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School Nutrition Programs Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



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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

Grade Grouping Reminders

Please keep USDA required grade groupings in mind as you plan menus for next school year. USDA has labeled traditional grade groupings as kindergarten (K) through grade five, grades six through eight, and grades nine through 12, with overlapping grade grouping options by each meal type. At breakfast, there is an overlapping meal pattern for grades K through 12. At lunch, the only overlapping grade grouping is K through grade eight. Buildings that have younger grades and grades nine through 12 together, must plan different menus to meet each grade grouping requirements. This means that students in grade eight or below cannot receive the same daily meal as students in grades nine through 12. If you have questions about meal pattern grade groupings, please contact your assigned field specialist.

Important Updates

Indiana SUN Bucks Website Now Available

The [website](#) includes resources for schools, parents, and community organizations. Please take the time to review the materials, prioritizing the following:

- Communications Plan for Schools
- Frequently Asked Questions for Schools
- Notification Letter Templates

The SUN Bucks online application will not open as planned on Monday, April 15, due to pending program approval from USDA. IDOE will send out notification as soon as it becomes available.

SUN Bucks Action Items

Thanks to those who attended the SUN Bucks informational session for schools. If you missed the sessions, you can review the slides with script [here](#). IDOE will rely on our school partners to be the first line of communication with households about this exciting new program.

- Begin communicating with households. Because this program is new, it is recommended that schools reach out to all households within the district to share eligibility status and application information.
 - Those who are directly certified (DC) for free or reduced benefits and those who have been approved by a meal benefit application, curricular materials, or similar application, are automatically eligible for SUN Bucks. These households should ensure their mailing address is up to date with their child's school to guarantee that the benefit card is sent to the

correct location. IDOE has a [letter template](#) that explains the new program and that these households are automatically eligible.

- o Those who are not approved for free or reduced benefits, but feel that they might qualify, should be instructed to apply using the [Indiana SUN Bucks application](#) when the application opens. IDOE has a [letter template](#) that explains the application process.

Learn more about SUN Bucks [here](#) and submit questions to the [online help form](#).

School Year (SY) 2024-2025 Paid Lunch Equity (PLE)

In March, USDA released [Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2024-2025](#). School food authorities (SFAs) with positive or zero balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2023, are exempt from PLE pricing requirements found at [7 CFR 210.14\(e\)](#).

In order to demonstrate state agency oversight, USDA's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) recommends that state agencies maintain documentation that includes which SFAs are using the PLE exemption for SY 2024-2025. This documentation should include a record that each SFA had a positive or zero balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2023. This record could include documents such as a financial ledger or an attestation provided by the SFA. IDOE created an [Attestation Statement](#) for schools that wish to confirm their exempt status. Exempt SFAs may still use the PLE tool to complete the steps necessary to determine their target SY 2024-2025 paid lunch price, consistent with program regulations at 7 CFR 210.14(e), and adjust their paid lunch prices accordingly.

- [Attestation Statement for Exempt Schools](#)
- [2024-2025 PLE Tool Flow Chart](#)
- [2024-2025 PLE Tool](#)

The [financial management](#) website is under construction and will be updated with SY 2024-2025 PLE resources soon.

Farm to School

Farm to School Symposium Registration is Open

The agenda and registration for the Farm to School and ECE Symposium can be found on the Indiana Grown for School's [event page](#). The event will be held at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds on Tuesday, June 18, and Wednesday, June 19. Participants will learn about gardening, local procurement, and agriculture education. All teaching, food service, and school administrative staff are welcome to attend. Contact [Sophie Lindley](#) with any questions.

Farm to School Highlight: Nineveh-Hensley-Jackson School Corporation

Nineveh-Hensley-Jackson School Corporation's high school agriculture department runs the Creek Cattle Company (CCC). Agriculture students raise, feed, and care for the cattle until they reach their ideal weight for processing. The beef is processed locally, and the food service department buys ground beef from the CCC. Learn more about their program [here](#). If you would like to highlight your school's farm to school program in the newsletter, contact [Sophie Lindley](#).

USDA Foods

SY 2024-2025 USDA Foods Direct Delivery Warehouses

IDOE has executed new contracts with two warehouses for SY 2024-2025. Dilgard Frozen Foods will cover the counties in northeastern region and Stanz-Troyers Foodservice will cover the remaining counties in the state. Click [here](#) for a map and list of county and regional assignments.

USDA Frozen Broccoli Cancelled

USDA Foods frozen broccoli 110473 has been cancelled for the remainder of school year 2023-2024. IDOE will not receive anymore of this item for this school. Allocations of this product should resume in school year 2024-2025. Please plan your menus accordingly.

American Commodity Distribution Association Conference (ACDA)

School food service staff working with the USDA Foods in Schools Program are encouraged to participate in the upcoming ACDA Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, from Sunday, April 21, through Wednesday, April 24. Learn more [here](#).

End of School Year Tasks

Schools should evaluate the volume of all USDA Foods currently at their state assigned warehouses (Dilgard Frozen Foods, Stanz-Troyers Food Service and Wabash Foods), at the processors and any Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program funds available in the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS). USDA Foods allocations into school food authority

(SFA) inventories in [CNPweb](#) will end on Tuesday, April 30. State assigned warehouse deliveries will end on or before Sunday, June 30. SFAs should remove all USDA Foods from their state assigned warehouse, processors and utilize DoD Fresh Program funds by Sunday, June 30. It is highly recommended that SFAs cross-reference their delivery periods under the "Orders" tab in [CNPweb](#) with school calendars. Any unordered direct delivery (brown box) USDA Foods will be swept from all SFA inventories after Sunday, June 30.

