

School Nutrition Update

March 24-28, 2025



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Important Dates

Date	Action Step
April 1	Monitoring and Compliance Self-Assessments Deadline
April 7	April 15 N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Showcase Registration Deadline
April 9	April 17 N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Showcase Registration Deadline
April 21	Spring Policy Updates Registration Deadline
May 8	2025 N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Participant Application Deadline
June 9	SNA-NC Pre-conference Workshops Registration Deadline
June 30	Healthy Meals Incentives Awards Deadline
Each Month – By the 10th (On or Before)	Claim for Reimbursement Due (NSLP, SBP, ASSP)
Each Month – By the 15th (On or Before)	FFVP Reimbursement Claims Due

Program Operations Information

Register for the 2025 N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Administrator Showcases

Please join Chef Cyndie Story and the K-12 Team from Culinary Solutions as they reveal what to expect for this summer's North Carolina K-12 Culinary Institutes. They will share recipes, updated information about the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institutes, demonstrate new school meal recipes and quick-scratch techniques, and share helpful resources to assist you with incorporating the skills and recipes from the institutes into your School Nutrition Program. Photos and success stories from N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute workshops over the years will be highlighted. You will not go home empty handed - all participants will receive an N.C. K-12 Culinary goodie bag!



While the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institutes were for your School Nutrition Managers, the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Showcases are for you and your central office staff! The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition will be offering two opportunities across the state to participate in this unique event. Please plan to attend only one showcase event.

- **April 15, 2025** - Masonic Center of Winston Salem (Winston-Salem) – [Register for the 4/15 Showcase](#). (Registration closes **Monday, April 7.**)
- **April 17, 2025** - The Journey Center (Greenville) – [Register for the 4/17 Showcase](#). (Registration closes **Wednesday, April 9.**)

Each workshop will take place **9:00 am - 4:00 pm**. Check-in starts 30 minutes prior to the start time. Participants are responsible for all travel expenses including breakfast, beverages, snacks, lodging, and mileage. Lunch and one snack will be provided each day.

Do not miss this opportunity to "taste" the difference that the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute can make in your program and to talk with a "seasoned" team of chefs with years of School Nutrition experience! For questions or more information, reach out to Katrina Perry, Professional Development Consultant, katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov.

Plan to Attend Spring 2025 Policy Updates – Register by 4/21

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition is happy to announce our in-person Spring 2025 Policy Updates meetings. We will be offering six opportunities across the state to engage with our team and network with other School Nutrition professionals while also receiving important information and updates impacting North Carolina School Nutrition Programs. Please note that Policy Updates are intended for School Nutrition Administrators and their central office staff.

Date	Location	Primary Facilitators
Tuesday, April 29	Jacksonville Onslow Chamber of Commerce 1099 Gum Branch Road, Jacksonville	Laura Chase, Pam Sheets
Tuesday, April 29	N.C. Telecenter 415 East Boulevard, Williamston	Cathie Masters, Leslie Otts
Wednesday, April 30	Masonic Center of Winston-Salem 4537 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem	Trip Warren, Flo Smith, Choncy Holman
Thursday, May 1	NCSU McKimmon Center 1101 Gorman Street, Raleigh	Dana Edwards, Jamie Narron, Jennifer Ozkurt
Thursday, May 1	Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) 121 Hendersonville Road, Asheville	Jennifer Brown, Sheryl Harris
Friday, May 2	Great Wolf Lodge 10175 Weddington Road, Concord	Kim McCall, Kristen Bealler

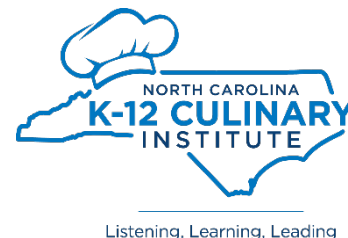
Participants are welcome to attend any meeting location, even if your Area School Nutrition Consultant is not facilitating that meeting. However, we do encourage you to attend the meeting that your Area School Nutrition Consultant is facilitating, if possible. Please only register for one location.

