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INDIANA
DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION

Mike Braun, Governor
Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

School Nutrition Programs

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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

Administrative Review Reports

USDA requires administrative review reports to be publicly available online. All Indiana administrative review reports are available [here](#).

Important Updates

Now Available: Program Year (PY) 2026-2027 Free and Reduced Application and Notification Letter Templates
Access the updated Free and Reduced Application, parent letter/instructions, and approval/denial letters on the [Free & Reduced Forms webpage](#).

The application is a PDF with fillable space for customization. The parent and notification letters are Google Docs. To update templates with contact information, click File and then Make a copy to revise, or click File and download into your preferred file format.

Important Updates and Reminders:

- The only change to the application is the removal of the optional textbook section on the back.
- Your application may be in a different format from the template; however, applications and letters must include all the same information as the templates.
- English and Spanish-language applications are available. If you need an application in another language, please reach out through the [CNPweb Help Form](#) and submit a request within the SNP CNPweb General Questions option.
- Applications cannot be distributed to parents until Wednesday, July 1.
 - Best practice is to wait until Direct Certification is conducted for the new school year to reduce the administrative burden of processing applications.
- All households must be notified of their ability to apply for benefits if they haven't already been approved through Direct Certification.
- For those that use online applications, ensure there is a paper option available for households to use if they prefer that method.
 - Review the [Online Free and Reduced Application Checklist](#) to ensure online applications meet USDA requirements.
- Find helpful fact sheets and guidance manuals for processing free and reduced applications on the [Fact Sheets & Training webpage](#).
- Updated income guidelines are available [here](#).

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Updates & Guidance

District-Wide CEP Sponsors: Alternate Applications for Free and Reduced Eligibility

Sponsors that operate CEP are not required to process free and reduced applications for meal benefits, however there are other programs and opportunities that rely on individual student free and reduced eligibility information. This data is collected by IDOE and is used for allocating funding, reducing fees, and providing grant opportunities. For this reason, district-wide CEP sponsors are highly encouraged to process alternate applications to determine individual eligibility for any student who could not be Direct Certified (DC). Access the Alternate Household Application, parent letter/instructions, and approval/denial letters on the [Free & Reduced Forms webpage](#) under the Alternate Applications for District-Wide CEP Schools drop-down.

The application is a Word document that will download to your computer. The parent and notification letters are Google Docs. To update templates with contact information, click File and then Make a copy to revise, or click File and download into your preferred file format.

Important reminders:

- Applications cannot be distributed until Wednesday, July 1.
 - Best practice is to wait until Direct Certification is conducted for the new school year to reduce the administrative burden of processing applications.
- For more information about Alternate Applications view the fact sheet [here](#).
- Find helpful fact sheets and guidance manuals for processing free and reduced applications on the [Fact Sheets & Training webpage](#).
- Updated income guidelines are available [here](#).

CEP Deadline is Tuesday, June 30

CEP allows high-poverty schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, ensuring they are well-nourished and able to learn throughout the school day. A school district may implement CEP in any school or group of schools with a minimum of 25% or more students who are eligible for free meals through DC (also known as Identified Students).

The CEP election period for school year (SY) 2026-2027 is open through Tuesday, June 30. Local school corporations must determine initial eligibility using DC and enrollment data collected on or around Wednesday, April 1. The data must be submitted to your assigned field specialist using the [CEP worksheet](#). After all requested information is provided, a validation process will occur before final approval and the collection of a signed agreement.

Helpful evaluation tools include the [CEP Estimator Tool](#) and [CEP Slider Tool](#). Additional resources are available on IDOE's [CEP webpage](#). For more information, contact your assigned School Nutrition Programs field specialist.

Transitioning From CEP to Standard Counting and Claiming

Schools planning to switch from CEP to standard counting and claiming procedures for SY 2026-2027 should submit written notification to their assigned field specialist by Tuesday, June 30. This notification begins the transition to standard counting and claiming procedures. Additional guidance on the transition process is available [here](#).

As part of the transition, Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) requirements must be followed. Schools may use the most recent documented paid lunch price when completing the PLE calculation. If the most recent price cannot be located, one of the following options must be used:

- If the school is part of a School Food Authority (SFA) that has not yet met the required average paid lunch price, the school must set its paid lunch price at a level equal to or higher than the other schools within the SFA to ensure the SFA's overall average price meets PLE requirements.
- If all schools within the SFA are transitioning from CEP at the same time, paid lunch prices must be set at or above the difference between the reimbursement rates for free and paid lunches in effect when entering the program.

For more guidance on the PLE Tool, view IDOE's Financial Management webpage [here](#).

USDA Foods

PrimerEdge Re-allocation Notifications

IDOE is in the process of catalog balancing and reconciliation. This entails reallocating, and in some cases reducing, USDA Foods cases and/or processor pounds to meet USDA truck requirements. When changes are made, PrimerEdge may send an automated notification to School Food Authorities (SFAs). No additional action is required for these routine notifications. Questions regarding the notifications can be directed to fdp@doe.in.gov.

