

School Nutrition Update

May 17, 2021



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Program Operations Information

Follow New Guiding Principles for N.C. School Nutrition Programs

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Division has created an updated set of guiding principles to ensure accountability and program integrity and access to appealing, quality school meals. Please adopt these guidelines and share them with all local School Nutrition Program staff.

1. Transition to support on-site instruction and nutritious, appealing school meals to all students, while addressing the needs of distance learners and other children in the community who are food-insecure within the human and financial resources available;
2. Support the physical, mental, social and emotional health and well-being of children, staff, families and communities by continuing support COVID-related public health priorities, food safety measures and personal hygiene protocols;
3. Operate programs in a manner that promotes overall sustainability and program integrity;
4. Communicate often with stakeholders about the challenges and opportunities associated with providing school meals; and
5. Use our collective voices to transform school meals to reflect new and emerging education and nutrition priorities.

Prepare for Annual Agreement Renewal for the 2021-22 School Year

The written Annual Agreement Renewal for the 2021-22 school year is now available. For your convenience, the Application Process Flow Chart, Annual Agreements and Free and Reduced Priced Meal Application packet are available on the School Nutrition [website](#).

Agreement Renewal Deadlines

- June 11, 2021
 - Update Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Site Applications for June 2021, July 2021 and August 2021 through the last day of summer before school starts.
 - Complete the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Application Process for 2020-21 (July, August and September 2021 starting with the first day of school for SY 21-22).
- June 30, 2021 is the deadline for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Annual Agreement Renewal (Online Renewal Application, and Written Agreement) and all hard copy documents must be received in the state agency office. Please plan accordingly to ensure your required documents are uploaded and received in the State Agency office by close of business on that day.
- July 30, 2021 - Complete the SSO Application Process for 2021-22 for October 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

Online Application Steps

- Access the [Online Renewal Application](#).
- Review the Instructions, Application Packet and Flow Chart for the necessary steps and timelines.
- The free and reduced packet and application should be emailed to Jacquelyn McGowan, Compliance Specialist at jacquelyn.mcgowan@dpi.nc.gov. Please do not upload the free and reduced packet into the School Nutrition Technology System.

- 2020-21 Food Safety Inspections must be completed in the online application (Applications Tab).
- If applicable, the Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Contract List must be completed online. All FSMC contract documentation must be submitted to Dr. Lynn Harvey for approval.
- Provide the following fully executed documents: Signature Page, Attestation for Compliance to Meal Pattern, Effective Date for Eligibility Determination and Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Amendment Agreement (if applicable), and Free and Reduced Application Packet.
- Complete the USDA Waiver Requests in the School Nutrition Technology System.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact your [Zone Team](#).

Choose SSO or NSLP/SBP

School Food Authorities (SFAs) have the option to choose to operate the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for School Year 2021-22. Weigh the options and decide which works best for the students you serve. Remember SSO Open Sites would be allowed to provide meals to the community during the school year and provide meals at no charge to virtual students. This is not allowed through the SBP and NSLP.

Be Aware of USDA Regulations Regarding Virtual Schools

USDA regulations at 7 CFR 210.2, define a “school” that is eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) as “operating in a single building or complex of buildings.” Therefore, schools that operate entirely virtually and do not operate in school buildings do not meet the definition of a school for purposes of the program. Please keep this in mind in planning for the 2021-22 school year. Ensure that school administrators are aware of the USDA regulations regarding virtual schools.

Is Your SFA Exempt from the Paid Lunch Equity Requirement?

All School Food Authorities (SFAs) with a positive cash balance as of December 31, 2020, are exempt from the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) requirement. The exemption will be based on December 2020 FC1-A. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact your [Zone Team](#).

Submit Community Eligibility Provision

Complete the Community Eligibility Provision for the 2020-21 school year in the School Nutrition Technology System (SNTS) prior to June 30, 2021.

Check Out #StrongSchoolNC Toolkit Updates

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) recently made updates to the [#StrongSchoolsNC](#) guidance related to physical distancing and minimizing exposure and cleaning and hygiene. Please review the updates and reach out to your Zone Teams for any questions.



- Requirement removed: “Discontinue the use of any self-service food or beverage distribution in the cafeteria (e.g., meals and/or snacks served at school should be individually packaged and served directly to students; milk or juice may be available separately and should also be served directly to students). As always, ensure the safety of children with food allergies.”

- Requirements for Plan A and B were aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for routine cleaning and disinfection only after someone is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Be Ready for Upcoming Summer Nutrition Program Events

Several important events/deadlines are coming up for N.C. Summer Nutrition Programs. Please note the following on your calendars. Visit the links below for more info and stay tuned to the SN Update and Wednesday Webinars. If you have questions, reach out to your [Summer Nutrition Program Consultant](#).