Each meeting will **begin at 9:00 am and conclude by 4:00 pm**. Additional details can be found in the registration form. [Register](#) by **Monday, April 21**.

Contact Katrina Perry, Professional Development Consultant, katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov, with any questions, or if you need to cancel or modify your registration. We look forward to seeing you this spring!

Encourage Participation in the 2025 N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute – Apply by 5/8

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition, in conjunction with Chef Cyndie Story and the Culinary Solutions K-12 Team, will offer four North Carolina K-12 Culinary Institute regional workshops this summer. Three workshops will be for School Nutrition Managers and one for School Nutrition (SN) Directors/Administrators or SN Central Office Staff. N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute workshops teach fundamental culinary techniques such as knife skills, food production strategies like batch cooking for quality, quick-scratch cooking techniques, and merchandising tips for recipes developed specifically for North Carolina schools. Participants graduate as Chef Ambassadors prepared to teach the Institute lessons and recipes to local School Nutrition professionals.



The N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute objectives are to:

- Improve student health, well-being, and academic success through nutritious, appealing meals at school,
- Increase participation in high quality, enticing School Nutrition Programs,
- Expand capacity of local School Nutrition Programs to purchase, prepare and serve fresh, locally grown produce,
- Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain rich foods, and
- Provide continuing education opportunities for School Nutrition personnel.

The N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute workshops will be hosted by School Food Authorities (SFAs) across the state and facilitated by the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute team, including State Agency staff. The following workshops will be offered this summer:

- **July 8-10** – Cleveland County Schools (SN Managers)
- **July 22-24** – Craven County Schools (SN Managers)
- **July 29-31** – Orange County Schools (SN Managers)
- **August 5-7** – New Hanover County Schools (SN Directors/Administrators and Central Office Staff only)

Interested School Nutrition professionals must [submit a 2025 Chef Ambassador Application](#) by **Thursday, May 8** to be considered for a spot and must have the support of their School Nutrition Director/Administrator, principal, and/or direct supervisor to attend. Submitted applications will be reviewed and selected participants will be notified by email. Selected participants must confirm their spot. Please reach out to Katrina Perry, Professional Development Consultant, katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov, with any questions.

Register for the SNA-NC Pre-conference Workshops by 6/9

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction, (NCDPI), Office of School Nutrition is thrilled to announce three upcoming in-person pre-conference workshops that will be offered at the School Nutrition Association of North Carolina (SNA-NC) Conference in Greensboro. The workshops will be held at the Koury Convention Center. See below for more information and links to register. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Katrina Perry, Professional Development Consultant, katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov.

New School Nutrition Manager

The *New School Nutrition Manager* is a two-day workshop designed for new and aspiring School Nutrition Managers. It will include introductory information and overviews for meal patterns and offer vs. serve, meal counting and claiming, cash management and accountability, Food Safety and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan, inventory management, production records, and customer service.

Dates: June 16-17, 2025

- Day 1: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm (Check-in begins at 12:30 pm.)
- Day 2: 9:00 am- 4:00 pm (Check-in begins at 8:30 am.)

[Learn more and register for the New School Nutrition Manager workshop](#). Registration will close on **Monday, June 9, 2025**, or when registration is full. Please register in advance as on-site registrations cannot be processed due to limited seating space.

Register for Safe Plates for Food Managers

The *Safe Plates for Food Managers* is a two-day workshop designed to help School Nutrition Administrators/Directors, School Nutrition Managers, and other Persons in Charge (PICs) obtain a Certified Food Protection Manager certification. This certification is required for School Nutrition Administrators/Directors as part of Professional Standards hiring requirements and is also required for PICs of food establishments per the North Carolina Food Code. A preparation course begins on the first day and ends on the second day. After the conclusion of the preparation course on the afternoon of the second day, participants will be given an opportunity to take the exam. The exam provided at the conclusion of this workshop meets the requirements for an American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-accredited exam option.

