



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

Winter Break Food Assistance

Winter break can be difficult for families facing food insecurity. Here are some resources to share with households to fill the gap over the winter break:

- [Community Compass](#) highlights resources for free meals, SNAP stores, WIC stores, and WIC Clinics.
- [Feeding Indiana's Hungry Food Bank Map](#) shows available food banks across Indiana.
- The [Indiana 211 website](#) has local resources for everything from food pantries to housing assistance.
- USDA's National Hunger Hotline provides local meal resources. Households can call toll free at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-866-8-HAMBRE.

Important Updates



There will be no newsletter Wednesday, December 24, or Wednesday, December 31. Have a happy and safe holiday break!

October Claim Due Date is Tuesday, December 30

Please note the final due date for the October claim and upward revisions to the October claim is Tuesday, December 30.

Verification Summary Report (VSR) Due Date is January 15, 2026

The VSR is due by January 15, 2026, and cannot be completed until the October claim has been submitted. All sponsors that operate the National School Lunch Program must complete this report, including district-wide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools and Residential Childcare Institutions (RCCIs) that do not process applications. Find detailed instructions for completing the report [here](#) or join the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) on January 8, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET. for a repeat VSR how-to webinar. Register [here](#).

Changes are Coming for the Food Distribution Program (FDP)

School Food Authorities (SFAs) will soon receive logins for PrimeroEdge, a new system that will replace CNPweb for FDP. SFAs will continue to use their CNPweb single-user login to access the School Nutrition Program (SNP), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

FDP will be moving to PrimeroEdge in phases, starting with the catalog (formerly, the annual pre-order forecast survey). Join IDOE's FDP team for a walk-through of the new system. Questions regarding Department of Defense (DoD) allocation commitments will also be addressed in the training session.

All FDP operators should register for and attend at least one of the offered training sessions listed below. There will also be an opportunity to attend an open office hours session to ask questions about the new PrimeroEdge program; this does not replace the in-depth training.

- [January 7, 2026 10 to 11:30 a.m.ET](#)
- [January 7, 2026 1 to 2:30 p.m.ET](#)
- [January 13, 2026 10 to 11:30 a.m.ET](#)
- [Q & A Office Hours, January 29, 2026 1 to 2p.m.ET](#)

Farm to School

Apple Crunch Impact

Thank you to those who officially participated in Apple Crunch this year and all who purchased local apples. Between schools and Purdue Extension offices, we had around 190,000 apple crunchers and 1,300 total bushels of apples purchased from local farms. Indiana Grown for Schools created an [Apple Crunch Impact Report](#) infographic to celebrate these amazing wins. You can see photos submitted by Apple Crunch participants [here](#).

Indiana Grown for Schools Seeks Regional Farm to School Action Team Leads

The Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (IDOH, DNPA) is acting as project coordinator in the search for Regional Farm to School Action Team Leads. These teams, divided into Northern, Central, and Southern regions, will play a critical role in advancing farm to school efforts across the state. Each Regional Action Team Lead will serve as a fiscal agent and coordination hub for their designated region. Selected organizations will receive funding to support administrative costs and implementation activities that strengthen local food systems and school-community partnerships. Letters of interest are due by 11:59 p.m. ET Friday, December 19. Learn more [here](#). Questions about the opportunity can be directed to [Brianna Goode](#) with IDOH.

USDA Foods

Local Department of Defense (DoD) in FFAVORS

Please see the following [article](#) to learn about the amount of local, Midwest food that was distributed via the DoD Fresh program during Farm to School Month! Indiana made some impressive progress from last year. As you are planning your DoD allotment for the 2026-2027 school year (SY), keep in mind there continues to be extensive work to increase the local, Indiana options on the FFAVORS portal.

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.

Direct Delivery "Order By" Reminder

As a reminder, schools must place USDA Foods Direct Delivery (Brown Box) orders in CNPweb by 10 a.m. ET the Monday of the week prior to the delivery period that your school would like to receive the delivery. Orders placed after 10 a.m. ET will not be accepted.

