



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

Crediting Information

As you plan new menus for next school year, ensure that crediting information is up to date.

- Child Nutrition (CN) Labels - Make sure all CN labels on file are still valid. CN labels can also be reviewed on the [USDA Authorized Labels webpage](#).
- Standardized Recipes - Utilizing new equipment? Ensure standardized recipes are tested with any new equipment to ensure the same yield as with previously utilized equipment.
- Fresh Produce - The [USDA Food Buying Guide](#) is continuously updated. Ensure the USDA Food Buying Guide is reviewed for any changes to items served annually.

Important Updates

Summer EBT Discontinued

The Summer EBT (SUN Bucks) program will be discontinued in 2025. As part of National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requirements, schools are required to advertise the availability of meals through the SUN Nutrition meals programs. Sponsors that serve meals at open sites on the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or Seamless Summer Option (SSO) should advertise their meal locations. Sponsors that do not participate in summer meal service must notify families that meals may be available in the community. Sponsors can provide the following site finder resource information to households:

- [USDA Site Finder Map](#)
- **Hunger Hotline** - families seeking food assistance for their children can contact the USDA National Hunger Hotline, operated by Hunger Free America.
  - **By phone:** Call 1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479) (for English) or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (1-877-842-6273) (for Spanish). The line is available Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET.
  - **By text:** To receive an automated response to resources located near an address or zipcode, text keywords such as "food," "summer," "meals," to the automated service at 914-342-7744.

Please note these site finder options will be updated to include Indiana locations the last week of May.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Election Period – Now through Monday, June 30

The 2025-2026 school year (SY) CEP election period is open until Monday, June 30. CEP allows high-poverty schools to provide breakfast and lunch free to all students. CEP reduces the district's paperwork and school meal administrative costs by streamlining the meal application process. A school district may implement community eligibility in any school or group of schools with an enrollment minimum of 25% or more students that are directly certified for free meals (identified students).

Determination of eligibility must be made by local school corporations by using direct certification and enrollment data collected annually in April. The application deadline to participate in CEP for SY 2025-2026 is Monday, June 30. Upon submission of the requested information, a validation process will take place prior to final approval.

Additional information and the application for applying for community eligibility is available on the [Community Eligibility Provision webpage](#). Questions about the application process can be directed to your assigned school nutrition programs field specialist.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant Applications Due Friday, May 16

Applications for the [2024 National School Lunch Equipment Grant](#) are being accepted until Friday, May 16. Indiana has received \$229,328 from USDA to award Equipment Assistance Grants for FY 2024 (this award is always one year behind the current program year). Public school districts, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCI) are eligible to apply if they participate in the NSLP. Priority will be given to schools where at least 50% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and have not previously received an equipment grant.

Additional information and application tools can be found [here](#). Questions can be sent to [scnfinance@doe.in.gov](mailto:scnfinance@doe.in.gov) with "equipment grant" in the subject line.

Farm to School

Last Call: Season Your Summer

Join us for the second annual Farm to Summer celebration called Season Your Summer! The theme for this year's educational initiative focuses on exploring different locally grown herbs that spice up daily meals. Participation in this initiative is voluntary, easy, and open to anyone operating a summer child nutrition program. All learning activities listed in the Toolkit are geared toward elementary-age students and provide different educational opportunities for young minds. The nutritional component of the initiative will teach students how to grow herbs at home and use them in preparing easy and fresh recipes. Sign up [here](#) by Friday, May 16, to request free seed packets for your summer sites!

Food Day Registration

Food Day registration is available. We are celebrating corn this year! Food Day is a promotional event that focuses on a different food item every year. We pick the product; you pick when and how to celebrate. This year, we are expanding the months of participation as a "food-of-the-year" celebration. We will provide seeds in the spring semester, and the learning begins there. Procure local corn or corn products at any point in the year to take part in the celebration! Additional information, including registration, can be found [here](#).

USDA Foods

USDA Foods End of School Reminders

1. USDA Foods direct delivery (brown box) allocations have now ended as of Wednesday, April 30.
2. SFAs should check [CNPweb](#) under FDP in the Inventory tab to ensure that all USDA Foods are ordered and delivered to your school before leaving for summer break or by the last delivery period in June. Direct Delivered (brown box) USDA Foods remaining at the state assigned warehouses, Dilgard or Stanz will be swept from all SFA inventories as of July 1 for redistribution.
3. SFAs should make every effort to utilize their inventory by drawing down pounds as close to zero at the processing companies by Monday, June 30. Any remaining unused pounds will carry over to school year 2025-2026 unless needed to assist other schools.
4. The last day to place a produce order in FFAVORS for school year 2024-2025 is Tuesday, June 24. Schools must enter their Department of Defense (DoD) Program receipts into the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System ([FFAVORS](#)) within two calendar days after the produce is delivered to your school. All USDA DoD receipts must be entered into ([FFAVORS](#)) by Monday, June 30, or before leaving for summer break. All DoD funds must be used by Monday, June 30. Any unused funds do not carry over to the next school year and will be lost.
5. USDA wants schools to use USDA Foods and DoD funds in the year allocated.
6. Summer break is a good time for a USDA Foods refresher or enhancing your USDA Foods knowledge by viewing some [training and webinars](#).

