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School Nutrition Programs Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



Indiana Department of Education sent this bulletin at 10/30/2024 04:00 PM EDT



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

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

Water Availability

[USDA Policy Memo SP 49-2016](#) states that potable water must be available to students during the meal periods. The water must be free of charge and students must be allowed to access water or have an adult provide them with water. The use of a water fountain is acceptable as long as the fountain is within the meal service/cafeteria area **and** students can access it. Please notify all adults in the meal service area providing oversight of students of this USDA program requirement.

The [2024 final rule](#) adds the word "plain" to the potable water regulations to clarify that schools are required to offer plain potable water during the meal service. Schools may choose to offer water with fruits, vegetables, and herbs added, **in addition** to the required plain water.

Please remember that bottled water is not an allowable expenditure of food service funds to meet this requirement and providing water for sale also does not meet the requirement. Additionally, the availability of water cannot act to meet special dietary needs for beverage substitution without a medical note from a prescriptive authority.

Additional questions about this requirement can be directed to your assigned field specialist.

Important Updates

Annual Financial Reports (AFRs) Due Friday, November 1

The 2024 AFR is due in CNPweb by this Friday, November 1. Please ensure the AFR is pending approval to avoid a potential hold on claim payments. IDOE will offer one final drop-in help session [Thursday, October 31, at 10:30 a.m. ET](#) where a School and Community Nutrition (SCN) Finance specialist will be available to answer any questions.

Review the [step-by-step AFR instructions](#) for more information on the report. Contact SCNFinance@doe.in.gov with questions and include your sponsor number in the subject line.

And Justice For All Posters

And Justice For All posters are currently **not** being printed by USDA nor distributed by IDOE. All sponsors should continue to use the 2019 version. Sponsors are recommended to make copies of their existing posters as needed. If possible, you should print the poster at the intended 11x17 size and in color. However, if printing capabilities are limited, an 8.5x11 size and/or a black and white version is allowable. There will be no administrative review findings until posters are printed and distributed again.

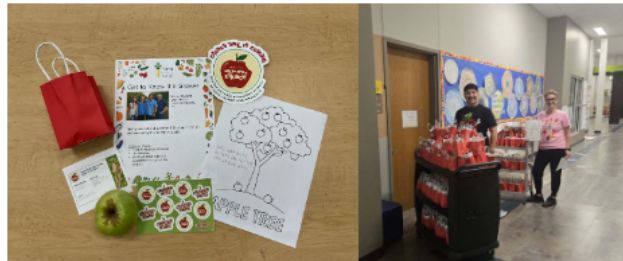
New Field Specialists and Territory Realignment

Since June 2024, three new field specialists have been added to the School and Summer Field staff. Now serving the west central Indiana territory is Lorrie Rainey who resides in Lafayette. Serving the northeast corner of the state is Andrea Stieglitz, who resides in Ft. Wayne. The most recent addition to the team is Katie Sherman who resides in Huntingburg and will be serving the southwest corner of the state. As always, your assigned field specialist contact information can be found within CNPweb, program year 2025, right under the Checklist heading on the Sponsor Summary page. With this expansion of the field staff team, territories could have shifted slightly. If you have any questions or need technical assistance in the day-to-day operation of your school nutrition program, please reach out to your field specialist.

Farm to School

Apple Crunch Day School Highlights

Shelbyville Central Schools celebrated Apple Crunch Day with apple bags and kits for the students to take home to enjoy.



Tri-County School Corporation celebrated Apple Crunch Day at their high school and intermediate school.



Grant Opportunity from Earth Charter

Have you been dreaming of how to make your school garden more sustainable? The Thriving Schools Challenge provides \$5,000 in grant funding for student led projects that emphasize the circular economy. Indiana public, charter, and non-public schools (K-12) are eligible to apply. Past projects include edible gardens, pollinator habitats, recycling, composting, food waste audits, and more! Learn more [here](#).

Funding Opportunity for Garden Projects

The SeedMoney Challenge is an annual crowdfunding challenge for school and community gardens across the U.S. If selected, the grants range from \$100 to \$1000, and the school receives 100% of the money they raise. Find more information [here](#). The application closes on Tuesday, November 12.

USDA Foods

Use Your USDA Foods

Schools must use their USDA Foods sitting at the state assigned warehouse, Dilgard Frozen Foods or Stanz-Troyers Foodservice and/or the processing companies in order to receive maximum benefit and reduce their school food budget. Non-use of USDA Foods can lead to food and funds loss, waste, improper inventory management, and excess inventory. USDA wants schools to use their USDA Foods in the year allocated. Remember to use carryover pounds first.

Remember to Receipt in FFAVORS

Schools should be receipting 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 [shredded mozzarella cheese](#) for this variation of [homemade cheesy breadsticks](#). This recipe must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



Training and Webinar Opportunities

Fall Culinary Skills for School Meals Webinar Series

Chef Cathy Powers and her team will be offering free, interactive culinary education for all K-12 school nutrition professionals. Virtual training is provided from 2 to 3 p.m. ET, featuring live chef demonstrations of practical recipes, efficient techniques, and important nutritional insights. Each class earns one continuing education unit (CEU) and includes great giveaways. Click the title of the sessions below to see more details and to register.

- Thursday, October 31 - [Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Hot Dishes](#)
- Thursday, November 7 - [Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Chilled Dishes](#)
- Thursday, November 14 - [Super Simple Sauces](#)

Did you miss any of the previous Culinary Skills for School Meals Webinars from earlier this year? Click any of the links [here](#) to view the recording.

Reminders

Last Chance! Photo Request for National School Lunch Week

Share your fun ideas and promotions from NSLW! IDOE will compile a scrapbook with school submissions. Please submit your photos with the school name and description to [Margo Birk](#). Remember that photos of children's faces cannot be submitted without media release information on file.

USDA Updated Policy Guidance

On October 7, 2024, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released the following policy guidance to support school meal program operations following the publication of the final rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans ([89 FR 31962](#), April 25, 2024):

- [SP 01-2025, Fluid Milk Requirements for School Meals](#)
- [SP 02-2025, Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit Flexibility in the School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators](#)

Updates from Our Partners

New USDA Grants Available

As part of [USDA's Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative](#), Project SCALES (Supporting Community Agriculture and Local Education Systems) is funding partnership grants that strengthen school meals programs, from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. To apply, you'll need a team of at least three partners, which must include a school food authority and a food industry partner, along with farmers, producers, distributors, and other organizations. To learn more and apply, visit [projectscales.com](#).

The Road to Successful Menu Planning for School Meals Training Series

Join Team Nutrition and the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) for free, live and recorded training on hot topics related to the Final Rule, "Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Pattern Consistent with 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans." The training series is designed to assist school food authorities, state agencies, and others in implementing the updated nutrition standards for school meals. Visit [here](#) to register for live training and view recorded training videos.

Upcoming Dates



Wednesday, October 30	August Claim Deadline
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Thursday, October 31, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Hot Dishes
Friday, November 1	2024 AFR Due
Wednesday, November 6, through Friday, November 8	ISNA Annual Conference
Thursday, November 7, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Cooking Whole Grains - Techniques for Chilled Dishes
Thursday, November 14, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	Culinary Skills for School Meals webinar series: Super Simple Sauces

Additional Resources

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

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Department News

- 10/09/24 Hoosiers Encouraged to Share Feedback on Second Draft of Diploma Rule
- 10/02/24 Indiana Launches Early Childhood Education Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

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