

School Nutrition Update

February 28-March 4, 2022



In this Issue:

Program Operations Information

- Be Aware - USDA Supply Chain Assistance Funds to Support Local School Nutrition Program Operations
- Review Income Eligibility Guidelines SY 2022-23
- Complete the 2021-22 Verification Reapplied & Reapproved Survey – Due 3/3
- Don't Forget - Comment on Final Rule: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium - Deadline March 24

School Nutrition Spotlight

- Check Out the Carolina Local Plate from Halifax County Schools
- Send in Articles for the School Nutrition Update E-letter

Job Opportunity

- Work with Wake County – Dietitian and Assistant Director Positions

Grant Opportunity

- Submit for the Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant Program – Due 3/11
- Apply for the Jumpstart Grant – Due 15th of each month

Nutrition Education & Promotion

- Celebrate a World of Flavors with National Nutrition Month

- Take Off with School Breakfast for #NSBW2022

Continuing Education

- Batch Cook for Quality and Efficiency – 3/3, 3 pm ET
- Talk School Breakfast with the Team Nutrition Meal Talk Webinar – 3/9, 3 pm ET
- Explore A Principal's Perspective on How School Meals Can Support the Socio-Emotional Needs of Students – 3/9, 3 pm ET
- Access Virtual Training Resources

Program Operations Information

Be Aware - USDA Supply Chain Assistance Funds to Support Local School Nutrition Program Operations

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has received Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that are to be used by approved School Food Authorities (SFAs) to help alleviate increased costs due to supply chain disruptions in the School Nutrition Programs. The amount that NCDPI received is \$28,387,578. The funds are being made available through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) as authorized under the CCC Charter Act [15 U.S.C. 714].

Federal guidance stipulates the funds be distributed to SFAs for the exclusive purchase of unprocessed and minimally processed domestic foods and for no other purpose. The guidance provided by the USDA requires that NCDPI provide funds equitably based on student enrollment data. Each SFA will receive a \$5,000 base payment and a scalable proportional amount based on student enrollment as of October 2021. The enrollment figures for Public School Units (PSUs) under the purview of the State Board of Education are based on October 31, 2021 data provided by the NCDPI's Education Technology and Data Services, School Research, Data and Reporting Division. All other SFA allocations are based on the October 2021 Claim for Reimbursement submitted in the School Nutrition Technology System (SNTS).

Each of the 200 eligible SFAs will be required to submit an attestation statement to receive SCA funds. This attestation form will include all USDA requirements as stated below:

- SFA is experiencing supply chain disruptions
- SFA is experiencing financial difficulty/need as a result
- SFA agrees to purchase only unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products
- SFA agrees to observe all existing program requirements regarding recordkeeping and use of funds

NCDPI, School Nutrition Division staff will enter the amount determined for each SFAs into the SNTS Disbursement of Funds Module. Payments to eligible SFAs will be made by the NCDPI, Financial Services Grants Accounting Section.

This item is being presented for review, deliberation, and vote at the March 2022 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting so SCA funds may be distributed to PSU's SFAs in a timely manner. More information is

available on the N.C. SBE [website](#), with the March Monthly Meeting materials. On the N.C. SBE March 2 Meeting Agenda, scroll down and click to expand and view the agenda item: II. Action and Discussion Agenda Committee Meetings, A. Business Operations Committee Meeting, d. BSOP 4 – USDA Supply Chain Assistance Funds to Support Local School Nutrition Program Operations - \$28,387.578 in Federal Funds. A chart of the proposed [Supply Chain Assistance \(SCA\) Funding](#) for each SFA is included as an attachment along with the USDA Supply Chain Assistance [Acknowledgement and Attestation Form](#).

Review Income Eligibility Guidelines SY 2022-23

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced annual adjustments to the Income Eligibility Guidelines to be used in determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals and free milk for the period from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. These guidelines are used by schools, institutions, and facilities participating in the National School Lunch Program (and Commodity School Program), School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program for Children, Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program. The Income Eligibility Guidelines are available on the NCDPI, School Nutrition Division [website](#). The N.C. Department of Public Instruction's guidelines for free meals and milk and reduced-price meals were obtained by multiplying the year 2022 Federal income poverty guidelines by 1.30 and 1.85, respectively, and by rounding the result upward to the next whole dollar.

