



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION

Mike Braun, Governor
Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

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

Meal Benefit Approval by Medicaid Participation

Sponsors are reminded that participation in Medicaid is not an automatic qualifier for school meal benefits. Approved students can be found in the Direct Certification (DC) system as qualifying for benefits by Medicaid free (source code M) or reduced (source code R). Because Medicaid is not an automatic qualifier for school meal benefits, Medicaid case numbers should not be accepted at face value nor included in the wording in the case number section of any meal benefit application (paper or online). Review the Medicaid Fact Sheet as well as the Medicaid FAQ for Parents on the [DC webpage](#).

Important Updates

Direct Certification (DC) Lists are Now Available!

DC lists are now available for July. Due to nightly data updates from the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), clicking Download New Matches on the Review New Matches page will generate multiple spreadsheets. To view one complete list, select Download New Matches, then navigate to Search Approved Students. Click Download Year to Date Matches, enter 7/1/2026 in the From Download Date field and the current date in the To Download Date field. Issues or questions can be submitted through the [CNPweb Help Form](#). Find resources for conducting Direct Certification [here](#).

Program Year (PY) 2027 Reimbursement Rates

On Thursday, July 16, USDA released the PY 2027 Reimbursement Rates. Reimbursement rates can be found on the [Federal Register](#). The reimbursement rate chart has been updated and posted to [IDOE's financial management webpage](#).

Adult Meal Pricing Guidance for School Year (SY) 2026-2027

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. School Food Authorities (SFA) 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 was not approved until after the PY 2027 reimbursement rates* were 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.

**The PY 2027 reimbursement rates were released on Thursday, July 16. If adult meal prices using last year's reimbursement rates were not board (or administrator) approved before Thursday, July 17, the local adult meal price must meet adult meal pricing requirements using the [PY 2027 reimbursement rates](#).*

2026 Summer Reading Challenge

USDA's Food and Nutrition Administration has shared details about the 2026 Summer Reading Challenge, an initiative supporting literacy and complementing summer meal efforts. Children entering grades kindergarten to eight can participate by reading 12 books between Monday, June 1, and Friday, September 4, and submitting a short reflection for a chance to earn prizes, including a trip to Washington, D.C.

Participants select 12 books, record completed titles in the [Reading Log](#), and have a parent or guardian [submit the log](#) by Friday, September 4, at 11:59 p.m. ET. For additional resources and information, please click [here](#).

All readers receive a digital certificate, personalized letter, America-250 bookmark, and may choose one prize from the prize website. All submissions are entered into a drawing for a trip to the nation's capital and the White House on Friday, September 25.

Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership (ISNL)

Twenty new food service directors with three years or less experience participated in the Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership training, held Monday, July 13, through Wednesday, July 15. The three-day hybrid course combined in-person sessions with self-paced online lessons and covered school nutrition program operations, director responsibilities, and how local policies align with state and federal regulations.



Farm to School

Culinary Skills and Farm to School Training

IDOE and the Indiana Grown for Schools Network will be hosting two Culinary Skills for Farm to School trainings in Indiana in September. Each training will take place over two days, with sessions lasting approximately three hours. Afternoon sessions are preferred, though timing may vary by site. Those interested in hosting may contact f2s@doe.in.gov. Registration for participants will be available soon and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Farm to School Recipe Contest for Indiana High School Culinary Students

The Indiana Grown for Schools Network and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) are excited to release registration for the third annual Farm to School Recipe Contest for Indiana high school students. Students will create a recipe using either apples, to celebrate [Indiana Apple Crunch](#), or tomatoes, to celebrate [Indiana Food Day](#). The contest aims to connect students to the school meal programs and provide a specific way to celebrate Farm to School initiatives. Winning students will receive an Indiana Grown for Schools network swag bag, a highlight on socials, and more! Learn more and register [here](#).

USDA Foods

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program

SFAs may now see Planned Assistance Level (PAL) posted in their FFAVORS account. Once PAL appears, SFAs can begin placing orders for SY 2026-2027. PAL information will continue to be updated, with all amounts posted by Saturday, August 1. If your SFA does not see PAL posted by that date, please contact the [FDP Mailbox](#).

Track DoD Fresh Spending

Monitor your DoD Fresh balance throughout the year to avoid unused funds.

USDA Foods Reminders

- Check your [PrimerEdge Catalog](#) to verify which USDA foods your SFA requested.
- Select your distributors in [K12 Foodservice](#) and/or [ProcessorLink](#) to deliver processed end products to your SFA.
- Verify processor pounds have been loaded by Saturday, August 1.
- Use carryover pounds first.
- Incorporate USDA foods into your school menu as much and as often as possible.

