

School Nutrition Update

March 20-24, 2023



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Program Operations Information

Take Action - Civil Rights Information Reminder for ALL SFAs and Sponsors

This notification is a reminder that all School Food Authorities (SFAs) and Sponsors need to ensure that the Nondiscrimination Statement (NDS) listed on School Nutrition documents reflects the most recent language per the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Civil Rights requirement. **The updated NDS is located on the [USDA website](#).** All documents, pamphlets, websites, etc. should be updated with the **2022 NDS** as follows:

1. Websites must be updated within 90 days of the date of the Revised Nondiscrimination Statement and “And Justice For All” Posters Memorandum (May 5, 2022).
2. Documents, pamphlets, brochures, etc. using 2015 NDS language must be updated when current supply on hand is exhausted or by September 30, 2023.
3. All new printing must use the 2022 NDS.

Please note that the new *And Justice for All (AJFA) Posters* are in the design/printing phase. A timeline for distribution cannot be determined until printing commences. AJFA posters currently posted must not be removed until replaced with the new poster.

If you have any questions, contact your Zone Consultant or Jacquelyn McGowan, Compliance Specialist, jacquelyn.mcgowan@dpi.nc.gov.

Apply to Participate in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program – Deadlines 3/24 and 31

The opportunity for North Carolina’s eligible elementary schools to apply to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for the 2023-24 school year (SY) is happening now! Please make note of these important dates:

- **Friday, March 24, 2023, 11:59 PM:** Deadline to complete the 2023-24 FFVP electronic application housed in the School Nutrition Technology System (SNTS) and accessible to School Nutrition administrative staff with “application entry” access.
- **Friday, March 31, 2023, 11:59 PM:** Deadline to complete and electronically submit the two required documents to complete a school’s 2023-24 FFVP application: 1) 2023-24 FFVP Application Signature Pages, and 2) “Number of Days the FFVP Operates Weekly” form to Zoe McKay-Tucker, N.C. FFVP Coordinator, zoe.mckaytucker@dpi.nc.gov. Both required forms are accessible on the School Nutrition [website](#).

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), Office of School Nutrition recently emailed to School Nutrition administrators for public school units and charter schools the 2023-24 FFVP application information and invitation for eligible elementary schools to apply. To request the FFVP application information and invitation, please e-mail Zoe McKay-Tucker, zoe.mckaytucker@dpi.nc.gov.

The FFVP is a Federally-assisted program that provides fresh fruit and vegetable snacks a minimum of two days/week during the instructional school day at no cost to the students. The goal of the FFVP is to create

healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices. Expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience and increasing their overall acceptance and consumption of fresh, unprocessed produce can make a difference in children’s diets to impact their present and future health.

NCDPI encourages School Nutrition administrators interested in the FFVP to become familiar with the program requirements by reading the [USDA FFVP: A Handbook for Schools](#). Then, discuss the FFVP with the superintendent and respective principal and others in eligible schools. If all are interested and committed to success, strongly consider applying to participate in the program. For schools selected to participate, the enrolled students will greatly benefit from the nutritious fresh fruit and vegetable snacks and learn that healthy choices can be delicious, too!

For questions about the North Carolina 2023-24 FFVP application process or the FFVP in general, e-mail Zoe McKay-Tucker, zoe.mckaytucker@dpi.nc.gov.

Submit Comments on School Meals Operation Study: Evaluation of the School-Based Child Nutrition Programs – Deadline 4/3

Section 28(a) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act authorizes the USDA Secretary to conduct annual national performance assessments of the school meal programs. The USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) plans to conduct this annual assessment through the School Meal Operations (SMO) Study in SY 2023-24. The SMO Study will collect data from State and local agencies on the Child Nutrition COVID-19 waivers as well as data on state and local program operations during SY 2022–23. This study will help USDA, FNS obtain:

1. General descriptive data on the characteristics of Child Nutrition Programs to inform the budget process and answer questions about topics of current policy interest;
2. Data on Program operations to identify potential topics for training and technical assistance for School Food Authorities (SFAs) and State agencies (SAs) responsible for administering the Child Nutrition Programs;
3. Administrative data to identify program trends and predictors; and
4. Information on the use and effectiveness of the Child Nutrition COVID–19 waivers.

The USDA, Food and Nutrition Service has made changes to their plans to collect data as part of the SMO Study. In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the general public and other public agencies are asked to comment on this proposed information collection. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service is seeking input on ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond. For more information, view the [announcement](#). Written comments must be received on or before April 3, 2023. Comments may be sent to Darcy Gungor, darcy.gungor@usda.gov. Comments will also be accepted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov, and follow the online instructions for submitting comments electronically.

Make Your Voice Heard – Submit Comments on New Child Nutrition Standards Proposed Rule – Due 4/10

On February 3, the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) announced a new proposed rule, “[Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)”. The proposed rule contains new Child Nutrition regulations regarding the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, Summer Food Service Programs, and Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Every voice matters! Submit your comments on how the new regulations in the proposed rule will impact your programs. The actual number of comments received makes a tremendous difference in the outcome. USDA will review and record all comments submitted. The standards are available for public comment for 60 days from February 7 through April 10, 2023. School Nutrition professionals and other stakeholders are encouraged to review the [proposed rule and related materials](#) and [submit comments](#).