Complete the 2021-22 Verification Reapplied & Reapproved Survey – Due 3/3

Please complete the [2021-22 Verification Reapplied & Reapproved Survey](#) by March 3, 2022. This survey has been developed for all School Food Authorities (SFAs) that completed a verification report with the exception of Special Milk Program SFAs, District-wide Continuing Eligibility Provision (CEP) SFAs, and Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) without day students. The purpose of the survey is to capture the data on Reapplied and Reapproved Applications and Students on or before February 15, 2022.

Please provide the number of student(s) and the number of application(s) for each category listed in the survey for households that were originally selected for verification (October 1-November 15) for which benefits were terminated and the household reapplied for benefits between November 16, 2021 and February 15, 2022.

Please remember the original termination of benefits may have been because:

- the household did not respond to verification;
- the household responded to verification, but benefits were changed from "Free" to "Denied"; or
- the household responded to verification, but benefits were changed from "Reduced" to "Denied".

VERY IMPORTANT

- It is important that you submit data for "Students" and "Applications" in each category in the survey.
 - If there is no data for a particular category, please enter a "0".
-

Don't Forget – Comment on Final Rule: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – Deadline 3/24

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued the *Final Rule: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium* in the [Federal Register](#) on February 7, 2022. This final rule becomes effective July 1, 2022.

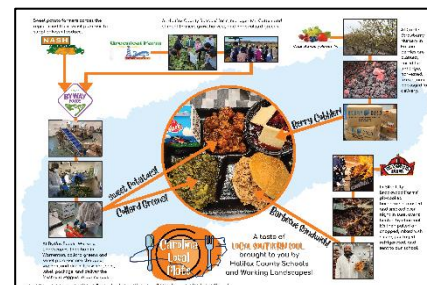
- This final rule will establish transitional standards to support the continued provision of nutritious school meals as schools respond to and recover from the pandemic and while USDA engages in notice-and-comment rulemaking to update the meal pattern standards to more comprehensively reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025.
- This rule finalizes the proposed milk provision by allowing local operators of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program to offer flavored, lowfat milk (1 percent fat) for students in grades K through 12 and for sale as a competitive beverage.
- It will also allow flavored, lowfat milk in the Special Milk Program for Children and in the Child and Adult Care Food Program for participants ages 6 and older. Beginning in SY 2022-23, this final rule will require at least 80 percent of the weekly grains in the school lunch and breakfast menus to be whole grain-rich.
- Lastly, this final rule will modify the proposed sodium standards and establish Sodium Target 1 as the sodium limit for school lunch and breakfast in SY 2022-2023 as proposed but implement a Sodium Interim Target 1A effective for school lunch beginning in SY 2023-2024.

Please review the final rule and submit comments to reflect how implementation of this rule will impact your School Nutrition Program. No comment will be perceived by USDA as support for the rule. Written comments on this final rule should be received on or before March 24, 2022, to receive consideration. More information about the rule and instructions for submitting written comments can be found on the USDA [website](#).

School Nutrition Spotlight

Check Out the Carolina Local Plate from Halifax County Schools

Halifax County School Nutrition Services offered a Carolina Local Plate for school lunch last Thursday featuring North Carolina pit-cooked BBQ from Brookwood Farms, strawberries from Cottle Strawberry Nursery, sweetpotatoes from Nash Produce, and collards greens from the Harmonious GAP-certified, vertically integrated, student-run Greenleaf Farm. The farm is a collaboration between the Career and Technical Education and School Nutrition Programs with the school district.



The Carolina Local Plate will be offered weekly throughout their winter cycle menu. Posters will be displayed on easels in each school café letting students know where their lunch came from. Teachers have lesson plans to teach about these locally grown/produced items on or around the day the Carolina Local Plate is served. School Nutrition Services will also conduct surveys with students to gather their feedback on the local plate.

Send in Articles for the School Nutrition Update E-letter

We aim to include 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, award announcement, or other news item for the SN Update e-letter, please send those to Tracey Bates, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov, by 12 pm on the Thursday prior to when the SN Update is sent out the following week. Include "SN Update" in the email subject line.