- Cartwheel Trainings - May 17, 24 and 25 (All sessions are full.)
- [SSO Training – May 20](#)
- SFSP RACE Live AR Training - May 27
- [Deadline to Update SFSP Site Applications for June 2021, July 2021 and August 2021 through the last day of summer before school starts and Complete the SSO Application Process for 2020-21 – June 11](#)
- [Deadline for NSLP Annual Agreement Renewal - Online Application and All Hard Copy Documents Received in the Raleigh Office – June 30](#)
- Special Milk Program Training – July 13
- [N.C. Farm to Summer Week - July 18-24](#)
- [Complete the SSO Application Process for 2021-22 for October 1, 2021-June 30, 2022 – July 30](#)
- [Turnip the Beet Award Nominations Deadline - September 10](#)

Review P-EBT Updates

Please be prepared to provide a file to the Testing Coordinator on the first business day of each month for the remainder of SY 2020-21. As with all reporting requirements, if the first falls on the weekend, the file will be due on the following Monday. The data collections are set for Tuesday, June 1, 2021 and Wednesday, June 30, 2021. Please note that if there have been no changes to students (through processing of a household application or direct certification) the June 30, 2021 will not be needed. Reminder: Corrections to student attendance records will be provided to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and any additional benefits will be issued retroactively to August 2021. Information about Summer P-EBT is on the horizon. Please stay tuned to the Wednesday Webinars and School Nutrition Update.

Submit Questions to be Answered During the Wednesday Webinars

Please submit any questions you have for the Wednesday Briefing for School Food Authorities (SFAs) via the [online form](#). Answer the first two questions and then enter your questions one question per box. If you have more than ten questions, please click on the link to the form and submit your additional questions.

School Nutrition Spotlight

Congratulate Scholarship Winners

The School Nutrition Foundation is still providing resources for School Nutrition Association (SNA) members by awarding twenty-three (23) Professional Development scholarships for the 2021-22 school year. Every year the School Nutrition Foundation provides education scholarships for SNA members with funding for

tuition and books for the following school year. Two SNA members from North Carolina were selected to receive scholarships. Congratulations to the recipients!



- Stefanie Almond, SNS, Cabarrus County Schools
- Jeremy Hetrick, Henderson Collegiate

Submit Articles for the School Nutrition Update E-letter

We aim to include lots of items of interest to our School Nutrition professionals across the state in the School Nutrition Update e-letter. Issues are scheduled to go out at the first of each week. If you have a resource, grant, job opportunity, continuing education event or other news item for the School Nutrition Update e-letter, please send those to Tracey Bates, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov, by 12 pm on the Thursday prior to when the School Nutrition Update will be released the following week.

Share a School Nutrition Spotlight

We love lifting up our #NCSchoolNutritionHeroes! If you know of a North Carolina School Nutrition team or professional that has received an award, honor or other recognition or should be spotlighted, please share for an upcoming School Nutrition Spotlight. Please send details to Tracey Bates, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov.

Nutrition Education & Promotion

Learn about Dairy and Win a Café Makeover

MootubeTV, the show that fuels you, is now premiering at Panthers.com. We think it's a pretty great way to close out the school year and give everyone a reason to celebrate plus win prizes! Watch Panthers Legends and Sir Purr in the three episodes. Enter for a chance to win a Carolina Panther themed [cafeteria makeover kit](#) and recess refresh kit for your school. Students, teachers, PE teachers, School Nutrition staff, etc. can enter for their school. Just submit a video preparing your favorite smoothie, using dairy, to MootubeTV@thedairyalliance.com. Include your name, the school name, county, and state.



Continuing Education

Learn Best Practices for COVID-19 Mitigation & School Re-opening – 5/19, 3 pm ET

Join the School Nutrition Association and representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to learn about best practices for COVID-19 mitigation and school-reopening. USDA representatives will provide an overview of the USDA's most recent waivers and discuss food safety best practices for all service models for back to school planning. Finally, a CDC representative will provide an overview of current COVID-19 safety guidance in school food service and serving meals in schools. Speakers will share and discuss materials containing actionable information on best practices for COVID-19 prevention and re-opening schools. [Learn more and register](#).

Access Virtual Training Opportunities

The Institute for Child Nutrition (ICN) has compiled [resources to help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus](#). Online food safety/HACCP training is available on the NCDPI, School Nutrition [website](#) and the ICN [website](#). Additional continuing education resources are available on the School Nutrition [website](#) from NCDPI, ICN, the School Nutrition Association and other agencies and organizations. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics offers [COVID-19 professional resources](#) for Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists (RDNs) and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTRs), and [continuing professional education resources](#).

Questions

If you have any questions regarding these updates, please reach out to your regional consultants. Contact information for your Zone teams can be found [here](#).

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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