Culinary A+ for School Meals In-Person Training

School nutrition operations are transforming. School nutrition standards require schools to offer more fruits, vegetables and whole grains which gives schools an opportunity to reflect these standards in menu items. Join Culinary A+ for School Meals for their in-person training as they focus on basic culinary skills needed to prepare and serve more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and salads while enhancing flavors and meeting the demands of today's guests. These basic culinary skills will help schools offer foods and meals that support the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and school nutrition standards.

Training is Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. local time. **Space remains for the following sessions:**

- Columbus on Monday, June 2, through Friday, June 6
- Charleston on Monday, June 9, through Friday, June 13
- Michigan City on Monday, July 7, through Friday, July 11 (limited spots available)

Register [here](#).

Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership (ISNL)

This summer, in connection with the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), we will be offering two sessions of ISNL, one in-person and one virtual via Zoom. ISNL is intended for new school nutrition program directors and provides an overview of school nutrition programs, defines the role and responsibilities of a director, and reviews the relationship between local policies and state/federal regulations.

Per ICN guidelines, these sessions will be capped at 40 participants. Therefore, we ask that only those with three or fewer years of director/program management experience, and who have never attended ISNL register to attend. Please register for only one option below. The training layout has changed from years past with 24 hours of live training with additional self-paced online lessons taken on the ICN iLEARN platform. Attendees are expected to be in attendance at the times listed below each option.

- In-Person: Lebanon Community High School
  - Monday, June 23, through Wednesday, June 25, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET
  - Register [here](#)
- Virtual Option via Zoom
  - Tuesday, July 15, through Friday, July 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET
  - Register [here](#)

Reminders

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

IDOE recently released SCN 2025-01: The Use of Artificial Intelligence policy. This newly released policy provides guidance for program operators using AI with child nutrition programs. SFAs might choose to use AI to develop menus, participate in nutrition-related meetings or administrative reviews, maintain recordkeeping requirements, etc. The policy outlines considerations and requirements that must be maintained to comply with state and federal protections. View the policy [here](#).

Updated Adult Meal Pricing Guidance

Breakfast and lunch served to adults under the School Nutrition Programs must be priced so that the adult payment is sufficient to cover the overall cost of the meal, including the value of any USDA entitlement and bonus donated foods used to prepare the meal. Beginning SY 2025-2026, SFAs are allowed to use the previous school year's reimbursement rates to set adult meal pricing for the following year if pricing was approved by the school board (or equivalent) prior to the newest reimbursement rates being released. If adult pricing has not been reviewed and board approved until after the new school year's reimbursement rates are released, then the newer rates should be used when determining the adult meal price.

Review updated guidance, frequently asked questions, and pricing formulas on the [Determining Meal Prices for Adults fact sheet](#). Once SY 2025-2026 reimbursement rates are released by USDA (typically in July), the pricing formulas will be updated to match the more current rates.

Buy American Requirements for SY 2025-2026 and Accommodation Requests

On April 25, 2024, the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) published the final rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962, April 25, 2024). Among other provisions, this rule finalizes regulations that strengthen the School Meal Programs' Buy American provision.

In the final rule, USDA established a new threshold for SFAs that use exceptions for the Buy American provision in regulation. The limit on the percent of total commercial food costs from non-domestic food will be phased in over seven school years as follows:

- Beginning in SY 2025-2026, the non-domestic food purchases cap will be 10%\*.
- Beginning in SY 2028-2029, the non-domestic food purchases cap will be 8%\*.
- Beginning in SY 2031-2032, the non-domestic food purchases cap will be 5%\*.

\*Items listed on the [Federal Acquisitions Regulations Nonavailable articles](#) list must be counted toward the cap on non-domestic purchases when it goes into effect.

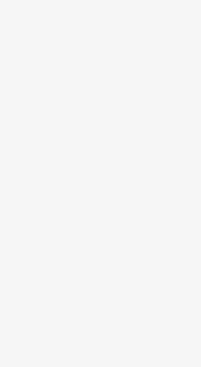
USDA Regulations [7 CFR 210.21\(d\)\(8\)](#) and [7 CFR 220.16\(d\)\(8\)](#) allow for temporary accommodation for the upcoming SY 2025-2026 thresholds. The accommodation process provides the IDOE the ability to approve temporary relief for school food authorities (SFAs) that demonstrate they cannot meet the thresholds for non-domestic food purchases established in [7 CFR 210.21\(d\)\(5\)](#) and [7 CFR 220.16\(d\)\(5\)](#).

To request a temporary accommodation for the upcoming SY 2025-2026 10% cap, please complete the [IDOE Buy American Accommodation Request Form](#).

Please see the [IDOE Buy American webpage](#) for memos and other guidance. Email questions to [SCNProcurement@doe.in.gov](mailto:SCNProcurement@doe.in.gov).

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, May 15, at 10 a.m. ET	<a href="#">Indirect Costs for Private Schools Webinar</a>
Friday, May 16	<a href="#">Equipment Grant Application Deadline</a>
Friday, May 30	<a href="#">Final Day for March Reimbursement Claim</a>
Monday, June 23 through Wednesday, June 25	<a href="#">ISNL at Lebanon Community Schools (in-person)</a>
Monday, June 30	CEP Application Final Due Date
Tuesday, July 8	<a href="#">IDOE Back to School Training</a> (in-person)
Tuesday, July 15 through Friday, July 18	<a href="#">ISNL Online Option</a>



### Additional Resources

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

