



## School Nutrition Programs

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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

#### Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Notification for Households

Helping parents understand how meals are served at school is vital to program success. Sponsors should notify households of the use of OVS in cafeterias. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has helpful notification resources in both English and Spanish, which can be found [here](#).

### Important Updates

#### Reminder! August Claim Due Date

August claims are due on Thursday, October 30. To view the 2025-2026 list of claim processing dates, click [here](#).

#### Smart Snacks Exempt Fundraiser Survey

IDOE is looking for feedback regarding the annual limit on Smart Snacks exempt fundraisers. We want feedback from stakeholders about the current limit of two per building per year, along with ideas for best practices for tracking non-compliant food-based fundraisers. The survey is open now through Friday, December 19. Feel free to share with stakeholders who may not receive this newsletter. Click [here](#) to respond.

#### National School Lunch Week Scrapbook Submissions

Share your fun ideas and promotions from National School Lunch Week! IDOE will compile a scrapbook with school submissions. Please submit your photos with the school name and description to [Gretchen Huntzer](#) by Friday, October 31. Remember that photos of children's faces cannot be submitted without media release information on file.

#### M.C.I. Foods, Inc. Recall of Ready-To-Eat Breakfast Burrito and Wrap Products Does Not Affect USDA Foods

M.C.I. Foods Inc. has recalled thousands of pounds of frozen breakfast burritos and wraps over possible [listeria](#) contamination. USDA reports that the products subject to this recall were not part of food provided by the USDA for the National School Lunch Program. Some products may have been distributed to schools through commercial sales. The individually packaged and bulk packed frozen breakfast burritos and wraps were produced between September 17, 2025, and October 14, 2025. To view the full recall announcement click [here](#).

### Farm to School

#### Thanks for a Great Farm to School Month!

That's a wrap on Farm to School Month 2025! Great work to all of those that participated in some way and helped educate students about locally grown food. If you have completed your Food Day activities, please take some time to fill out the [Food Day Feedback Survey](#). Don't forget to submit photos to the Farm to School Month scrapbook at [F2S@doe.in.gov](mailto:F2S@doe.in.gov). We are grateful in advance for your time and feedback!

#### Tonight: School Garden to Cafeteria Webinar

The School Garden Support Organization is holding a webinar tonight that will explore how to build a vibrant garden-to-cafeteria culture that connects students, staff, and the wider school community through fresh, school-grown produce. Two teachers from Attica, NY, will highlight strategies for engaging students in growing food, collaborating with cafeteria staff, and involving families and community partners in celebrating the harvest. The webinar will be Wednesday, October 29, at 5:30 p.m. ET. More information and registration can be found [here](#).

#### Coming Soon: Greenhouses, Crop Covers, and Other Season Extension Tools for Schools

IDOE will host Greenhouses, Crop Covers, and Other Season Extension Tools for Schools. Three panelists will share their experience with greenhouses and discuss how schools can utilize them while working with what they have to extend their growing season. Save the date for Tuesday, November 19, from 4 to 5 p.m. ET. Registration on [The Learning Lab](#) is coming soon!

#### School Highlights

##### Plainfield Community Schools

The Plainfield Imagination Lab has a greenhouse and garden boxes for students to utilize throughout the school year and during summer programs. In August, they had a theme, "Planting Healthy Habits." All students got to plant seeds in the greenhouse and sample cucumbers, tomatoes, and basil. This year, they began working with the Plainfield Community School Corporation Food Service Department. Due to this partnership, Clarks Creek Elementary School was able to serve school-grown cucumbers in the cafeteria. See the photo of the student enjoying fresh cucumbers from the garden.



##### Fort Wayne Public Schools

This year, Fort Wayne Public Schools planted a Rainbow Garden featuring tomatoes, carrots, kohlrabi, kale, long beans, nasturtiums, and a variety of peppers (pictured here). The harvest became part of their library education programs, where children had the chance to taste homegrown produce and see first hand how food grows. In addition, they brought in locally grown berries for students to enjoy as part of their lunch. These are just some of the amazing local features Fort Wayne Public Schools has had.



### USDA Foods

#### Be Sure Your School Food Authority (SFA) is Placing USDA Foods Orders

Remember USDA Foods can reduce your school's food budget by 15 to 20%. In order to benefit from USDA Foods, you must place orders for delivery to your school.

- Instructions for placing orders for direct delivered USDA Foods can be found [here](#).
- For USDA Foods for Processing, you will need to manage and monitor them in the commodity tracking websites, [K12 Foodservice](#) and/or [ProcessorLink](#). To order USDA Foods for Processing, a distributor must be selected in the commodity tracking website and orders placed via the distributor website.
- Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program orders are placed via the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System ([FFAVORS](#)).

