

# School Nutrition Update

February 26-March 1, 2024



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## Program Operations Information

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### *Submit the School Nutrition Semi-Annual Financial Report (FC1-A) - Due 3/1*

Please note that the SY 2023-24 Semi-Annual Financial Report (FC1-A) must be submitted via the School Nutrition Technology System (SNTS) by **March 1, 2024**. This is a firm deadline. The N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), Office of School Nutrition uses FC1-A data to prepare a legislated report required by General Statute, G.S. 115C-450, and no extension can be granted for Public School Units (PSUs) to submit late.

If you expect any delays (due to technical issues or other circumstances), you still must submit a preliminary report and note in the comments section of FC1-A that the report is preliminary. You can resubmit the financial report once it is final, but the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition needs to receive at least your best estimate by March 1. For questions, contact Frank Cernik, Financial Analyst, [Frank.Cernik@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Frank.Cernik@dpi.nc.gov).

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### *Register for the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Administrator Showcases by 3/1*

[Register](#) to participate in a N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Administrator Showcase by **March 1!** While the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institutes were for your School Nutrition Managers, this event is for you and your central office staff (Supervisors, Menu Planners/Dietitians, and Training Specialists).



Please join Chef Cyndie Story and the K-12 Team from Culinary Solutions for a re-launch of our 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. You will not go home empty-handed - all participants will receive an N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute goodie bag and a chance to receive some additional equipment and smallwares featured in the Institutes!

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition will be offering two opportunities across the state to participate in this unique event. Each event will take place over two consecutive days. Please plan to attend **only one** showcase.

- **March 18-19, 2024** - Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center (Williamston)
- **March 21-22, 2024** - Masonic Center of Winston Salem (Winston-Salem)

Workshop times are as follows:

- Day 1 - 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Day 2 - 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

Check-in starts 30 minutes prior to the start time each day. 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](mailto:katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov).



### ***Encourage Participation in the 2024 N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute – Apply by 3/1***

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition, in conjunction with Chef Cyndie Story and the K-12 team from Culinary Solutions, will be offering six [North Carolina K-12 Culinary Institute](#) regional workshops during the summer of 2024. The Institute is intended for School Nutrition professionals who are currently managing and/or responsible for the supervision of site-level nutrition operations (e.g., School Nutrition Managers and School Nutrition Assistant Managers). The purpose is for participants to master fundamental culinary skills to enhance school meals and be empowered to teach-it-forward to their team members at the local level.



The N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute is a wonderful opportunity for School Nutrition Managers! These workshops will prepare participants to serve as Chef Ambassadors in their districts and beyond. Selected workshop participants will learn fundamental culinary techniques such as knife skills, food production strategies like batch cooking for quality, quick-scratch cooking techniques, and merchandising tips for new K-12 Chef-developed recipes specifically for North Carolina schools. Participants will also learn effective teach-it-forward techniques so they can communicate new knowledge and skills with others in their districts.

The objectives for the Institute 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:

- June 25-27 – Alexander County Schools and Pitt County Schools (Two workshop options)
- July 9-11 – Columbus County Schools
- July 23-25 – Northampton County Schools
- July 30-August 1 – Cherokee County Schools
- August 6-8 – Alamance-Burlington School System

Interested School Nutrition Managers and Assistant Managers must submit a [Chef Ambassador Application](#) by **March 1** to be considered for a spot and must have the support of their School Nutrition Director/Administrator, Principal, and/or 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](mailto:katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov), with any questions.

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### ***Learn About and Apply for the Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards***

As part of a cooperative agreement to develop and implement the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service's Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative, Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is recognizing and celebrating School Food Authorities (SFAs) who have made operational changes to improve the nutritional quality of their school meals, as well as SFAs who implemented innovative strategies in their school meals program to engage students and families in nutrition education and in the planning and preparation of nutritious school meals.

Join AFHK for an informational webinar on **March 6 at 3:30 pm ET** that will provide an overview of the Recognition Awards including information about eligibility, the application process, technical assistance, and more. The Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards has recently been streamlined to make the application process easier and more efficient! [Learn more and register.](#)

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### ***Prepare for the 2024-25 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Application Season***

North Carolina will soon open the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) application season for eligible elementary schools to apply to participate in the 2024-25 School Year. The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition continues to make the annual FFVP application process efficient for School Nutrition administrators, especially for schools that applied last year.

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.

