

School Nutrition Update

September 12-16, 2022



In this Issue:

Program Operations Information

- Submit Equipment Assistant Grant Success Stories (URGENT) – Due 9/13
- Explore New Food Safety Resources

School Nutrition Spotlight

- Breaking a Record with the North Carolina Annual FFVP Schools Selection
- Share your School and Summer Meal Photos
- Send in Articles for the School Nutrition Update E-letter

Nutrition Education & Promotion

- Cooking Matters at Home with the Carolina Hunger Initiative

Farm to School/Summer

- Turnip the Beet for Summer 2022!
- Get Ready to Crunch!

Continuing Education

- Learn the Role of School Nutrition Directors in School Safety – 9/13, 12 pm ET
- Explore Tips and Tools for Produce Safety Training – 9/22, 3 pm ET
- Access Virtual Training Resources

Program Operations Information

Submit Equipment Assistant Grant Success Stories (URGENT) – Due 9/13

The National Office of Program Monitoring and Operational Support Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service has requested that State Agencies reach out to their School Food Authorities (SFAs) that have received Equipment Assistance Grants within the last 5 years to identify stories regarding how these funds have made a positive impact on their operations. The Congressional Agriculture Committee is currently finalizing their budget. The success story data will support a request to continue the Equipment Assistance Grant funds with the Agricultural Appropriation for the coming year.

If your SFA has received an Equipment Assistance Grant (EAG) in the last 5 years and you have a success story to share, please send the following to your Zone Consultant Team by **COB on Tuesday, September 13**.

- Name of School Food Authority,
- Contact Information at SFA (phone number and email address), and
- Brief description of how EAG funds were used by your SFA to make a difference in your food service.

Helpful points to highlight would be how the funding has allowed your SFA to improve operations by:

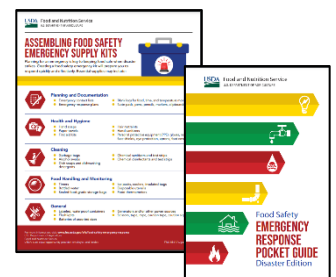
- Purchasing equipment to enable you to begin scratch cooking,
- Replacing very old equipment with grant funds,
- Purchasing equipment that has increased your ability to serve fresh and possibly local foods, and/or
- Serving more appealing meals due to equipment purchases with grant funds.

If you have questions or need further information, please reach out to your Zone Consultants. Thank you all for working together so we can share North Carolina's stories of how the Equipment Assistance Grants have improved operations for our SFAs and the meals we serve to nourish students' bodies, minds, and souls.

Explore New Food Safety Resources

September is National Food Safety Education Month & National Preparedness Month. The updated [USDA, Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\) Food Safety Emergency Response webpage](#) provides resources and information on food safety during emergencies and disasters, including some that have been published in recent months.

- The Assembling Food Safety Emergency Supply Kits Poster was published in August 2022. This resource for schools is available in English and Spanish.
- The Food Safety Emergency Response Pocket Guide was published in April 2022. This resource for schools is available in print or to download in English and Spanish. Physical copies of the Pocket Guide can be ordered by agencies administering School Nutrition Programs; contact Lauren.McClearn@usda.gov for more information on how to order copies of this resource.



These resources can be bookmarked, downloaded, and printed. Additional resources and information are available via the [Institute of Child Nutrition's \(ICN\) Food Safety Resources webpage](#).

USDA, ICN and the U.S. Department of Education are offering upcoming food safety webinars for School Nutrition professionals. Check out the Continuing Education section of the SN Update to learn more.

School Nutrition Spotlight

Breaking a Record with the North Carolina Annual FFVP School Selections

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction is excited to announce that North Carolina has 232 elementary schools that have been selected and approved by the N.C. State Board of Education to participate in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for the 2022-23 school year. This is North Carolina’s largest number of schools ever to participate in a given school year! Every school that applied was selected and approved to participate. This is representation from 34 public school units (PSUs) with almost 103,000 students reaping the benefits of this nutritious opportunity this school year. This is the 19th year that the great state of North Carolina has had the opportunity to participate in the FFVP. Check out the [list of schools](#) approved to participate in the FFVP for 2022-23.

To learn more about the FFVP and how an eligible school can apply to participate in the future, contact Zoe McKay-Tucker, North Carolina’s FFVP coordinator, at zoe.mckaytucker@dpi.nc.gov or 984-236-2636.

DINE with Durham #NCFarmtoSummer Activities

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition in conjunction with the Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina is highlighting success stories from the 2022 #NCFarmtoSummer Challenge. Our first success story highlights the collaboration of the Durham County Health Department DINE Program with preschools, schools, and community organizations.