#### 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.

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

100309 Canned Carrots (Entire School Year)  
100256 Frozen Strawberry Cups (January - September 2026)

#### Check Your Expire and Close Dates Regularly

Expire Date	Close Date
It is the latest date that direct delivered (brown box) USDA Foods must be <b>delivered</b> to SFA to avoid excess storage fees.	The latest date a USDA Food can remain an SFA's inventory before it is swept and placed into surplus for redistribution to other schools.
This is approximately 45 days after the USDA Food has been allocated into the SFA's inventory.  Remember missed expire dates = excess storage fees.	This is approximately six months after the USDA Foods have been allocated into the SFA's inventory.

For more information regarding expire dates and close dates click [here](#).

Expire Date	Close Date
12/31/2025	03/31/2026
11/30/2025	03/31/2026
11/30/2025	03/31/2026
12/31/2025	03/31/2026
11/30/2025	03/31/2026
12/31/2025	03/31/2026
12/31/2025	03/31/2026
11/30/2025	02/28/2026
11/30/2025	03/31/2026
12/31/2025	03/31/2026

#### USDA Foods Recipe Ideas

Use your USDA Foods [refried beans](#), [salsa](#), and [shredded cheddar cheese](#) for this [spiderweb 7 layer dip recipe](#). These recipes may need to be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



### Procurement

#### Considering a Partnership or Joining a Cooperative?

If you are interested in partnering with a food service management company or joining a cooperative purchasing roup (Co-op), contact IDOE at [scnprocurement@doe.in.gov](mailto:scnprocurement@doe.in.gov) to find out where to start.

#### Procurement Review

It's Procurement Review season. If your school is scheduled to participate in an Administrative Review this school year, you will be contacted by the IDOE Procurement team for a procurement review. A Procurement Review is a process where state agencies evaluate a sponsor's procurement practices to ensure compliance with program regulations.

#### Procurement Review Tips

- Prepare early.
- Be sure you are documenting and keeping organized records.
- Have a copy of your school's procurement plan.
- Complete the procurement tool and submit it with your paid vendor list.

#### New Monthly Reconciliation Form

IDOE has a new [USDA Foods Monthly Reconciliation Report form](#). This form is required during a procurement review and is a valuable tool for recording USDA Foods activities and transactions. This form can be found on both the [Procurement](#) webpage, under forms, templates and examples, and the [Forms and Checklists](#) webpage.

### Training and Webinar Opportunities

#### In-Person Training: Meal Patterns & Offer vs. Serve (OVS)

IDOE is excited to offer in-person training for school nutrition professionals on breakfast and lunch meal patterns and OVS. This training is geared toward menu planners, but all are welcome.

All participants must register in advance for the desired training. Please register for only one session, as the content will be the same.

- Tuesday, December 2, from 1 to 3 p.m. ET at Kokomo Schools (721 W. Jackson Street, Kokomo, IN 46901) [Register here](#).
- Thursday, December 11, 1 to 3 p.m. ET at MSD of Martinsville (389 E. Jackson Street, Martinsville, IN 46151) [Register here](#).

#### Upcoming Webinars

- Knife Techniques to Enhance Fruits, Thursday, October 30, at 2 p.m. ET
- On-site Reviews: Guidance and Best Practices, Thursday, November 13, at 2:30 p.m. ET
- Verification Summary Report (VSR), Thursday, November 20, at 10 a.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.

### Updates from Our Partners

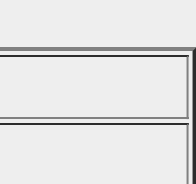
#### Institute of Child Nutrition October STAR Webinar

Cycle menu provide structure and consistency while supporting variety, compliance, and efficiency in school menu programs. In this webinar, school nutrition leaders will share best practices for developing cycle menus that are both nutritious and appealing to students. Participants will explore strategies for menu planning, cost control, labor management, and incorporating diverse and innovative menu ideas that keep school meals engaging. This webinar will take place on Thursday, October 30, at 3 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

#### Institute of Child Nutrition November Virtual Instructor Led Training (VILT)

The November VILT Training, titled Norovirus in Schools, will be held on Thursday, November 20, at 2 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

### Upcoming Dates



Thursday, October 30	<a href="#">Final August Claim Date</a>
Friday, October 31	Last day to submit School Lunch Week photos



### Additional Resources

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