School Nutrition Spotlight

Visiting Bertie County Schools

On March 15, Congressman Don Davis came to meet with and visit the Bertie County School Nutrition director and staff. He visited Windsor Elementary School and served lunch to fifth graders, alongside Superintendent Dr. Otis Smallwood and the School Nutrition cafe staff. The students were incredibly pleased to meet him. Afterward Congressman Davis spoke with School Nutrition Director Tiwana Smallwood, Principal Clara Lee, Superintendent Dr. Smallwood, and Board of Education Chair Rickey Freeman to discuss the School Nutrition Program and other educational topics. The district and school leadership and School Nutrition staff voiced their concerns about current issues facing and the proposed regulation changes for School Nutrition Programs. Mr. Davis has already been instrumental in changes to support the program. That same day, Congressman Davis cosigned a bill from Representative James McGovern that would help improve reimbursement for School Nutrition Programs. The support for education and School Nutrition is wholeheartedly appreciated.



Follow/Like Us on Social Media

Did you know you could find the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition on social media? Follow or like our pages - @NCSchoolMeals and @Ray4NCKids on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Share Your School Nutrition Photos

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition wants to highlight the appealing, wholesome, quality meals our School Nutrition Programs across the state offer to students each day. Share your beautiful photos of serving lines and complete school breakfast or school lunch meals with us. Please send to Tracey Bates, NCDPI School Nutrition Promotion Specialist, at tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov. Make sure to include the school and district info so we can aim to credit the source. Be on the lookout for photos of school meals from across the state on social media.



Orange County Schools

Send in Articles or Topics of Interest for the School Nutrition Update E-letter

If you have a resource, grant, job opportunity, continuing education event, award announcement, shout out or other news item for the School Nutrition Update, please send a brief article (250 words or less) to Tracey Bates, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov, by 12 pm on the Wednesday prior to when the SN Update is sent out the

following week. Please include “**SN Update**” in the email subject line. If there are topics of interest you would also like to see included, please share as well.

Job Opportunity

Work with Wake County – Administrator for Innovation and Program Development

The Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), Child Nutrition Services Department is hiring for an Administrator for Innovation and Program Development. This position works under the direction of the Director of Innovation and Program Development and assists with food and supply decisions, creates the menus and oversees meal pattern compliance for WCPSS, works directly with vendors, and works to help implement new innovations and visions within the Child Nutrition Department. To view the job description and apply, visit the [WCPSS Job Board](#).

Grant Opportunity

Apply for School Nutrition Foundation Equipment Grants – Due 3/31

The School Nutrition Foundation (SNF) is teaming up with industry partners to provide new kitchen equipment to school districts. Apply now for the 2023 SNF Equipment Grant Program, featuring applications for five grants. Eligible applicants have the opportunity to win equipment grants, each worth between \$20,000 to \$100,000 of equipment. Applications and photos must be submitted by a School Nutrition Director. There is a submission cap of thirty applications for each grant. March 31 is the grant application deadline. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Apply for Professional Development Scholarships – Due 3/31

The deadline for School Nutrition Foundation Professional Development Scholarships is March 31, 2023. School Nutrition Association (SNA) members can achieve their educational dreams with a scholarship from the School Nutrition Foundation. These scholarships are intended to provide funding for tuition and books for the following school year. Three (3) scholarships are available for 2023: Superhero Scholarship from Bart Christian (multiple scholarships available each year), Schwan’s Food Service Scholarship (multiple scholarships of up to \$2,500 each), and the Nancy Curry Scholarship (one scholarship of \$500 is awarded each year, funded by Handgards, Inc., and friends of Nancy). Winners will be announced in Spring 2023. Use the convenient Common Application to apply for all three scholarships. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Going Local Grant – Due 4/15

The North Carolina Farm Bureau is happy to provide agricultural outreach grants to North Carolina teachers through the Ag in the Classroom Going Local program. These grants value up to \$500. Going Local Grants help educators provide Pre-K through collegiate level students with valuable, real-world education and experiences directly related to the agricultural industry and the N.C. Standard Course of Study. Teachers practicing in private and public North Carolina schools, colleges, and universities are encouraged to apply. The deadline to submit an application is April 15, 2023. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Growing Minds Grant – Due 15th of Each Month Through 4/15

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), Growing Minds program wants to help fund your farm to school project in Western North Carolina! This mini-grant program connects K-12 schools throughout the eighteen westernmost counties of North Carolina with local agriculture and gives children positive experiences with healthy local foods through the four components of farm to school: farm field trips, local food cooking and taste tests, school gardens, and local food served in school cafeterias. Farm to school activity mini-grants will be provided up to \$1,000. Mini-grant applications are due every month on the 15th through April 15, 2023 and will be awarded by the 30th of each month! [Learn more and apply.](#)

Continuing Education

Re-imagining & Re-shaping the Future of School Nutrition Professionals: A Design Thinking Approach – 3/22, 2 pm ET

Join the national School Nutrition Association (SNA) on March 22 at 2 pm ET for a webinar on the design thinking approach. Gain a solid understanding of design thinking methodology, creativity tools, and techniques to unleash your inherent creativity, as well as apply design thinking principles to your work environment and position. [Learn more and register.](#)

Access Virtual Training Opportunities

The Institute of 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 [continuing professional education resources](#) for Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists (RDNs) and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTRs).

Questions

If you have any questions regarding these updates, please reach out to your [regional consultants](#).

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained [online](#), from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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) (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.