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School Nutrition Programs Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



Indiana Department of Education sent this bulletin at 07/17/2024 04:00 PM EDT



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

Health Department Notification

Each sponsor must notify the local health department of their program operations annually. IDOE has a [notification letter template](#) that schools can use to fulfill this requirement. To use this template, either make a copy in Google or download the document in your preferred format.

Important Updates

Direct Certification (DC) Now Open

CNPweb program year 2025 is now open for Direct Certification only. Sponsors can begin to pull DC matches for the upcoming school year. See IDOE's [DC Webpage](#) for updated instructions. The PY 2025 renewal application is not yet open. Your patience is appreciated as the system is updated.

Equipment Grant Update

Thank you to everyone who applied for IDOE's 2023 Equipment Grant. Funding was not available for every project requesting support. Schools will be notified whether or not they have been awarded the grant by Friday, July 26. USDA recently announced their 2024 equipment grant information. Additional details will be announced this fall and more information is available [here](#). Other equipment grant opportunities may be available through [No Kid Hungry \(NKH\)](#) and [American Dairy Association](#). Contact SCNfinance@doe.in.gov with any questions. Please include your sponsor number and Equipment Grant in the subject line.

Indiana SUN Bucks

SUN Bucks Updates

Automatic Eligibility

- Students who were individually approved for free or reduced meals during the 2023-2024 school year should have received their SUN Bucks cards by now.
- Cards were shipped to "auto-enrolled" students beginning Wednesday, May 15.
- Households expecting to receive a card that did not might have had an issue with the data or address on file.

Address Updates

- Address change submissions are being processed in the order they were received.

- IDOE's School Nutrition team is currently processing submissions from early June.
- Households can expect their card to arrive three to four weeks after their address has been updated.
- IDOE is working to automate this process to increase efficiency.

Applications

- IDOE's School Nutrition team is processing applications. Households can expect their card(s) to arrive three to four weeks after their application has been approved.

Farm to School

Local Foods for Schools (LFS) Extended

The Indiana Department of Health and the Indiana Grown for Schools Network are excited to share that USDA's LFS program has been extended for the 2024-2025 school year. LFS supports the purchase of locally grown and produced products to benefit economically and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, with distribution to schools free of charge. Qualifying sites have a 50% or higher Free and Reduced Lunch rate or are operating the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Currently participating schools do not need to reapply. Contact [Brianna Goode](#) with any questions or for more information.

Farm to School Month Opportunities

We are continuing to gear up for Food Day and Apple Crunch to celebrate Farm to School Month this October. This year we are celebrating pumpkins on Food Day. If you have not already signed up for Food Day, you can do so [here](#) to access the newly released Growing Toolkit for Pumpkins. Apple Crunch [registration](#) is also open. We look forward to celebrating with you all.

USDA Foods

Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs) and School Food Authorities (SFAs)

[This video](#) shares information about the roles of FSMCs, SFAs, and their collaboration to use USDA Foods efficiently.

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Orders and Receipting

Returning school sponsors that participated in the DoD program in school year 2023-2024 and have allocated funds for school year 2024-2025 can begin placing orders immediately in the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS). Schools new to DoD in school year 2024-2025 must await approval from USDA/DoD. IDOE will update sponsors new to DoD once accounts are approved.

PY 2025 for USDA Foods

PY 2025 has been hidden until the school year opens in July 2024. IDOE will notify schools via this newsletter when it is available.

USDA Foods for Processing

SFAs that have allocated pounds to processors for school year 2024-2025 should check [K12Foodservice](#) and [ProcessorLink](#) to see if pounds have been uploaded to their accounts. Ordering may begin once pounds are loaded. SFAs should remember to use carryover pounds first once they rollover.

USDA Foods Recipes

Use your USDA ground beef (100158) or beef crumbles (100134) for a delicious variation of [Cheeseburger Sliders](#). This recipe must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



Training and Webinar Opportunities

Free and Reduced Training Series

Free and reduced meal benefits processors must be trained annually. The following training series will meet the requirement for processors:

- [Eligibility Disclosure](#) - Wednesday, July 24, at 2 p.m. ET.
- [Verification for Cause](#) - Tuesday, July 30, at 10 a.m. ET.

- [Processing Possible DC Matches](#) - Thursday, August 1, at 11 a.m. ET.
- [DC Basics](#) (Repeat) - Tuesday, August 6, at 10 a.m. ET.
- [Processing Free and Reduced Applications](#) (Repeat) - Wednesday, August 7, at 2 p.m. ET.

Reminders

Change for Spend Down Plan Guidance

With the new NSLP program year comes a new fiscal year. The required excess fund balance for the Nonprofit School Food Service Account has been **increased** from the three-month average operating cost to the six-month average operating cost. This means a spend down plan will only be required from this point forward, including the PY 2024 Annual Financial Report, if the ending balance exceeds the six-month average operating cost. The six-month average operating cost is calculated by:

$$\text{Total Food Service Operating Expenses} / \text{Number of Operating Months} = \text{Average Monthly Expenses}$$

$$\text{Average Monthly Expense} \times 6 = \text{Six Month Average Operating Cost}$$

If the ending balance exceeds the six-month average operating cost, a spend-down plan is required. All costs must be specific to food service and some costs have stipulations to be considered allowable. Reach out to your IDOE field specialist for guidelines on allowable expenses, requirements, and sufficient supporting documentation. Additional guidance can be found in the [Spend Down Plan Ideas for Excess Fund Balance](#) resource.

Annual Financial Report (AFR) Delays Expected

The 2024 AFR is expected to have a delayed opening date this year as we are working with our vendor to update the report in CNPweb. Please watch this newsletter for updates and additional information. Once the report is open in CNPweb, IDOE will hold weekly webinars to review the updates and required information for the AFR. Dates and times for the webinars will be forthcoming. If you have any additional questions, please contact SCNFinance@doe.in.gov and include your sponsor number and "AFR" in the subject line.

Nutrient Analysis Software Updates

State agencies, school food authorities (SFAs), and local schools should verify with their nutrient analysis software company that the software includes the most current version, CN27, of the [Child Nutrition Database \(CNDB\)](#). To maintain USDA approval, software companies were required to update their nutrient analysis software to include CN27 and submit certification of compliance software to the USDA Software Evaluation Team by July 9. Instructions for submitting software to USDA were provided directly to software companies.

Upcoming Dates



Wednesday, July 24, at 2 p.m. ET	Eligibility Disclosure
Tuesday, July 30, at 10 a.m. ET	Verification for Cause
Thursday, August 1, at 11 a.m. ET	Processing Possible DC Matches
Tuesday, August 6, at 10 a.m. ET	DC Basics (repeat)
Wednesday, August 7, at 2 p.m. ET	Processing Free and Reduced Applications (repeat)
Tuesday, August 27	Summer EBT Final Rule Comments Extended Deadline

Additional Resources

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



Department News

- **07/17/24** 2024 ILEARN Results Released
- **06/27/24** Indiana Leaders Continue To Seek Feedback on the Future of High School Diplomas
- **06/11/24** Updates to Indiana GPS Provide Educators and Families with Additional Tools to Improve Outcomes for Students
- **06/05/24** Indiana Leaders Continue Listening to Stakeholder Feedback to Improve the High School Experience

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