Dates: June 16-17, 2025

- Day 1: 10:00 am - 6:00 pm (Check-in begins at 9:30 am.)
- Day 2: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (Check-in begins at 8:30 am. Exam - 2:30 pm - 5:00 pm.)

Safe Plates for Food Managers is an evidence-based, interactive food safety training course developed by N.C. State University (NCSU)/Cooperative Extension. This workshop is being offered by NCSU. [Learn more and register for the Safe Plates for Food Managers workshop](#). Registration will close on **Monday, June 9, 2025**, or when registration is full. Advance registration is REQUIRED; on-site registrations and payments cannot be processed.

NOTE: There is a \$70 registration cost for the workshop that includes participation in the course, training materials, and the ANSI-certified exam fee. The SNA-NC *Safe Plates* registration fee is a discounted rate compared to taking this course through your local N.C. Cooperative Extension agent.

Administrative Review Workshop: An Approach to Collaborative Compliance – 6/16-17

The *Administrative Review: An Approach to Collaborative Compliance* is a two-day workshop designed to provide important information about the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Administrative Review. Participants will have a better understanding of the areas of review and process of the Administrative Review.

Dates: June 16-17, 2025

- Day 1: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm (Check-in begins at 12:30 pm.)
- Day 2: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm (Check-in begins at 8:30 am.)

Please note, registration is currently open only for SFAs scheduled for an Administrative Review in SY 2025-26. These SFAs will receive the link to register in the letter they receive from the Administrative Review team. Registration will open for all SFAs on **Monday, May 26, 2025**. Registration will close for all on **Monday, June 9, 2025**, or when registration is full.

School Nutrition Spotlight

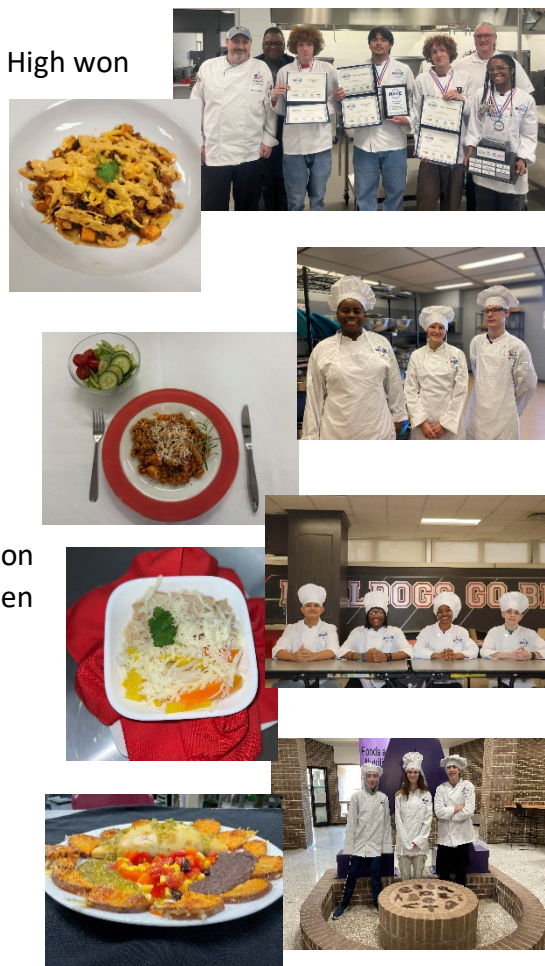
Celebrate 2025 N.C. Jr. Chef Competition Results!

The “Knights of Culinary” team from Durham Public Schools’ Northern High won first place in the 2025 NC Jr. Chef Competition. Their Chipotle Beef and Sweetpotato Skillet won top honors in the competition and a silver medal.