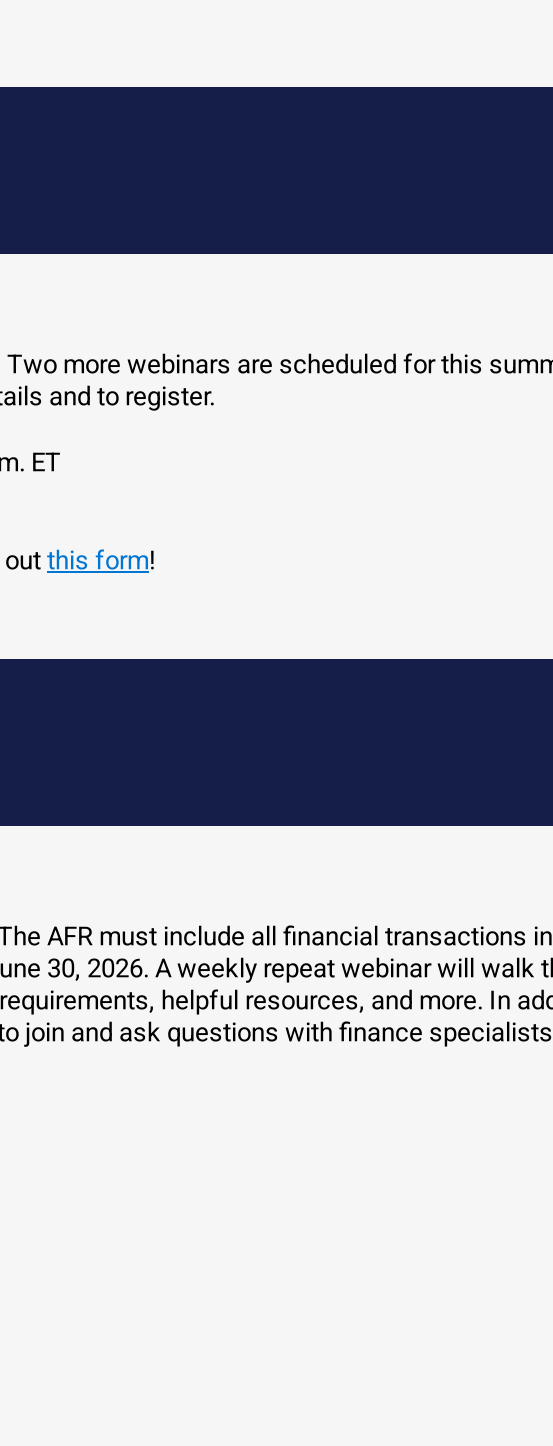
USDA Foods Cancellations for SY 2026-2027

- 100256 Frozen Strawberry Cups (January-September 2026)
- 100258 Frozen Apple Slices
- 110721 Sweet Potato Fries
- 110921 Frozen Chicken Fillet, Unbreaded

USDA Foods Recipe Ideas

Utilize your USDA [frozen blueberries](#) in this refreshing summer [frozen blueberry cluster](#) recipe. Recipes must meet USDA meal patterns and regulations. Looking for recipes to use your USDA Foods? Check out these resources:

- [Nutrition.gov](#)
- [Smart Swaps Recipes](#)
- [Wild Blueberry Recipes](#)
- [Recipes for Healthy Kids](#)
- [Recipes for Schools - Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#)
- [Team Nutrition Recipes](#)



Procurement

Procurement Information

The procurement section of our website has been updated to include the newly revised Child Nutrition Procurement Plan Template. The updated template is federally required for all sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Sponsors must download the new template and submit it as part of their annual application to ensure compliance with current procurement standards. The template can be found [here](#).

Questions about procurement? Click [here](#) or contact the [SCN Procurement mailbox](#) for assistance.

Training and Webinar Opportunities

Upcoming Webinars

Check out the upcoming webinar list [here](#), as new events are added regularly. Two more webinars are scheduled for this summer as a part of the Free & Reduced Summer Series. Click the links below for more details and to register.

- [Direct Certification \(DC\) Overview](#) - Thursday, July 23, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET
- [Eligibility Disclosure](#) - Thursday, July 30, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET

If there is a specific topic you would like to see covered, let us know by filling out [this form](#)!

