

# School Nutrition Update

March 11-15, 2024



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## Program Operations Information

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### ***Register for the Boot Camp for School Nutrition Personnel in Charter Schools***

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition is thrilled to provide another opportunity for School Nutrition Administrators and Directors to attend the special professional development workshop *Boot Camp for School Nutrition Personnel in Charter Schools: How to Effectively Manage the Risks and Navigate the Regulatory Waters of the Federal School Nutrition Programs*.

- Date: **Friday, April 12, 2024**
- Time: Sign in - 8:30 am, Workshop 9:00 am – 4:15 pm
- Location: NCSU McKimmon Conference and Training Center, 1101 Gorman Street, Raleigh

This intensive course was designed specifically for Charter School personnel who administer and/or operate School Nutrition Programs. The day-long workshop will provide valuable information about the complex rules and regulations of the Federally-assisted School Nutrition Programs and your responsibilities for implementing the rules as a program administrator or manager. Your participation will provide a unique opportunity to support your success in meeting the unique needs and challenges of Charter Schools' participation in the School Nutrition Programs. Some questions answered during the workshop include:

- How do you know what to prioritize when managing the School Nutrition Programs?
- How to maintain program compliance with the regulations to avoid costly findings and required corrective actions?
- How do you minimize the risk of non-compliance which may result in the reclaim of funds and adversely impact the status of your charter?
- What strategies help Charter Schools comply with program regulations while simultaneously providing nutritious, appealing meals to students?

Participants will review the basic requirements for operating a successful and compliant School Nutrition Program. The topics chosen for this workshop are cited as the most challenging for Charter Schools to correctly implement. The following topics are often cited as “findings requiring major corrective actions” in eighty percent of Charter Schools participating in the School Nutrition Programs:

- Meal pattern
- Offer Versus Serve
- Accuracy and accountability in meal counting, claiming and consolidation
- Cash management procedures
- Standardized recipes
- Production records as the legal basis to substantiate reimbursable meals
- Purchases using school nutrition funds

- Succession plans to train new Charter School personnel in the event of staff turnover

Upon completion, the workshop will provide 6 hours of continuing education credit as required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for professional development in the learning code 3000 Administration. Charter School personnel are required to participate in a minimum number of professional development workshops annually to achieve and maintain good standing in the School Nutrition Program. This is a great opportunity to strengthen your knowledge and skills in the management of the School Nutrition Programs while minimizing the risks which may, unintentionally, undermine the integrity of your program.

[Register](#) by **Monday, April 8**. Please note - Participants are responsible for all additional travel expenses including breakfast, beverages, snacks, lodging, lunch, and mileage. If you have general questions about the workshop, please contact Katrina Perry, Professional Development Consultant, [katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov). We look forward to seeing you for this important professional development opportunity!

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### ***Complete the Non-Congregate Meal Application Process***

The Congressional Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 required the Secretary of Agriculture to make available an option to states to provide summer meals for non-congregate meal (NCM) service in rural areas where no congregate meal service is available. This [Interim Final Rule](#) amends the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) regulations to codify the flexibility for rural program operators to provide NCM service in the SFSP and SSO, collectively referred to as the Summer Nutrition Programs.

Sponsors interested in participating in rural NCM service for the summer of 2024 must apply to be eligible. Complete the [form](#) to begin the process with a NCDPI, Summer Nutrition Consultant. The full application process includes multiple steps to determine Sponsor eligibility and capacity to serve rural non-congregate meals and establishes an integrity plan to guide NCM operations.

**Note:** Potential meal sites must be classified as **RURAL** to operate in a non-congregate fashion. Completion of the interest form does not constitute NCM approval from the State Agency. Additional items are required for NCM approval including an integrity plan, completion of a webinar, and meal site application(s). For questions, please contact Jennifer Bailey, Section Chief, Summer and Special Nutrition Programs, [jennifer.bailey@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:jennifer.bailey@dpi.nc.gov).

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## **School Nutrition Spotlight**

### ***Celebrating NSBW with Johnston County Public Schools***

Johnston County Public Schools celebrated “Surf’s Up with School Breakfast” in a big way for National School Breakfast Week! On Wednesday, Tammy Twiggs and the School Nutrition team at Micro Elementary hosted students along with their families, school administration, Dr. Bracy, JCPS Superintendent, and Dr. Pearce, JCPS Assistant Superintendent of Administrative and Auxiliary Services. In



addition, representatives from the USDA Southeast Regional Office and the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition attended the event.

The students and their families were served fresh made Belgium waffles, prepared by JCPS School Nutrition Supervisors, Twana Johnson and Kim Williams. A yogurt parfait and assorted cereal were additional breakfast options. Participants had a variety of toppings to choose from including fresh raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, and strawberries, chopped bacon, chocolate chips, granola, caramel and chocolate syrups as well as whipped cream. The students and their families raved about the waffles!