It is not a requirement for an eligible school to participate in the FFVP. School Nutrition administrators interested in the FFVP are encouraged to read the [USDA FFVP: A Handbook for Schools](#) to become familiar with the program requirements. Then, discuss the FFVP with the superintendent and respective principal and others in eligible schools. For a school that applies and is selected to participate, the FFVP is additional work for School Nutrition administrators and respective staff. Thoughtful consideration (School Nutrition staffing, adequate refrigerated space, etc.) should be given before a school applies. 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!

Mark your calendar for these important dates:

- **Friday, March 1, 2024:** Electronic FFVP application for the 2024-25 SY opens in the School Nutrition Technology System (SNTS) - accessible only to School Nutrition administrators with “application” access
- **Friday, March 15, 2024, 11:59 PM:** Deadline to complete electronic FFVP application for the 2024-25 SY in the SNTS
- **Friday, March 22, 2024:** Deadline to electronically submit the 2024-25 FFVP Signature Pages and “How Many Days the FFVP Operates Weekly” Form

Instructions for accessing and guidance for completing the FFVP application along with the FFVP Signature Pages and “How Many Days the FFVP Operates Weekly” Form are available on the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition [website](#). For questions about the FFVP (program requirements, operation, finances, application, etc.), contact Brenda Watford, N.C. FFVP Coordinator for the 2024-25 School Year, [brenda.watford@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:brenda.watford@dpi.nc.gov).

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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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### ***Completing 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

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### *Getting Hungry for School Breakfast – Pilot Mountain Elementary!*

Pilot Mountain Elementary School and Surry County Schools gave a shout out on social media to their School Nutrition Team for the variety of delicious, nutritious school breakfast options offered daily to students. Eating school breakfast helps students with attendance, focus, behavior, and academic performance. Makes us hungry for school breakfast! How about you? Way to go!



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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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### *Work with Guilford County School Nutrition Services – Finance Director Opening*

School Nutrition Services with Guilford County Schools is seeking applicants for the Finance Director position. The Finance Director establishes and implements policies, procedures and standards for budgeting and fiscal recording, accounting and reporting in Child Nutrition Programs, ensuring compliance with applicable local, State, and federal guidelines; monitors income and expenditures to maintain knowledge of programs' adherence to budget constraints; develops annual operating and capital outlay budget proposals; and identifies and implements application of automated systems for fiscal and other data collecting, collating, calculating, and storage requirements. [Learn more and apply.](#)

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## Grant Opportunity

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### *Apply for RFA on Supporting the Use of Traditional Indigenous Foods in the Child Nutrition Programs – Deadline Extended to 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).

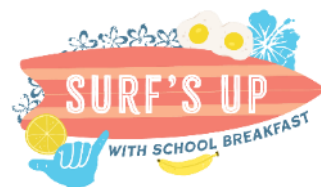
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## Nutrition Education & Promotion

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### *Celebrate Surf's Up with School Breakfast – 3/4-8*

Schools across the North Carolina and the nation can celebrate “Surf’s Up with School Breakfast” for National School Breakfast Week, March 4-8. What a terrific opportunity to remind students, educators, families, and the school community about the importance and benefits of school breakfast! Find free [#NSBW resources](#) from the national School Nutrition Association. Share how you celebrate #NSBW 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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### *Learn About Cross Curricular Education: Ag Ed + Family and Consumer Sciences – 3/5, 3 pm ET*

The New Hampshire School and Youth Garden Network is offering a 2024 Education Webinar Series. Join Shea Higley of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) and Mike Smith of Mascenic High School to make salsa and converse about incorporating cross-curricular learning and teaching between science and food in the classroom. [Learn more and register.](#)

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### *Explore the New N.C. State Extension Online School Garden Course*

Spring is approaching, which means it is time to dig back into the school garden! The N.C. State University (NCSU)/Cooperative Extension Online School Garden Course will help you learn more about starting or maintaining a school garden and its connections to farm to school. Topics in the course include introduction to farm to school, school garden design, accessibility in school gardens, and more! [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).

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## Important Dates

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Date	Action Step
<b>March 1</b>	Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Application Deadline
<b>March 1</b>	Financial Form (FC1-A) Deadline for July 1 thru December 30 (Semi-Annual Report)
<b>March 1</b>	Registration Deadline for N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Administrator Showcases
<b>March 1</b>	Application Deadline for N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute Workshops
<b>March 1</b>	Application Deadline for Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant
<b>March 18</b>	Application Deadline for Supporting the Use of Traditional Indigenous Foods in the Child Nutrition Programs Cooperative Agreement
<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>June 30</b>	Last day to declare for CEP in SY 2024-25

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

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