Direct Delivered/Direct Ship USDA Foods Allocations and Delivery Deadlines

Direct Delivered USDA Foods deliveries to schools end on or before Tuesday, June 30, depending on the delivery period.

Processed Goods/Processed USDA Foods

Bulk pounds remaining at the processor on Tuesday, June 30, will rollover to school year (SY) 2026-2027.

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program

DoD Funds remaining in the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) by Tuesday, June 30, do not rollover over to next school year and will be lost.

All USDA Foods are intended to be used in the year they are allocated.

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

Looking for recipes to use your USDA Foods? Check out these resources:

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

Procurement

Procurement Information

Do you have questions about procurement click [here](#) or contact the [SCN Procurement mailbox](#) for assistance.

Training and Webinar Opportunities

New Webinars Scheduled

Check out the upcoming webinar list [here](#), as new events are added regularly. Four new 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.

- [Introduction to Free & Reduced](#) - Thursday, June 25, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. ET
- [Free & Reduced Processing](#) - Thursday, July 16, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. ET
- [Direct Certification \(DC\) Overview](#) - Thursday, July 23, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. ET
- [Eligibility Disclosure](#) - Thursday, July 30, from 10 a.m. 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!](#)

Back to School Training is Full

Effective Sunday, August 1, the Office of Indiana State Comptroller is FULL! This training will take place on Wednesday, July 8, at Martinsville High School and will be packed with relevant information for staff in all areas of school nutrition, including front-line staff, programming and administration, and finance and budgeting. Staff who have registered but can no longer attend are encouraged to email SCNtrainings@doe.in.gov to be removed from registration. Those interested in attending but who have not registered are encouraged to join the waitlist [here](#). Those on the waitlist will be contacted if spots open.

Reminders

Summer Meals Site Finder Map is Live

The Summer Meals Site Finder is a modern map-based resource that helps families locate nearby summer meal sites. The site finder reflects USDA's commitment to improving customer service through technology. Families can search by address or visually explore meal sites using familiar map tools. The map displays sites that offer meals and snacks for on-site consumption, as well as sites in rural areas that allow families to pick up meals for consumption at home. To view the site finder, click [here](#).

Discontinuance of Paper ACH Notifications

Effective Sunday, August 1, the Office of Indiana State Comptroller will discontinue mailing paper ACH payment notifications and transition fully to electronic notifications. Suppliers that have not provided an email or have outdated email addresses on their supplier record can register by contacting Suppliers@comptroller.in.gov. Impacted suppliers will receive a communication advising them to contact the Comptroller's Office directly to enroll in electronic ACH notifications. Should a supplier contact you, please direct them to the Comptroller's Office for updates or additional information. For questions regarding this update, please contact ejones@comptroller.in.gov.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Indirect Cost Rates

The FY 2027 Indirect Cost Rates are available [here](#) and in the Indirect Costs folder of [Moodle](#). School corporations that received certified rates will receive an individual email with the calculation information. Please contact icr@doe.in.gov with any questions.

Updates from Our Partners

Procuring with Efficiency: Local Food Purchasing in Schools

The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) is hosting a webinar on Thursday, June 25, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. ET to explore the core principles of sound procurement, including practical strategies for forecasting needs, tips for developing strong bids, and sourcing fresh, high-quality, local foods that meet program requirements. Foundational strategies for using USDA Foods, meeting federal requirements for local purchasing, and applying geographic preference to increase the availability of locally grown foods in school meals will also be shared. Join this session to gain insight in building strong partnerships with farmers, vendors, co-ops, and distributors to strengthen and support local supply chains. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.

School Nutrition Association (SNA) K-12 Recipe Library

SNA operator members can help expand the [K-12 Recipe Library](#) with meals students love and operators trust. Share student favorites and help build a collection of nutritious, delicious ideas. [Submit a recipe](#) and be part of this growing resource.

Central Indiana Farm to School Regional Action Team Survey

This brief survey from Indiana Grown for Schools is intended specifically for stakeholders in the Central Indiana region, including the following counties: Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Vigo, Clay, Owen, Sullivan, Greene, Hendricks, Boone, Morgan, Howard, Tipton, Hamilton, Marion, Johnson, Grant, Madison, Hancock, Shelby, Blackford, Delaware, Henry, Rush, Jay, Randolph, Wayne, Fayette, and Union. Input will help inform the Regional Action Plan that the Advisory Council will develop over the next two meetings. Click the link [here](#) to complete the survey no later than Monday, June 29.

Upcoming Dates



Monday, June 29	Final Due Date for April Claim
Tuesday, June 30	CEP Application Closes
Wednesday, July 1	Annual Financial Report Opens
Thursday, July 30	Final Due Date for May Claim



Additional Resources

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

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