and culturally relevant products. The RFAs close Tuesday, April 30.

- Spark Awards: Funding for projects that need a short-term infusion of funds for school food system and marketplace improvements, such as capacity-building, planning, and product testing projects. Amount: \$10,000 - \$75,000

- Innovation Collaborative Awards: Funding for projects that promote systems-level change of the school food system and marketplace, such as scaling up of programs, regional partnerships, or new program or product development and integration. Amount: \$250,000

Find more information [here](#).

Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) and USDA are recognizing and celebrating school food authorities (SFAs) who have made operational changes to improve the nutritional quality of their school meals, as well as those who engage students and families in nutrition education and school meals. If you've made changes to your school recipes and menus or engaged students in menu planning and nutrition education, you may qualify for a [Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Award](#). AFHK has made the application process easier and faster. Awardees will receive national and local recognition, including a stipend to attend an exclusive national Healthy Meals Summit in Las Vegas. This recognition award is on-going to June 30, 2025. Congratulations Portage Township Schools Corporation as a recent Recognition Award winner!

Updates from Our Partners

Youth Adolescent Physical Activity (YAPA) Grant Application Now Open

The Indiana Department of Health's (IDOH) Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (DNPA) has released the 2024-2025 YAPA grant application. This one-year grant is focused on providing physical activity and physical education opportunities for youth and adolescents six through 17 years of age, kindergarten through grade 12, in the classroom, school, and before or after school program settings. Schools and youth-serving organizations are eligible to apply by Friday, May 17, at 5 p.m. ET. [Click here](#) to join IDOH's DNPA virtual office hours on Wednesday, May 1, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. ET to answer any questions. Please contact IDOH's [Emma Smythe](#) with any questions.

Upcoming Dates



Thursday, April 25, at 10 a.m. ET	Maintenance of the Non-Profit School Food Service Account (Fund 0800)
Tuesday, April 30	Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub Application Deadline
Tuesday, April 30, 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET	Session 3: Trauma-Informed Nutrition Security for Indiana Schools
Wednesday, May 1, at 5 p.m. ET	Food Education Fellowship Office Hour
Thursday, May 2, at 1 p.m. ET	End of Year Updates and Reminders
Thursday, May 9, at 2 p.m. ET	Professional Standards
Thursday, May 16, at 2 p.m. ET	Wellness Policies
Friday, May 24	FSD 101 Registration Deadline
Monday, May 27	Food Education Fellowship Application Deadline
Tuesday, June 18, and Wednesday, June 19	Farm to School and ECE Symposium
Wednesday, July 10, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET	IN the Mix: Back to School Training
Tuesday, August 27	Summer EBT Final Rule Comments Extended Deadline

Additional Resources

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

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Department News

- 04/23/24 State of Indiana Launches SUN Bucks
- 04/11/24 Indiana Launches New Tools to Understand and Support Kindergarten Readiness

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