Prizes were available for the ones that received the "Lucky Trays" as well as for anyone that completed the education sheets provided for families and students to work on together. Completed activity sheets were hung up in the cafeteria for display. Students could also take home the activity sheets from the NSBW tool kit. Students, families, and guests could take pictures in available photo booths. In addition, JCPS School Nutrition Supervisor, Yadira Creech, went around taking pictures of our students and their families with a Polaroid camera so that they would have a keepsake to take home. All decorations were made by the School Nutrition office staff. Micro Elementary normally serves around 200 students daily for breakfast. The School Nutrition team served over 476 students, parents, and staff for the NSBW event!

On Thursday, Tammy Baker and the School Nutrition team at McGees Crossroads Elementary hosted students, staff, and the Benson Police Department for breakfast. The officers handed out honorary badges and Benson PD bracelets to the students, as well as took pictures with them. Breakfast that morning was a choice of cheese, sausage or bacon, egg and cheese biscuits, a breakfast calzone, parfait or cereal, fresh blueberries, a fruit slushie, or juice, and assorted milk.

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### ***Congratulate the 2024 NC Jr. Chef Finalist Teams***

Three high school teams competed as finalists in the annual North Carolina Jr. Chef Competition to create unique school lunch entrée recipes. The competition results were announced this week in a virtual awards ceremony. The Flaming Knights from Northern High (Durham Public Schools) won first place and a silver medal for their Crispy Taquitos recipe.



The Northern High team worked to create a healthier version of taquitos, a student favorite. They sauteed chicken with a variety of spices and added diced cabbage and onions, julienned zucchini, grated carrots, and black beans. The Jr. Chefs wrapped the filling in whole grain tortillas, which they baked in the oven to crisp. They served the taquitos with a home-made spicy chipotle dipping sauce. The recipe featured North Carolina-grown cabbage, onions, and zucchini.



The "GHS" team from Garinger High with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools won second place and a silver medal for their Le Ramsay recipe. The Jr. Chefs featured flavors from their Hispanic heritage in their twist on Fajitas with Orange Rice and Fresas Con Crema, which featured North Carolina-grown beef, peppers, and strawberries.

The “Nighthawks” team from First Flight High with Dare County Schools won third place and a silver medal for their Chicken Cordon Bleu with Orzo Rice and Mushroom Demi-Glaze, their version of an elevated comfort food often found on restaurant menus. The recipe featured North Carolina-grown broccoli, spinach, mushrooms, and Carolina Gold Rice.

High school students across the state were challenged to work with their teachers and School Nutrition administrators to develop creative recipes for school lunch entrées that are compliant with School Nutrition Program standards, include at least two North Carolina-grown products and one USDA Foods item, are replicable by School Nutrition Programs and are appealing to students. [Learn more](#).

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### *Expanding School Breakfast in North Carolina*

Governor Roy Cooper recently announced \$1.3 million in grants to forty-two public school districts and public charter schools across North Carolina to expand access to healthy school breakfast for more than 51,000 students. The N.C. Innovative School Breakfast Grants were funded through Federal funds directed by the Governor in October 2023. Access to nutritious school breakfast improves student outcomes and helps students thrive. [Learn more](#).

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### *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.

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### *Share Your School Nutrition Photos*

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition wants to highlight 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](mailto: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.

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### *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 ready-for-print article (250 words or less) to Tracey Bates, [tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov](mailto: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. **Submissions received after the deadline will be saved for the next issue.**

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## **Job Opportunity**

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### *Apply for Davie County School Nutrition Director Position*

Join the Davie County Schools Team! Davie County is seeking applicants for the Director of School Nutrition. The director provides leadership in all aspects of School Nutrition, including strategic planning, managing the

budget/fiscal responsibilities, supervising personnel, overseeing food production, ensuring compliance, marketing and public relations, and managing School Nutrition equipment and facilities. For more information or to apply, visit Davie County's [online job board](#).

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## Grant Opportunity

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### ***Apply for Growing Minds Farm to School Program Funding – Due 3/31***

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) Growing Minds Program is offering \$500 mini-grants for schools to engage children in farm to school experiences: offering local food taste tests and cooking demonstrations, incorporating local food into meals or snacks, conducting farm field trips or farmer visits to preschools and classrooms, and growing edible gardens. Funding can be used to start new projects or to expand upon existing activities. Pre-k through 12 schools and homeschool groups are eligible to apply. Schools must be located throughout the twenty-three westernmost counties of North Carolina. [Learn more and apply](#).

