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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

Direct Certification - Medicaid

IDOE has received questions about students losing their direct certification (DC) status this new school year even though they were previously approved for free or reduced meals due to Medicaid. Beginning April 2023, the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) began rolling back Medicaid-coverage due to pandemic-related eligibility provisions. This was a 12-month process. During that time, a household might have been DC at the start of the 2023-2024 school year due to Medicaid, but within the same year, lost their Medicaid coverage or reported updated information on their Medicaid application that no longer met the USDA income guidelines for free and reduced meals. Households should be reminded that they can always complete an income application if they feel they still qualify for benefits. To help communicate how Medicaid works with free and reduced eligibility determinations, refer to Medicaid Frequently Asked Questions for Parents in English and Spanish on IDOE's [Free and Reduced Benefits Fact Sheets & Training webpage](#).

Important Updates

National School Lunch Week

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) serves nearly 30 million children every school day. President John F. Kennedy created National School Lunch Week (NSLW) in 1962 to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child's life and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom. #NSLW24, "School Lunch Pirates - Find Your Treasure!" will be celebrated Monday, October 14, through Friday, October 18. Access activity guides, coloring pages, marketing and community resources, and playlists [here](#).

Revised Whole Grain Resource

The [Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#) has been revised to reflect the Final Rule, "[Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)." It is a must-have resource for anyone involved in planning school meals. This important resource provides examples of various grain products often served in schools and walks through the process of determining whether products are whole grain-rich, creditable as enriched, or not creditable. The Spanish-translated version will be available soon.

Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast Guide Updated

Check out USDA's [Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast Guide](#) for information on how to identify sources of added sugars, ways to reduce added sugars in school breakfast meals, and ideas for

connecting with families and caregivers about added sugars. This document was recently updated to reflect the meal pattern changes with the final rule.

Indiana SUN Bucks

Streamline Certified (Auto-Enrolled) Cards Have Been Expunged

Federal regulations required that SUN Bucks benefits be removed from EBT cards 122 days after the card was issued to the household. Households that were automatically issued SUN Bucks cards due to direct certification or through an application approved by the school during the 2023-2024 school year have now hit the 122 day period, and funds have been removed. There are unfortunately no waivers or flexibilities for those that never received their cards due to incorrect address information or other data issues. Please direct households to the [SUN Bucks Help Portal](#) if they have additional questions.

Farm to School

Indiana Grown for Schools All-Network Meeting

Join the Indiana Grown for Schools Network's meeting on Thursday, September 26, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET to help shape the future of Farm to School in Indiana. During this session, we will discuss successes, challenges, and priorities for increasing local foods, fostering school gardens, and integrating nutrition and agriculture education in your classrooms and statewide. Learn more and register [here](#).

USDA Foods

Login.gov Account Required to Access Department of Defense Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (DoD FFAVORS)

All DoD FFAVORS external users must have a Login.gov account to access FFAVORS before Monday, September 30, per USDA. Access the [Login.gov website](#) and click the "Sign in with LOGIN.GOV" button. If you need assistance, contact the [FFAVORS Help Desk](#).

DoD Fresh Produce Orders and Receipting

School food authorities (SFAs) placing orders must receipt in FFAVORS within five days of receiving DoD orders.

Program Year (PY) 2025 for USDA Foods Now Open

Schools can now access the Food Distribution Program (FDP) link in CNPweb to recertify, review their 2024-2025 annual pre-order forecast survey, and place direct delivery USDA Foods orders.

Recertifying the FDP and USDA Foods

Login to [CNPweb](#) and navigate to FDP.

- Read the update and message screen, then scroll to the bottom and click "continue."
- Click "Program Year 2025" in the upper-right corner.
- Go to the applications tab and click the "Edit" link.
- Verify and/or update the address and contact information.
- Ensure that a 24-hour access phone number (such as a mobile phone number) is entered.
- Scroll down to box 29 in the verification section and place a checkmark in the box.
- Click the submit button, and your account should be pending approval.
- IDOE will approve your account if all requirements are met.

If your account has the following message, "You do not currently have a NSLP information sheet for Program Year 2025 in a Pending Approval or Approved status. You must complete the enrollment process for the National School Lunch Program before your FDP information sheet can be Certified and Approved," your school still has tasks that need to be completed under SNP.

Placing USDA Foods Orders

Direct delivered (Brown Box) USDA Foods orders must be placed in [CNPweb](#). Click [here](#) for the link to the direct delivered USDA Foods ordering instructions. USDA Foods for processing must be ordered via a distributor and must be monitored and managed through the [K12 Foodservice](#) and [Processorlink](#) commodity tracking systems. DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program orders must be placed, and funds must be managed and monitored in [FFAVORS](#).

USDA Foods Recipes

Use your USDA sliced or diced pears for [baked pears with oatmeal crisp topping](#). This recipe must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



Training and Webinar Opportunities

Fall Culinary Skills for School Meals Webinar Series

Chef Cathy Powers and her team will be offering free, interactive culinary education for all K-12 school nutrition professionals. Virtual training is provided from 2 to 3 p.m. ET, featuring live chef demonstrations of practical recipes, efficient techniques, and important nutritional insights. Each class earns one Continuing Education Unit (CEU) and includes great giveaways. Click the title of the sessions below to see more details and to register.

