



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

**National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) is Coming**  
NSBW will take place from Monday, March 3, through Friday, March 7. This week is a celebration of the importance of a nutritious school breakfast in fueling students for success. This special observance during the first week of March celebrates the national School Breakfast Program and the many ways it gives kids a great start every day. This year's theme is Clue In to School Breakfast. View promotional materials and other resources on the [School Nutrition Association NSBW website](#).



Important Updates

**USDA Foods Annual Pre-Order Forecast Survey**  
The USDA Foods Annual Pre-Order Forecast Survey will open on Thursday, February 6, at 8 a.m. ET and will close on Friday, March 7, at 4 p.m. ET. Once the survey closes, it cannot be reopened. School food authorities (SFAs) must complete the survey in [CNPweb](#) under the surveys tab, by the deadline, in order to receive USDA Foods for school year 2025-2026. If applicable, schools should verify that the amount of entitlement deducted for Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables is correct under the entitlement tab. For useful information and resources, please review the [Preparing for the Annual Pre-Order Forecast Survey guidance](#). Additional details for the Maximize and Master the USDA Foods Survey: Plan, Prepare, Succeed are available in the USDA Foods section below.

- USDA Studies**  
SFAs are encouraged to participate in the following studies conducted by USDA:
- National School Foods Study-** USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) sent the 2024-2025 National School Foods Study, conducted by Mathematica, to selected schools. Those invited to participate are encouraged to submit the requested information. This important study will collect updated information from states, SFAs, schools, parents, and children on school meal programs. This data has not been collected in over a decade and is critical to informing current and future program and policy decisions, affecting your schools and student lunches. Please complete the survey by the deadline listed on the original email notification. For more information about the study, click [here](#).
  - Supply Chain Disruption and Student Participation-** USDA FNS is conducting the 2024-2025 SFA survey on supply chain disruption and student participation, a web survey of all SFAs that operate Child Nutrition Programs. Like prior, similar surveys, the survey seeks to collect information on key challenges SFAs are currently facing, including those related to school food procurement, program administration, and program finances. FNS has contracted with Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR) to conduct the survey with all public, charter, and private SFAs nationwide. The survey was e-mailed to SFAs on Monday, January 27, and came from [noreply@gemailserver.com](mailto:noreply@gemailserver.com).

**Nominations for the School Food Service Employee of the Year Due Thursday, February 27**  
Help IDOE recognize school food service employees who contribute significantly to the health and learning capabilities of students by nominating them for IDOE's 2025 School Food Service Employee of the Year Award. This award was created to recognize the outstanding achievements of school food service employees who excel in the areas of customer service, attitude, professionalism, and teamwork. All school food service personnel except Food Service Directors are eligible to be nominated. Submit your [nomination](#) by Thursday, February 27. Contact [Suzette Hartmann](#) with any questions.

**IDOE Encourages Participation in Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**  
SFSP is designed to fill the nutritional gap during summer months when school is out of session and food insecurity is often at the highest level. SFSP provides a way to retain food service staff during the summer and helps to support the food service budget, as reimbursement [rates](#) for SFSP meals are higher than during the school year. As sponsors of child nutrition programs who serve children throughout the school year, local educational agencies make good candidates for summer meal program sponsorship. The two primary ways to qualify for the SFSP sponsorship are by using the school's free and reduced meal eligibility data or the U.S. Census block [data](#). Sponsors that meet the qualification requirements and are located in rural counties as determined per USDA Rural Designation [mapper](#) may qualify for meal non-congregate (RNC) meal service in areas where there is currently no congregate meal sites. The RNC option allows SFSP/SSO sponsors to distribute meals using either meal pick-up or home delivery method. SFSP application is scheduled to open in the CNPweb in March and there is a streamlined process for current child nutrition sponsors. For more information, contact your field specialist or [summermeals@doe.in.gov](mailto:summermeals@doe.in.gov).

Farm to School

**Local Foods for Schools and Child Care (LFSCC)**  
The Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, received approximately \$14.7 million from the USDA for the LFSCC Program. This program provides funding to operators of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in support of local purchasing of unprocessed or minimally processed foods. We are collecting information to help guide our planning process. Please take a few moments to complete the [five-question survey](#).