Reminders

PY 2026 Annual Financial Report (AFR) is Now Open

The PY 2026 AFR is now open in CNPweb and is due by Friday, September 4. The AFR must include all financial transactions in the Nonprofit School Food Food Service Account from July 1, 2025, through Tuesday, June 30, 2026. A weekly recap webinar will walk through the AFR, including required information, errors versus warnings, indirect cost requirements, helpful resources, and more. In addition, 30-minute help sessions will be available, providing an opportunity for sponsors to join and ask questions with finance specialists.

PY 2026 AFR Walkthrough Webinars:

- Monday, July 27, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET - Register [Here](#)
- Tuesday, August 4, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET - Register [Here](#)

AFR Help Sessions:

- Thursday, July 23, from 1 to 1:30 p.m. ET - Register [Here](#)
- Tuesday, July 28, from 10 to 10:30 a.m. ET - Register [Here](#)
- Thursday, July 30, from 1 to 1:30 p.m. ET - Register [Here](#)
- Monday, August 3, from 2 to 2:30 p.m. ET - Register [Here](#)
- Wednesday, August 5 from 9:30 to 10 a.m. ET - Register [Here](#)

CNPweb PY 2027 is Open

School Nutrition Program (SNP) sponsors may now complete their PY 2027 sponsor and site applications, as well as complete any flagged item on the checklist tab. Be sure to carefully review each application to make sure it is current and accurate for the new school year.

New this year:

- All sponsors must submit their SNP applications to Pending Approval by Monday, August 31.
- The procurement plan template has been updated, so all SNP sponsors must download, complete, and upload the final signed document onto the checklist tab.
- The virtual training platform has moved from Moodle to the Nutrition Hub. Users are encouraged to access online training through the Nutrition Hub going forward. View the Nutrition Hub User Guide [here](#) for more information on the platform.

Reminders:

- Sponsors that have been approved to operate the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) in July and August are expected to complete their applications as soon as possible, so the system has the most current operating information.**
- New Food Service Directors (FSDs) are required to complete the [New Director Hiring Form](#).
- Food Safety Certification is required for all FSDs and is active for five years. After a certification expires, FSDs have 30 days to obtain an updated Food Safety Certification.
- On the checklist tab, only enter the date that the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Attestation Statement was completed for PY 2027 or the PLE Tool was submitted and approved by [SCNFinance@doe.in.gov](#).

Instructions for submitting the renewal application can be found [here](#). Questions or technical needs with CNPweb can be submitted through the [CNPweb Help Form](#).

Nutrition Hub Reminder

IDOE has transitioned from Moodle to the Nutrition Hub on the LearningLab platform. Click [here](#) to view the user guide outlining the setup process.

Access to the Nutrition Hub requires a two-step process.

Step 1: Create a [LearningLab](#) account.

Step 2: Submit the [Nutrition Hub access request form](#). The same email address must be used for both steps to ensure setup.

Access requests may take up to 48 business hours to process. For questions, email SCNtrainings@doe.in.gov.

Health Department Notification

To assist sponsors with the required annual program operations notification to local health departments, IDOE provides a template [notification letter](#) that schools can utilize. To use the template, make a copy in Google or download the document in a preferred format.

Now Hiring: School Nutrition Programs Training Specialist

IDOE is seeking a candidate with strong school nutrition program experience to lead training and support efforts statewide. This role develops virtual and in-person trainings, creates resources for sponsors, manages learning platforms, and collaborates with partners to strengthen program implementation and compliance.

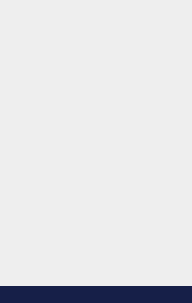
Please contact Jennifer Ress-Henry at jress@doe.in.gov with any questions. Click [here](#) to view the full job posting.

Updates from Our Partners

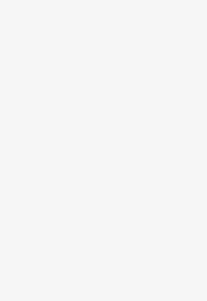
Smart Swaps – Lower Sugar Breakfast Ideas

The Smart Swaps [recorded webinar](#) from the National Dairy Council shares practical strategies for introducing lower-sugar breakfast items to school menus. The session features chefs, nutrition experts, and school nutrition professionals demonstrating student-tested breakfast concepts designed for real-world operations, along with recipe demos, menu inspiration, training tools, and resources that support serving healthy, compliant, kid-approved meals. Smart Swaps resources can be accessed [here](#).

Upcoming Dates



Thursday, July 30	Final Due Date for May Claim
Monday, August 31	SNP Applications Due to Pending Approval
Monday, August 31	Final Due Date for June Claim
Friday, September 4	PY 2026 Annual Financial Report Due



Additional Resources

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