



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

On-Site Reviews

Sponsors with more than one site must conduct on-site reviews by February 1 annually. All sites operating the lunch program must be reviewed annually. At least 50% of all breakfast sites must be reviewed each year, and the other 50% of breakfast sites reviewed the following year, ensuring all breakfast sites are reviewed at least every other year. Find the monitoring forms [here](#).

Important Updates

Special Dietary Needs Medical Statement Change for PY2026

On December 30, USDA released memo [SP 07-2025, CACFP 07-2025](#). The memorandum with the attached questions and answers clarifies the updated regulatory requirement for program operators to accept medical statements from registered dietitians. This requirement applies to program operators of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The change requiring program operators to accept medical statements from registered dietitians must be implemented by July 1, 2025, for school meal programs and October 1, 2025, for CACFP. Program operators have the option, but are not required, to implement this change prior to the implementation dates. Contact [Margo Birk](#) with additional questions.

USDA Request for Information Webinars

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released two requests for information in December to solicit public input. FNS is hosting two informative webinars for state agencies, local operators, and the public on Zoom that will provide an overview of the requests for information.

[Child Nutrition Programs Tribal Pilot Projects](#) (comments accepted through Monday, March 24)

- Webinar: Request for Information: Tribal Pilot Projects Wednesday, January 22, at 3 p.m. ET. Please register [here](#).

[Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#) (comments accepted through Wednesday, March 26)

- Webinar: Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting Tuesday, January 28, at 3 p.m. ET. Please register [here](#).

FNS plans to share webinar recordings in the future for those unable to attend the live sessions.

Farm to School

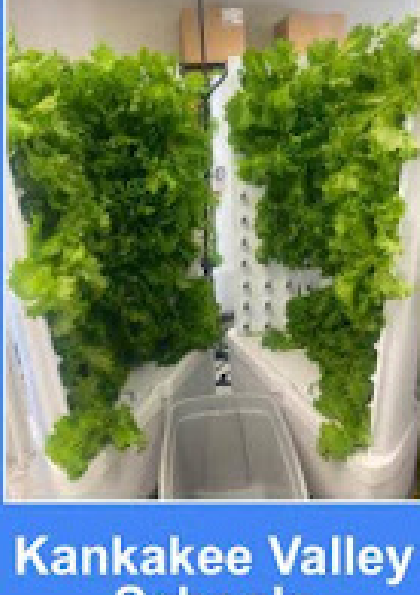
School Highlights

Marion Community Schools have hydroponic towers at each building that grow fruits and vegetables. The cafeteria is then able to incorporate the items into the school menus. A full tower produces about 30 pounds of lettuce per month.

Kankakee Valley Schools partnered with their agriculture classes to use nine Fork Farms hydroponic units this school year. The produce is transported to all school buildings in the district to be used in their cafeterias. In the coming years, their goal is to produce 70% of their lettuce with their student-run hydroponic units. They estimate they will save about 65% on lettuce in a year.



Marion Community Schools



Kankakee Valley Schools

Indiana Grown for Schools January Newsletter

Find the January newsletter for Indiana Grown for Schools (INGFS) [here](#). Every month, INGFS releases a newsletter packed with upcoming events and webinars, school highlights, grant information, and more! If you want to receive this directly to your inbox, sign up for our listserv on our [website](#).

USDA Foods

USDA Foods Orders and Deliveries

Inclement weather has arrived! Please be sure that when your school places USDA Foods orders that school staff must be available to inspect, verify, and accept the delivery. All USDA Foods deliveries/orders should also be cross-referenced with school and personal calendars.

Survey Time Approaching

It's time for schools to prepare to complete the annual pre-order forecast survey. An updated newsletter with the pre-order forecast survey information was released on Thursday, January 9.

Remember to Receipt in FFAVORS

Schools should be receiving their Department of Defense (DoD) produce receipts into the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) within five calendar days after the produce delivery.

USDA Foods Recipes

Use your USDA Foods mixed fruit to prepare this variation of a [Jell-O with fruit cocktail](#). This recipe should 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.

January

- Forward Contracting for Local Procurement:** Wednesday, January 22, at 2:30 p.m. ET
- Direct Certification Basics:** Tuesday, January, 28 at 10 a.m. ET
- LEAD to Succeed Training Options**
 - Conflict Style Inventory:** Thursday, January 23, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET
 - The Power of Emotional Intelligence:** Thursday, January 30, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET

February

- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Informational Webinar:** Tuesday, February 4, at 10 a.m. ET
- 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 & Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Training

IDOE is excited to offer in-person training on breakfast and lunch meal patters 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](#)
- [Tuesday, February 25, from 1 to 3 p.m. ET at MSD of Decatur Township School for Excellence](#)

Reminders

Verification Summary Reports (VSR)

The VSR is due Wednesday, January 15. This annual report is a requirement for all program operation types including residential facilities and Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) operators. Please ensure the report for your program is submitted on time. Questions about the VSR can be sent to [Gretchen Hunter](#).

Upcoming Dates



Wednesday, January 22, at 2:30 p.m. ET	Forward Contracting for Local Procurement webinar
Thursday, January 23, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	LEAD to Succeed Training: Conflict Style Inventory webinar
Tuesday, January 28, at 10 a.m. ET	Direct Certification Basics webinar
Thursday, January 30, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	LEAD to Succeed Training: The Power of Emotional Intelligence webinar
Saturday, February 1	On-site reviews due
Tuesday, February 4, at 10 a.m. ET	CEP Informational webinar
Thursday, February 6, at 10 a.m. ET	Summer Meal Program Options webinar
Tuesday, February 11, at 2 p.m. ET	Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Overview webinar
Tuesday, February 18, at 2 p.m. ET	ASSP Operations webinar
Tuesday, February 25, at 1 p.m. ET	Meal Pattern and OVS in-person training at MSD Decatur Township
Thursday, February 27, at 1 p.m. ET	Meal Pattern and OVS in-person training at Noblesville Schools



Additional Resources

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