The Northern High team worked to create a hearty, tasty and nutritious recipe that they and their student peers would love. The Jr. Chefs sauteed North Carolina-grown ground beef, onions peppers, roasted corn, collard greens, and sweetpotatoes with a variety of spices. They topped off the recipe with cheese and a homemade avocado jalapeno crema.

The “Cloudy with a Chance of Pasta” team from Martin County High won second place and a silver medal for their delicious, comfort food Chicken Parmesan Pasta recipe accompanied by a fresh salad with homemade apple cider vinaigrette. The “Blazin’ Bulldogs” team from Thomasville High with Thomasville City Schools placed third and earned a silver medal for their Chicken Philly Cheese Bowl, featuring student favorite flavors and ingredients. The “Gordon Ramsey’s Minions” from Ashe County High also received a silver medal for their creative Baked Chicken Empanadas, accompanied by roasted sweet potato rounds along with a homemade bean dip and salsa verde.

All the teams showcased their knowledge and skills in the culinary competition. [Read the press release](#) to learn more about the teams, their recipes, and the competition.



Read about Iredell-Statesville Schools' "Dairy-licious Celebration" in School Nutrition Magazine

Iredell-Statesville Schools is thrilled to be featured in School Nutrition Magazine, a national publication, for its month-long celebration of dairy in January. The district's "Dairy-licious Celebration" promoted the nutritional benefits of dairy through fun activities and creative collaborations across the community.

Central and Harmony Elementary Schools kicked off the celebration with dairy-themed coloring sheets and dress-up contests, rewarding winners with dairy-themed prizes like milk mustaches and bracelets.

Meanwhile, Central, Lake Norman, and Cool Spring Elementary Schools brought the fun to life with visits from live milk carton characters, engaging students with interactive dairy-themed giveaways. Sharon Elementary hosted a vibrant coloring contest in the cafeteria, with prizes from The Dairy Alliance for winning students. Schools such as Coddle Creek Elementary worked with Prime Time for Kids to teach dairy education, and Union Grove Elementary teachers joined forces to help students understand the importance of dairy in a healthy diet. At Troutman Elementary, PE teachers introduced the "Milk vs. Sugary Drinks" game, educating students about the benefits of dairy through an exciting and hands-on lesson.

The district's cafeterias were transformed into dairy-themed spaces, complete with colorful decorations, balloon arches, and vibrant posters. The month-long celebration was supported by The Dairy Alliance, which provided prizes and educational materials to further engage students in the importance of dairy.

"We are incredibly thankful for the teamwork across all departments and the invaluable support from The Dairy Alliance," said a district official. [Check out School Nutrition Magazine.](#)

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 X, formerly Twitter.

Share Your School Nutrition Photos

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition wants to spotlight the appealing, wholesome, quality meals our School and Summer Nutrition Programs across the state offer to students. Share your beautiful photos of serving lines, complete school or summer meals, and nutrition education and promotion 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 or organization info so we can aim to credit the source. Be on the lookout for photos from across the state on social media.

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

School Nutrition Update e-letters are scheduled to go out twice per month during the second and fourth full weeks. 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 take the actions below**. If there are topics of interest you would also like to see included, please share as well. **Submissions received after the deadline will be saved for the next issue.**

- **Send a brief ready-for-print 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.**

Job Opportunity

Apply for Gaston County School Nutrition Director Position

Gaston County Schools is actively recruiting applicants for the School Nutrition Director position. The School Nutrition Director will lead a large school district with 55 schools and 30,000 students. Gaston County School Nutrition also has a Central Kitchen/Distribution Center. A bachelor’s degree, with an academic major in specific areas, is required, and a master’s degree is preferred. At least (5) years of management experience in a K-12 school program is strongly recommended. Contact Angela Calamia at arcalamia@gaston.k12.nc.us for more information.