USDA Foods Orders and Deliveries

If your school places a USDA Foods order and will not be in session, will be on break, or has an e-learning day scheduled, please ensure school staff is onsite and available to inspect, verify and accept any USDA Foods deliveries. If your school places an order and school staff is unavailable and it results in a missed delivery, the SFA may be subject to missed delivery fees, which could include transportation, handling, fuel, and restocking fees.



USDA Foods Recipes

Celebrate National Grilled Cheese Day on Friday, April 12, with [USDA's Toasted Cheese Sandwich](#) and use your USDA sliced American 100036, shredded cheddar 100012, and/or shredded mozzarella 100021 cheeses. Recipes must be adjusted to meet serving sizes and meal patterns.

Training and Webinar Opportunities

Spring Webinars from IDOE

- **Maintenance of the Non-Profit School Food Service Account (Fund 0800):** Learn the finance basics for managing the Non-Profit School Food Service Account including a review of allowable and unallowable cost using federal funds, application of indirect cost and Annual Financial Report requirements. Thursday, April 25, at 10 a.m. ET. [Register here.](#)
- **End of Year Updates and Reminders:** Join us for important reminders and updates to help wrap up your school year and prepare for the next school year. Thursday, May 5, at 1 p.m. ET. [Register here.](#)

Back by Popular Demand! Culinary Skills for A+ School Meals In-Person Summer Training

Culinary Skill for A+ School Meals is a free five-day, hands-on culinary training skills workshop designed for all job positions in school kitchens. Classes are free and will earn attendees 28 continuing education units (CEUs). This workshop will be offered in six locations throughout Indiana.

- Evansville - Monday, June 3, through Friday, June 7
- Columbus - Monday, June 10, through Friday, June 14
- Fishers - Monday, June 24, through Friday, June 28
- Merrillville - Monday, July 8, through Friday, July 12
- Elkhart - Monday, July 15, through Friday, July 19
- Plainfield - Monday, July 22, through Friday, July 26

Classes meet from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. local time at the host site. Space will be limited for each session and participants should plan to attend all five days. Register [here.](#)

Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership (ISNL)

Due to restrictions from the Institute of Child Nutrition, IDOE will offer one in-person ISNL training opportunity this summer, from Monday, June 24, through Friday, June 28, at Greenfield-Central Educational Services Center. ISNL is intended for new school nutrition program directors and provides an overview of school nutrition programs, defines the role and responsibilities of a director, and reviews the relationship between local policies and state/federal regulations. Because this session will be capped at 40 participants, we ask that only those with three or fewer years of director/program management experience, and who have never attended ISNL training, register to attend. [Register here.](#)

Food Service Director (FSD) 101 - Wait List

IDOE will provide training to new school nutrition program directors with five years or less experience through FSD 101. This series of live webinars will discuss the director's role, meal pattern and crediting, wellness policies, special dietary needs, USDA foods, and more. We ask that participants plan to attend all sessions. This training is currently full. Please email SCNtrainings@doe.in.gov to be added to the waitlist.

Reminders

Ramadan Waiver

USDA approved IDOE's [waiver request](#), allowing program operators to seek approval to serve meals in a non-congregate setting to children at schools operating the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program who are fasting in observance of Ramadan. Contact your field specialist for more information.

Updates from Our Partners

Pilot Light Food Education Fellowship

Food service staff, please share with educators in your district. Pilot Light, a Midwest Region USDA Farm to School Grantee, has launched the application for the 2024-2025 Food Education Fellowship. Teachers may apply [here](#) through Monday, May 27. Pilot Light created the Food Education Fellowship to invest in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 teacher leaders who are committed to bringing food education to their students. In addition to integrated food education lessons, fellows will partner with an individual or organization in the food space to support student-led advocacy work within their classrooms. Learn more about the fellowship [here](#). Pilot Light will hold a virtual office hour about the fellowship on Wednesday, May 1, at 5 p.m. ET. You may register [here](#) to learn more.

Upcoming Dates



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| Tuesday, April 16, 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET | Session 1: Trauma-Informed Nutrition Security for Indiana Schools |
| Sunday, April 21, through Wednesday, April 24 | ACDA Conference |
| Tuesday, April 23, 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET | Session 2: Trauma-Informed Nutrition Security for Indiana Schools |
| Thursday, April 25, at 10 a.m. ET | Maintenance of the Non-Profit School Food Service Account (Fund 0800) |
| Monday, April 29 | Summer EBT Final Rule Comments Due |
| Tuesday, April 30 | Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub Application Deadline |
| Tuesday, April 30, 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET | Session 3: Trauma-Informed Nutrition Security for Indiana Schools |
| Wednesday, May 1, at 5 p.m. ET | Food Education Fellowship Office Hour |
| Thursday, May 5, at 1 p.m. ET | End of Year Updates and Reminders |
| Friday, May 24 | FSD 101 Registration Deadline |
| Monday, May 27 | Food Education Fellowship Application Deadline |
| Tuesday, June 18, and Wednesday, June 19 | Farm to School and ECE Symposium |

Additional Resources

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

- [CNPweb](#)

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