USDA Foods Cancellations for SY 2025-2026

100309 Canned Carrots (Entire School Year)
100256 Frozen Strawberry Cups (January - September 2026)
111900 Turkey Breast Deli (January - June 2026)

USDA Foods Recipe Ideas

Use your USDA Foods [ground beef](#), shredded [cheddar](#) and/or [mozzarella](#) cheeses, and [salsa](#) for this [walking tacos](#) recipe. This recipe may need to be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.

Procurement

Updated Monthly Reconciliation Form

IDOE has updated the new [USDA Foods Monthly Reconciliation Report Form](#). The updated form includes clearer instructions and a signature page. If you already completed the previous form without the signature, please go to the link above and complete the signature page. This form is required during a procurement review for schools that contract with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) 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

Upcoming Webinars

- Verification Summary Report (VSR) Repeat Session, January 8, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET
- January Coffee Break Webinar Series
 - January 15, 2026: Point of Sale Best Practices
 - January 22, 2026: Pre-Kindergarten Meal Service Best Practices
 - January 29, 2026: Alternate Breakfast Serving Methods Best Practices
- Smart Swaps with American Dairy Association Indiana, January 21, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. ET
- After School Snacks Refresher, Tuesday, January 27, at 2:30 p.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.

Reminders

Turnip the Beet Award

USDA Food and Nutrition Service is excited to share that the *Turnip the Beet* summer nutrition award is open for 2025 summer operations. To apply for the award, sponsors must self-nominate their organization by completing the [Nomination Form](#) and submitting the form, plus one month of menus that were served in summer 2025. Nomination forms and menus should be sent to [Tina Skinner](#) by **Wednesday, December 31**. This award is open to both Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option program operators.

State Match Resource

June 2025 State Match has been disbursed. Federal regulations require state agencies to contribute state matching funds to school food authorities (SFAs) on the National School Lunch Program. USDA calculates the amount states must distribute, and states choose how it is distributed among schools. Indiana distributes the match requirement based on the paid meals (fair share based on the number of paid meals at that SFA, compared to all paid meals in the state). Sponsors should treat state match funds like other school nutrition federal funds, but can decide how to distribute the funds among nutrition programs. As a reminder, Sponsors that claim using the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) at all sites and are reimbursed for all meals at the free reimbursement rate will not have State Match funds distributed. To learn more, including instructions on how to pull a report of the funds received by site, please see the [State Match Fact Sheet](#). Questions about State Match can be directed to SCNfinance@doe.in.gov.

Updates from Our Partners

Smart Swaps from the American Dairy Association

Dairy adds essential nutrition for sustained energy and focus, and with the USDA's updated nutrition standards, there is now an opportunity to incorporate more dairy in school breakfast. New guidelines can feel overwhelming, which is where Smart Swaps comes in! This initiative was designed to make compliance simple, kid-friendly, and turnkey. Here's how:

- Tested Nationwide: Earlier this year, a wide range of recipes were put to the test in schools of all sizes—urban and rural, large and small.
- Kid-Approved: 25 student favorites rose to the top, and you get free access to them all!
- Fully Compliant: Every recipe underwent full nutritional analysis and USDA approval.
- Ready-to-Use: School nutrition teams can download the standardized recipes and sample menus directly from the website, along with educational videos!

Don't miss the Smart Swaps webinar on January 21, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. ET for a glimpse into the resources and tools that are available for implementing Smart Swaps right away. Leave feeling confident about meeting upcoming breakfast guidelines—without starting from scratch. Register [here](#).

Indiana School Nutrition Association (ISNA) and IDOE Certificate Courses for Directors

As you begin planning your professional development for the new year, don't forget to secure a spot in the ISNA/IDOE School Nutrition Certificate Courses! These courses are a great way to strengthen your skills, earn certificate credit, and bring fresh ideas to your district. Registration is open now—reserve your seat and start the year with valuable learning that supports both you, your program, and your students. Learn more about the certificate program [here](#) and view a calendar of upcoming courses [here](#).

Upcoming Dates



Friday, December 19	Smart Snacks Exempt Fundraiser Survey Closes
Friday, December 19	Farm to School Regional Lead Letters of Interest Due Send to: Brianna Goode
Tuesday, December 30	October Claim Due Date
Wednesday, December 31	Turnip the Beet Award Self-nominations are Due Send to: Tina Skinner
Thursday, January 15	Verification Summary Report Due



Additional Resources

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

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