Work for Durham Public Schools – Child Nutrition Supervisor Opening

Durham Public Schools (DPS) is seeking applicants for an open Child Nutrition Supervisor position. The Child Nutrition Supervisor provides direct support for the School Nutrition Services (SNS) Department through active participation in Local, State and Federal programs, prepares requested reports and findings as requested by Durham Public Schools, NCDPI, and USDA, conducts ongoing school assessments to ensure observance of Federal, State and Local regulations and policies, works collaboratively with the Central Office team, District Leadership, and school-based Administration to ensure a smooth operation and excellent customer service, provide support in the development of new School Nutrition Services programs and implement programs to increase student meal participation, and supervises the operations of the Central HUB Kitchen and all related programs including Charter Schools and Catering. [Learn more and apply for the DPS position.](#)

Apply for Anson County School Nutrition Director Position

Anson County Schools is actively recruiting applicants for the School Nutrition Director position. A bachelor’s degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas; or a bachelor’s degree in any academic major and a State-recognized certificate for School Nutrition Directors; or a bachelor’s degree in any academic major and at least two years of relevant School Nutrition Program experience; or an associate’s degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field; and at least 2 years of relevant School Nutrition Program experience is required. [Learn more and apply for the Anson County School Nutrition Director position.](#)

Have a Job Opportunity to Share?

If you have a job opportunity to share, please send to Tracey Bates, School Nutrition Promotion Specialist, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov.

- **Write a brief paragraph describing the position role, responsibilities, and requirements.** Consider including unique aspects of the role, facts about your public school unit and School Nutrition Program, or other information that may entice applicants.
 - **Note the closing date (if applicable).**
 - **Include a link to the job description and online application accessible to individuals outside of your public school unit.**
-

Award/Grant Opportunity

Apply for the Growing Minds Farm to School Mini-Grant – Deadline 3/31

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP), Growing Minds Program offers mini-grants to help early childhood education (ECE) centers and K-12 schools throughout the 23 westernmost counties of North Carolina provide children positive experiences with healthy local foods through farm to school: school gardens, farm field trips and farmer classroom visits, and local foods served in meals, snacks, and/or taste tests. Deadline to apply is **March 31**. [Learn more and apply for a Growing Minds Farm to School Mini-Grant](#).

Apply for a Healthy Meals Incentive Award – Webinar 4/9, Deadline 6/30

As part of the USDA, Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Initiative, Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is offering Recognition Awards to celebrate School Food Authorities (SFAs) that have made improvements to the nutritional quality of their school meals and to spotlight innovative practices and student and community engagement activities. There are eight HMI Recognition Award categories. SFAs are encouraged to apply for one or more awards. Learn more about all the awards by visiting the [Healthy Meal Incentives website](#). [Register for a HMI Award informational webinar](#) on **April 9 at 3 pm ET**.

1. SFA Breakfast Trailblazer Award
2. Small and/or Rural SFA Breakfast Trailblazer Award
3. Lunch Trailblazer Award
4. Small and/or Rural SFA Lunch Trailblazer Award
5. Innovative School Lunch Makeover Award
6. Innovation in the Cultural Diversity of School Meals Award
7. Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals Award
8. Innovation in Nutrition Education Award

SFAs that receive HMI Awards will receive travel stipends to attend the national Healthy Meals Summit in October. The summits are an exclusive opportunity for HMI Awardees to celebrate their outstanding work, network with School Nutrition professionals from across the country, and provide an opportunity to showcase their best practices! HMI Recognition Award winners will also receive an awardee toolkit that includes promotional materials and digital assets to help publicize the district's success to local media and the school community. USDA and AFHK will highlight and share best practices from HMI Awardees nationwide through traditional and social media, stakeholder engagement, and training and technical assistance activities.

The application portal and helpful resources to complete the application are available from the Healthy Meals Incentives [website](#). Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through **11:59 pm ET June 30, 2025**. If interested in attending the HMI Summit, SFAs are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. If you have questions about the awards and application, email award@healthymealsincentives.org.