The DINE Program staff and interns hosted a variety of #NCFarmtoSummer activities with kids. They talked about pollinators and the parts of bugs and made veggie bugs using spinach, cucumbers, tomatoes, and carrots. They looked at pictures of a strawberry growing on a farm, examined and identified parts of a strawberry, and tasted strawberry yogurt parfaits. They tasted watermelon and used cookie cutters and melon ballers to cut out watermelon pieces. They also looked at photos of melons growing on a farm, labeled plant parts, and compared and contrasted watermelon, honeydew, and cantaloupe. They discussed eating the rainbow and made rainbow pizzas using whole wheat English muffins, red sauce and/or pesto, cheese, multicolored bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, zucchini, and corn. Staff were able to deliver seedlings donated from the Inter-faith Food Shuttle (tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and eggplant). In addition, the DINE Program installed raised bed gardens at a community center and distributed gardening kits at a PORCH food distribution. The gardening kits contained seeds, soil, directions on growing microgreens at home, and incentives like pencils and bookmarks.



Be on the lookout for more success stories in upcoming SN Update issues. Thanks to all who participated in the #NCFarmtoSummer Challenge!

Share your School and Summer Meal Photos

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



Wilson County Schools



Burke County Public Schools

Send in Articles 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 SN Update, please send a brief article (250 words or less) to Tracey Bates, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov, by 12 pm on the Wednesday prior to when the SN Update is sent out the following week. Include “**SN Update**” in the email subject line.

Nutrition Education & Promotion

Cooking Matters at Home with the Carolina Hunger Initiative

The Carolina Hunger Initiative is offering free, online nutrition and cooking education lessons September 13 through October 18 at 7 pm ET. The Cooking Matters at Home program shares information about buying healthy, affordable foods that families can prepare and eat together at home. This series will highlight seasonal ingredients of fall in healthy, affordable ways. All lessons will be held via Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent to participants after completing the registration form. Participants have the opportunity to receive a \$10 grocery store gift card, provided by the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle. [Learn more.](#)

Farm to School/Summer

Turnip the Beet for Summer 2022!

The Turnip the Beet Award, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), recognizes outstanding Summer Meal Program sponsors who work hard to offer high quality meals that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious. All Summer Meal Programs sponsors in good standing, including Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors and National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sponsors, may be eligible for a Turnip the Beet Award. Sponsors may self-nominate or be nominated by another party. Participation in the #NCFarmtoSummer initiative can help with Turnip the Beet award applications. The Turnip the Beet nomination form must be completed and submitted along with a detailed one-month menu. No more than 5 supporting documents can be submitted. Submit 2022 Turnip the Beet Award applications to NCDPI at summernutritionprogram@dpi.nc.gov by 5 pm on September 16. More details and the nomination form are available from the USDA [website](#).



TURNIP THE BEET
with high quality summer meals!

Get Ready to Crunch!

Registration for the 2022 North Carolina Crunch is now live! [Sign up now](#) for the #NCCrunch to receive a free guide with tips, templates, and links to resources so that you are ready to crunch.

The N.C. Crunch, co-hosted by the Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina and N.C. Farm to Preschool Network, is designed to celebrate agriculture, nutrition, and farm to school. Annual N.C. Crunch events offer kids and adults an opportunity to taste and learn about locally grown North Carolina produce with their schools, early care, and education (ECE) centers, community organizations, and/or families. Farm to School/Farm to Early Care and Education Month also offers an opportunity to recognize the importance of farm to school/early care and education and honor all those who contribute to feeding our kids and communities – from farmers, farm workers, and food hub distributors, to school and early care nutrition professionals, educators, garden coordinators, bus drivers and transportation professionals.



**North Carolina
Crunch**

This year's N.C. Crunch is scheduled for Wednesday, October 19, 2022, but you can plan to participate any time during October that works for you in celebration of Farm to School and Early Care and Education Month. Plan now for produce orders and educational activities and reach out to local partners who can help. Utilize this opportunity to recognize and thank our agriculture, education, and school and early care and education nutrition heroes who make farm to school activities happen. Help us reach all 100 counties and as many kids and adults as possible to make this a crunch heard around the state!

Continuing Education

Learn the Role of School Nutrition Directors in School Safety – 9/13, 12 pm ET

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools and its Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center will host a webinar on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, 12-1:00 PM ET. This webinar will highlight the role of School Nutrition directors in school safety, security, emergency management, and preparedness activities, including emergency operations plan (EOP) development. [Learn more and register.](#)

Explore Tips and Tools for Produce Safety Training – 9/22, 3 pm ET

The USDA, Food and Nutrition Service Food Safety team and the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) will hold a webinar on Thursday, September 22, 3-4:00 PM ET for Produce Safety University (PSU) graduates and School Nutrition professionals. The webinar will provide continuing education for PSU graduates and highlight strategies and resources that can be used to train others on produce safety. [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 (RDs) 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.

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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.

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