USDA Foods

**USDA Foods Survey Training - Maximize and Master the USDA Foods Survey: Plan, Prepare, Succeed**  
IDOE will offer a live webinar on [Thursday, February 6, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. ET](#). The webinar will be an overview of USDA Foods and provide a walk-through of the USDA Foods annual pre-order forecast survey process.

**USDA Foods Orders and Deliveries**  
**Inclement weather has arrived! School closures and delays are imminent.** Please be sure that when your school places USDA Foods or Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables orders that school staff must be available to inspect, verify, and accept the delivery. Please also remember to cross-reference all USDA Foods deliveries/orders with your school and personal calendars. USDA Foods orders are delivered by your school's state assigned warehouse for Direct Delivered (Brown Box) and/or your school's selected distributor for USDA Foods for Processing, as well as Creation Gardens for DoD.

**Receipt Deadline Has Changed in FFAVORS**  
USDA has changed the deadline for schools to receipt DoD produce receipts into the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) has changed to two calendar days after the produce delivery instead of the original five day deadline.

**USDA Foods Recipes**  
Use your USDA Foods frozen [sliced strawberries](#) or [whole strawberries](#) and [blueberries](#) to prepare this variation of [berry and fruit salad](#). This recipe must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



Training and Webinar Opportunities

**Upcoming Live Webinar Trainings**  
Learn more and register [here](#) for the training sessions below.

- Summer Meal Program Options Webinar:** Thursday, February 6, at 10 a.m. ET
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Overview Webinar:** Tuesday, February 11, at 2 p.m. ET
- After School Snack Program (ASSP) Operations Webinar:** Tuesday, February 18, at 2 p.m. ET

**Culinary Skills for A+ School Meals**  
Virtual culinary skills workshops are back! View the current line up of sessions, which begin Thursday, February 13, and register [here](#).

**In-Person Meal Pattern and OVS Training**  
IDOE is excited to offer in-person training on breakfast and lunch meal patterns and OVS. This training is geared toward menu planners, but all staff who would benefit are welcome. Attendees must register in advance. Sessions will be repeated, so please select the date and time that best meets your needs.

- [Tuesday, February 25, from 1 to 3 p.m. ET at MSD of Decatur Township School for Excellence](#)
- [Thursday, February 27, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. ET at Noblesville Schools Educational Services Center](#)

Reminders

**State Match Resource**  
June 2024 State Match has been disbursed. Federal regulations require state agencies to contribute state matching funds to school food authorities (SFAs) on the nutrition 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 SFAs can decide how they distribute the funds among their programs. 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](mailto:SCNfinance@doe.in.gov).

Updates from Our Partners

**Indiana Association of School Business Officials (IASBO) School Nutrition Seminar**  
IASBO is hosting a School Nutrition Seminar on Wednesday, March 19, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Embassy Suites in Plainfield. The [agenda](#) includes 4.75 hours of professional standards training hours. Participants do not have to be members of IASBO to attend. Find more information and register [here](#).

**Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) Presents How to Transition to Scratch Cooking**  
Transitioning to scratch cooking in schools can feel like a significant shift, but with the right approach, it can transform the quality of meals served to students. In this session, Seattle Public Schools' school nutrition experts will share some foundational steps for introducing scratch cooking, including strategies for sourcing high-quality ingredients, developing recipes that are practical and within budget, managing operational challenges that come with the transition, and more. Thursday, February 6, at 3 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

**Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership at the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)**  
ICN is hosting Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership (ISNL) at their location on the campus of the University of Mississippi. The training will be three days of in-person, instructor lead sessions Monday, March 10, through Wednesday March 12, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. local time with additional self-paced online course work. The training is free to attend, but travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of the participant. Learn more and register [here](#).

Upcoming Dates



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Tuesday, February 11, at 2 p.m. ET	<a href="#">Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Overview webinar</a>
Tuesday, February 18, at 2 p.m. ET	<a href="#">ASSP Operations webinar</a>
Tuesday, February 25, at 1 p.m. ET	<a href="#">Meal Pattern and OVS in-person training at MSD Decatur Township</a>
Thursday, February 27	<a href="#">Nominations due for School Food Service Employee of the Year</a>
Thursday, February 27, at 1 p.m. ET	<a href="#">Meal Pattern and OVS in-person training at Noblesville Schools</a>

### Additional Resources

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