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## School Nutrition Programs Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



Indiana Department of Education sent this bulletin at 11/20/2024 04:00 PM EST



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

#### Food Safety Plans

All school food authorities (SFAs) that operate the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program must have a food safety plan based on HACCP principles. A well-designed food safety plan will manage potential food safety hazards at every stage of the foodservice process, from receiving to serving. The written food safety plan should be specific to each individual school within the district taking into account the physical location, equipment, staff, menu, etc. of that site. Involve site managers in the process, and keep the food safety plan on hand for their implementation and reference.

Use this [resource](#) as a guide to create your Food Safety Plan. Also visit [IDOE's Food Safety webpage](#) for additional information and resources.

### Important Updates

#### Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements

USDA has released an updated policy memo, [SP 05-2025\\_CACFP 04-2025\\_SFSP 02-2025 Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](#).

The updated memo provides important information about acceptable manufacturer documentation for meal pattern contribution crediting information. Of note, the memo clarifies the difference between the date of authorization found on the CN label and the "Valid Until" date on the CN Label Verification Report. Additionally, the memo confirms the use of the CN Label Verification System to check if a CN label is valid.

Additional USDA resources:

- [Manufacturer Documentation: Child Nutrition Labels and Product Formulation Statements](#)
- [Tip Sheet for Accepting Processed Product Documentation](#)
- [CN Label Verification Report](#)

#### Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meals Program - Updated Clarification

On November 1, 2024, FNS released [SP 04-2025\\_Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs](#). This memorandum clarifies the policy related to fees associated with electronic (online) payments in the school meal programs. The memo states that, effective school year (SY) 2027-2028, families with students eligible for reduced price meal benefits in the school meal programs must not be

charged any fees for using electronic payment services in the school meal programs. This means that families with students eligible for reduced-price meal benefits are not required to pay any fees, even if the school offers an alternative payment option that normally doesn't require fees.

This policy is effective SY 2027-2028, or the school year immediately following the expiration of the SFA's current contract with a payment processing company, if the contract expires after SY 2027-2028. FNS is delaying implementation of this requirement to provide ample lead time to allow SFAs to modify current systems and/or establish new contracts. However, SFAs are encouraged to implement this requirement as soon as they are able and may use funds in the nonprofit school food service account to cover the fees under their current contract.

The following list provides additional clarification for schools that choose to provide electronic payment services.

1. SFAs must provide all families (including families paying the full price for school meals) a free and accessible method of making deposits to the student meal account.
2. SFAs must provide a method of making deposits to the student meal account that does not require computer access to meet the needs of families who do not have access to a computer, do not have a bank account, or who prefer to make their payment by other means. Common methods SFAs use for families to add money to their child(ren)'s meal account(s) that do not require computer access include accepting money (i.e., cash and checks) at the school office or allowing families to mail in checks.
3. SFAs must notify families of available payment options and any associated fees in ways that are easy to find and understand.
4. All families must have access to all payment methods made available by an SFA for adding money to their student(s)' meal account(s). Schools cannot discriminate against children receiving free or reduced price meals, including by limiting their options to pay for the cost of meals in comparison to the options available to other school children. For example, SFAs may not exclude families eligible for reduced price meals from using electronic payment services.

## Farm to School

### We Want Your Feedback

Did you participate in Indiana Food Day or Indiana Apple Crunch? Please take a few minutes to complete the following feedback forms so we can build better promotional events next year. Find the Indiana Food Day survey [here](#), and the Indiana Apple Crunch survey [here](#).

### USDA Fiscal Year (FY) Farm to School Grant Program

In FY 2025, the USDA will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the grant program. Each grant will help eligible entities implement farm to school programming that increases access to local food in eligible schools, connects children with agriculture for better health, and inspires youth to consider careers in agriculture. You can apply for \$5,000 to \$500,000 depending on your funding track. Find more information [here](#). Applications must be submitted by Friday, January 10, 2025.

## USDA Foods

### Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Allocation Requests for School Year 2025-2026

The time has come to submit your school's allocation requests for next school year. Schools must complete the appropriate form that applies to your School Food Authority. The deadline for submission is Friday, December 13, at 5 p.m. ET. Remember that DoD allocations are deducted from your school's USDA Foods entitlement before the annual pre-order survey opens.

- Click [here](#) if your school is currently on the DoD Fresh Program for school year 2024-2025.
- Click [here](#) if your school is NOT currently on the DoD Fresh Program for school year 2024-2025.
- For more information on the DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program, please visit [IDOE's DoD Fresh Website](#) and/or view IDOE's three-part DoD series in [Moodle](#).

### Holiday Breaks

Please remember to put a 24-hour access phone number under the Application tab in CNPweb and cross-reference your school calendars and personal calendars with your USDA Foods delivery periods under the Orders tab in FDP link in CNPweb. Schools must ensure that school staff is available to inspect, verify and accept all USDA Foods deliveries. Missed deliveries where school staff is unavailable could result in costs to the school for transportation, fuel, handling, and restocking fees.

### Remember to Receipt in FFAVORS

Schools should be receipting their DoD produce receipts into FFAVORS within five calendar days after the produce delivery.

## USDA Foods Recipes

Use your USDA [frozen turkey roast](#), [canned](#) or [frozen carrots](#) and [frozen green beans](#) to prepare this variation of [best turkey pot pie](#). This recipe must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.



## Training and Webinar Opportunities

### Verification Summary Report (VSR) Webinar

Join us for information on how to complete the VSR on Tuesday, December 3, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

### Tips for Increasing Employee Retention

Join the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) for their November Strategies Training Action Plans resources (STAR) webinar series on Thursday, November 21, at 3 p.m. ET. This webinar will explore practical tips to enhance employee satisfaction and retain valuable food service staff. Register [here](#).

### Produce Safety University

Applications are now open for the 2025 [Produce Safety University](#). USDA Food and Nutrition Services in collaboration with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Services will host five PSU sessions: one virtual and four in-person sessions February through June. More information and application can be found [here](#).

## Reminders

### Verification Summary Report (VSR)

All sponsors must complete the VSR, even if they are not required to conduct verification. As soon as the October claim for reimbursement has been submitted and approved, VSR will be open under the Reports tab in CNPweb. The VSR is due on January 15, 2025. For more information, visit the [IDOE verification webpage](#).

### National School Lunch Week Scrapbook

Thanks to those sponsors that submitted photos! So many great ideas and fun across the state. Check out the scrapbook [here](#).

## Updates from Our Partners

### 'Milk is Local' Kit from American Dairy Association Indiana

Did you know that fresh dairy milk is one of the most local products that you serve to your students? With an average of 48 hours from farm to cafeteria, the milk that you serve daily is not only local, but fresh. Join the American Dairy Association Indiana in amplifying this message with our 'Milk is Local' Kit. Use the pieces to share the milk is local message to your students while also encouraging them to choose this nutrient dense option for each meal. Turn your cafeteria into a classroom! Order your kit [here](#).

### Project SCALES Grant

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](#).

## Upcoming Dates



Thursday, November 21, at 3 p.m. ET

[ICN November STAR webinar](#)

Tuesday, December 3, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET	<a href="#">VSR webinar</a>
Friday, December 13, at 5 p.m. ET	Deadline to submit DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program allocation requests for the 2025-2026 school year
January 10, 2025	Application deadline for FY 2025 Farm to School Grants
January 15, 2025	VSR due

### Additional Resources

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

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## Department News

- 11/12/24 Intentional Investments in Summer Math and Reading Support Show Return on Investment for Students
- 11/08/24 Indiana Schools Recognized for Commitment to Service Members, Veterans and Families

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