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### ***Apply for Supporting the Use of Traditional Indigenous Foods in Child Nutrition Programs RFA – Due 4/8***

USDA has extended the deadline to apply for the [Supporting the Use of Traditional Indigenous Foods in the Child Nutrition Programs Cooperative Agreement](#) until **April 8**. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will award \$2 million in total grant funding to up to four (4) organizations to provide regionally focused training and technical assistance (TA) to School Nutrition professionals on procurement, preparation, and crediting of traditional Indigenous foods, including the use of cooperator and FNS-developed resources and tools. The cooperators, with FNS guidance and approval, will also develop culturally relevant nutrition education materials for students to accompany the traditional Indigenous foods that are served, and the cooperators will train School Nutrition professionals and other school staff on providing nutrition education to students.

The Lead Applicant entity must be led and staffed primarily by members of Federally Recognized Tribes and/or Native Hawaiians but may have partners that are not. Eligible entities include non-profit organizations; School Food Authorities that participate in the National School Lunch Program; tribal government owned entities, arms, or instrumentalities; Native Hawaiian Organization as recognized by the Department of the Interior; and/or other non-governmental entities including Tribal Colleges & Universities. Applicants must demonstrate existing relationships, experience and expertise in training, TA, School Nutrition, Indigenous foods, and nutrition education. Fiscal sponsorships of eligible entities are allowed.

#### Additional Information:

- A recording of the Informational Webinar and a Q&A document can be found on the USDA [website](#).
- Grant applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](#).
- The Intertribal Agriculture Council is available to provide technical assistance to potential applicants. Contact **Ashley Geravis** at [ashley@indianag.org](mailto:ashley@indianag.org) or (406) 214-6242.
- Send questions regarding the Request for Applications via email to **Anna Arrowsmith**, Grants Officer Grants and Fiscal Policy Division, USDA, FNS, [anna.arrowsmith@usda.gov](mailto:anna.arrowsmith@usda.gov).

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# Nutrition Education & Promotion

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## *Celebrate National Nutrition Month – Beyond the Table*

National Nutrition Month® is celebrated each March. The 2024 NNM theme is “Beyond the Table”. We eat not only around a table together but also on the go, in schools and restaurants, and at games and events. Thinking beyond the table addresses the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition, from food production to distribution, storage, preparation, and consumption. The theme helps us to think about and make the best food choices for ourselves and our families.



School meals can make a difference for students. Many schools participate in farm to school and feature North Carolina-grown ingredients. Find [NNM resources](#) to celebrate from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Share how you celebrate #NNM with the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition. Tag @NCSchoolMeals with your posts on social media.

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## Continuing Education

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### *Engaging Kids with "I Tried Local..." – 3/20, 3:30 pm ET*

Join Growing Minds from the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) for a virtual training session to support educators interested in implementing a new farm to school resource: “I Tried Local...” A Toolkit for Engaging Kids with Local Food and Farms. This toolkit is designed for use in early care and education (ECE) through second grade and is divided into ten units based on crops growing locally in North Carolina. [Register](#) to reserve your spot, and [sign up](#) for their newsletter to receive information about future sessions.

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### *Explore Indoor Gardening Activities for Any Classroom – 3/20, 4 pm ET*

How can you get your students excited to garden if you have no outdoor space? In this presentation, hosted by Massachusetts Farm to School, you will learn easy, affordable ways to introduce young people to seeds, plants, and gardening indoors. Participants will explore some fun and simple laboratory investigations that can be done in any classroom, as well as some simple ways to create your own “green” space in a classroom setting. Presenter Heidi Ragno has over 12 years of science teaching experience at the secondary level, specializing in biology, environmental science, and forensic science. [Learn more and register.](#)

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### *Learn Effective Menu Planning Strategies – 3/28, 3 pm ET*

Join the Institute for Child Nutrition (ICN) for an insightful webinar highlighting effective tools for menu planning in School Nutrition Programs. This session is designed to equip School Nutrition professionals with tried-and-true tips for crafting innovative menus that are appealing and inclusive to students. By participating in this webinar, School Nutrition professionals will gain insight and practical tools for implementing a systematic approach to menu planning that caters to students' preferences, enhances their dining experience, and promotes overall well-being. [Learn more and register.](#)

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## 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).

## Important Dates

Date	Action Step
<b>April 1</b>	Charter/Non-Public Self-Assessment Due (Maintain on file at the SFA)
<b>April 1</b>	CEP - Determine the number of Identified Students per School Determine the number of Enrolled Students per School
<b>April 8</b>	CEP - Enter the number of Identified Students and Enrollment into the School Nutrition Technology System
<b>April 8</b>	Application Deadline for Supporting the Use of Traditional Indigenous Foods in the Child Nutrition Programs Cooperative Agreement
<b>June 30</b>	Last day to declare for CEP in SY 2024-25

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- (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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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