Nutrition Education & Promotion

Recognize National Public Health Week

National Public Health Week is April 7-13. This year's theme is "It Starts Here". Public health starts with each of us making a difference in our homes and communities. It is how the places we live, work, and play affect our well-being. It is the way we are all stronger—and healthier—together through the efforts of agencies, organizations, and others that support and advocate for healthy communities. School meals, farm to school, school gardens, nutrition education and local wellness policies can all support health for students, school staff, families, and communities. [Learn more and find resources to celebrate and get involved with National Public Health Week](#), because public health starts with all of us. It starts here.

Continuing Education

Incorporating Plant-based, Minimally Processed Standardized Recipes for All Students – 3/27, 3 pm ET

There is a growing focus on offering plant-based, minimally processed meal options that meet the meal pattern requirements for all students in School Nutrition Programs. This session, presented by the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) in collaboration with Friends of the Earth, on **March 27 at 3 pm ET** will highlight practical strategies for School Nutrition professionals to incorporate plant-based, minimally processed standardized recipes that showcase a variety of flavors while aligning with the USDA meal pattern requirements. Attendees will gain insight into the benefits of practical approaches for procuring and sourcing fresh ingredients from local farmers and vendors, preparing plant-based, minimally processed standardized recipes, communication strategies for engaging the school community, and more. In addition, School Nutrition Directors will share how they have successfully integrated these meal options and offer tips for overcoming common challenges. [Register](#) for the session to hear how you can incorporate flavorful, nutritious, plant-based meals in your programs!

Learn More about Digital Accessibility – March Webinar Series

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a State or local government entity. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has consistently made clear that the Title II nondiscrimination requirements apply to all services, programs, and activities of public entities (also referred to as “government services”), including those provided via the web. It also includes those provided via mobile apps.

In April 2024, a regulatory rule, [Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities](#), was published in the Federal Register. In this rule, the DOJ establishes technical standards for web content and mobile app accessibility to give public entities greater clarity in exactly how to meet their ADA obligations and to help ensure equal access to government services for individuals with disabilities.

Understanding the laws and policies that govern digital accessibility is essential for ensuring compliance and promoting equitable access to digital resources. NCDPI has offered a webinar series on accessibility for Public School Units (PSUs). The webinars were recorded and posted on the NCDPI website. [View the accessibility webinars for PSUs.](#)

NCDPI is offering a webinar series in March designed specifically for vendors who develop digital solutions for K-12/higher education, state government and/or local government entities. Ensuring that your digital products and services are accessible is not only about legal compliance; it is a commitment to providing solutions that are accessible to all users. This webinar series will provide foundational knowledge and practical guidance on integrating accessibility into product design, development, procurement, and customer support.

Who Should Attend?

Vendors providing digital solutions to public entities, including solutions such as:

- **Educational technology & learning platforms**, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), instructional content, assessment solutions
- **Public & employee-facing web platforms**, such as government portals, Human Resources (HR) systems, parent & staff dashboards
- **Data & reporting systems**, such as student information systems, analytics tools, compliance tracking
- **Document & content management solutions**, such as electronic forms, PDF creation tools, publishing platforms
- **Collaboration & communication tools**, such as web conferencing, messaging, email platforms, notification systems
- **Authoring & interactive media platforms**, such as e-learning content creators, simulations, AI tools
- **Mobile apps & digital services**, such as applications for public services, user portals, engagement platforms

All personnel/team roles, including leadership, product development, UX/design, sales, marketing, procurement, and customer support should attend. Participants can [register](#) for any or all webinars in the series. Each webinar will be recorded, and all registrants will receive an email following the event with the recording

link. Feel free to attend the vendor webinar series and share information on this webinar series with vendors that work with your SFA.

Access Virtual Training Opportunities

Continuing education resources are available on the Office of School Nutrition [website](#) from NCDPI, the Institute of Child Nutrition, 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).

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, audiotape, 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.

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