- Thursday, September 19 - [Grab and Go Salads](#)
- Thursday, September 26 - [Indiana Food Day/Farm to School](#)
- Thursday, October 10 - [Knife Skills - Basics](#)
- Thursday, October 17 - [Knife Skills - Cutting Vegetables](#)
- Thursday, October 24 - [Knife Skills - Cutting Fruit](#)
- Thursday, October 31 - [Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Hot Dishes](#)
- Thursday, November 7 - [Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Chilled Dishes](#)
- Thursday, November 14 - [Super Simple Sauces](#)

Did you miss any of the previous Culinary Skills for School Meals Webinars from earlier this year? Click any of the links [here](#) to view the recording.

Final Rule: Updates for Child Nutrition Programs Webinar

Learn more about USDA's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) final rule titled, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* during a webinar discussing updates to nutrition standards, menu flexibilities, and administrative and operational changes. This will be a repeat presentation of what was presented during the Back-to-School Training on July 10, 2024.

When: Thursday, September 12, at 1 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

Updated Registration Link for Meal Talk: Reducing Sugars in School Meals

USDA's FNS Team Nutrition initiative is hosting a webinar, **Meal Talk: Reducing Sugars in School Meals**, on Thursday, September 12, from 3 to 4 p.m. ET. The webinar will highlight strategies to reduce added sugars to meet the upcoming added sugar limits for school meals starting in school year 2025-2026. Register [here](#).

Verification Webinar Series

- Verification Methods
 - Tuesday, September 24, at 2 p.m. ET. [Register here](#).
 - Programs that can select their own verification method may join this session to learn about each option.
- Verification Preparation
 - Thursday, September 19, at 2 p.m. ET. [Register here](#).
 - Repeat Session: Thursday, September 26, at 2 p.m. ET. [Register here](#).

Reminders

2024 Annual Financial Report (AFR)

The 2024 AFR is currently under construction in CNPweb for additional updates to the report. These updates have affected previous years AFRs and will not allow a sponsor to submit an old AFR for approval. Please refrain from editing previous years' AFRs until further notice. Sponsors are still able to view previous years' AFRs using the view function, but should not be edited, as this will result in an error. IDOE will share additional information once the 2024 AFR is opened in CNPweb. Contact scnfinance@doe.in.gov with questions regarding the 2024 AFR.

SUN Bucks Phone Line Closed

Due to the end of the 2024 SUN Bucks Program, the call center phone line has been closed. Households can still reach out through the [SUN Bucks Help Portal](#) with questions or concerns.

As a reminder, funds are expunged 122 days after cards are initially issued to households. For issued cards that did not arrive or for households reporting an incorrect address, the issuance period is unfortunately not able to be extended.

The 2025 SUN Bucks Program will open next spring. To ensure households receive SUN Bucks cards to the correct address next year, please advertise the need for correct address information at the school-level by April 30, 2025.

Updates from Our Partners

Indiana School Nutrition Association (ISNA) 2024 Annual Conference

Register today for the 2024 ISNA Annual Conference! This year's conference will be held Wednesday, November 6, through Friday, November 8, at the Century Center in South Bend. ISNA has a great lineup of presenters and looks forward to reconnecting in person with colleagues from across the state. To view the agenda and register, visit the [ISNA conference website](#). Early bird registration ends Friday, September 20.

Strategies to Increase Attendance: School Meals and Food Security

Alliance for a Healthier Generation is hosting a panel discussion on Wednesday, September 18, at 1 p.m. ET to share how supporting students and families experiencing food insecurity can impact chronic absenteeism. Participants will explore how schools and districts can support nutrition security through school-based programs and additional food supports.

This session is a part of Healthier Generation's Thought Leadership Series, "Every Day Counts: A Holistic Approach to Increasing School Attendance."

Register for the panel session [here](#).

Upcoming Dates



Thursday, September 19, at 2 p.m. ET	Verification Preparation webinar
Thursday, September 19, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Grab and Go Salads
Tuesday, September 24, at 2 p.m. ET	Verification Methods webinar
Thursday, September 26, at 2 p.m. ET	Verification Preparation webinar
Thursday, September 26, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Indiana Food Day/Farm to School
Thursday, September 26, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET	Indiana Grown for Schools All-Network Meeting
Monday, September 30	Deadline to activate Login.gov account for DoD FFAVORS
Thursday, October 10, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Knife Skills - Basics
Thursday, October 17, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Knife Skills - Cutting Vegetables
Thursday, October 24, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Knife Skills - Cutting Fruit

Thursday, October 31, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Hot Dishes
Wednesday, November 6, through Friday, November 8	ISNA Annual Conference
Thursday, November 7, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Chilled Dishes
Thursday, November 14, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Super Simple Sauces

Additional Resources

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

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Department News

- 09/06/24 Third Annual Red Carpet Event Celebrates Indiana's Top Schools and Educators
- 09/04/24 Indiana Department of Education Announces Indiana Teacher of the Year Top Three Finalists

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