Job Opportunity

Work with Wake County – Director of Innovations & Program Development

Wake County Schools is seeking applicants for an open Director of Innovations & Program Development position. The IPD Director provides leadership for program strategic initiatives and administrative support to the Senior Director by developing innovative and cost-effective service and systems best practice solutions that align with internal/external customer service expectations and supports program sustainability. The IPD Director also oversees product sourcing, USDA Foods management, menu planning, centralized ordering, warehouse/distribution operations, grants, marketing, and supplier engagement.

POSITION DETAILS

Frontline Job ID: 44849 (Central Office Administrator-Director)

[Wake County Public Schools - Frontline Recruitment \(applitrack.com\)](#)

Salary Schedule (Admin, Band 2)

[Admin and Tech Bands 2021-2022 Salary Book Jan - June 2022.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

Grant Opportunity

Submit for the Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant Program – Due 3/11

The Whole Kids Foundation knows that the more kids know and feel connected to their food, the more curious they become about how things grow or taste, and the more willing they are to try new foods. Their Garden Grant program provides a \$3,000 monetary grant to support a new or existing edible educational garden located at either a K-12 school or a non-profit organization that serves children in the K-12 grade range.

[Learn more and apply here](#). Grant applications are due March 11.

Apply for the Jumpstart Grant – Due 15th of each month

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's (ASAP) Growing Minds Jumpstart Grant is now open! Eligible schools and organizations can apply for funding in the amount of \$500 to \$1,000 to support their farm to school project. Funding can be used to start new projects or to expand upon existing activities. Pre-k through 12 schools, homeschool groups, teacher and nutrition education programs, and community-based organizations serving children and families are eligible to apply. Schools/organizations must be located within the 23 westernmost counties of North Carolina (Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yancey) or the Qualla Boundary. Applications are due on the 15th of each month through August 2022. [Learn more here](#).

Nutrition Education & Promotion

Celebrate a World of Flavors with National Nutrition Month

Get ready to celebrate a world of flavors with National Nutrition Month 2022. National Nutrition Month is an annual celebration in March. Celebrating flavors from cultures around the world is a tasty way to nourish ourselves and appreciate our diversity. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a free [promotional toolkit](#) with tip sheets, handouts, games, activities, PowerPoint presentations and more. Select content is



available in seven languages, including English, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Celebrate the diversity of your school community and meals with National Nutrition Month. Share your #NNM activities on social media. Please tag @NCSchoolMeals with your posts.

Take Off with School Breakfast for #NSBW2022



Mark your calendar for National School Breakfast Week—March 7-11, 2022! The theme is “Take Off with School Breakfast,” a fun way to promote your super-powered School Breakfast Program to students, families and stakeholders! The School Nutrition Association has a [ready-to-go toolkit of resources](#) – logo and artwork, press release and proclamation templates, handouts, social media graphics and more - to help you celebrate. We can’t wait to hear about your school breakfast celebrations. Please tag @NCSchoolMeals with your #NSBW2022 social media posts.

Continuing Education

Batch Cook for Quality and Efficiency – 3/3, 3 pm ET

Batch cooking is a production practice that can help us protect food quality and reduce waste. As a follow-up to the January 2022 Webinar on Kitchen Efficiency, the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) is taking a deeper dive into batch cooking (or cooking to the line) to explore its many advantages. Hear success stories from our panel of Child Nutrition operators on how batch cooking helps them optimize production efficiency and exceed customer expectations. [Learn more and register.](#)

Talk School Breakfast with the Team Nutrition Meal Talk Webinar – 3/9, 3 pm ET

Join the USDA’s Team Nutrition initiative for a new webinar series, Meal Talk Webinars. These webinars provide interactive trainings on hot topics related to school meals. The first webinar of this series will focus on school breakfast and will provide an overview of USDA’s School Breakfast Program, including the benefits of school breakfast, program requirements, and resources for navigating supply chain challenges. Food and Nutrition Service Offices, State agencies, School Food Authorities (SFAs), and others who may be interested are invited to participate. [Learn more and register.](#)

Explore A Principal's Perspective on How School Meals Can Support the Socio-Emotional Needs of Students – 3/9, 3 pm ET

Join No Kid Hungry on March 9 at 3 pm ET for a robust discussion with North Carolina's Regional Principal of the Year Michelle Baker, around addressing the social-emotional needs of children through school meals and other interventions. Attendees will have a chance to win a social and emotional learning (SEL) package for their school. [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 [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.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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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