

School Nutrition Update

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Program Operations Information

USDA Extends Free School Meals through 2020-21 School Year

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the extension of free meals for all children through summer meal programs throughout the entire 2020-21 school year. No matter what school looks like, these flexibilities will ensure that children can continue to be fed. View the press release [here](#). To view issued waivers, please visit the USDA [website](#).

Ensure Free and Open Competition

Even though North Carolina is still under a state of emergency due to COVID-19, schools, businesses, etc. are opening back up. As we aim for a new state of normalcy, your School and Summer Nutrition Programs should ensure the opportunity for free and open competition for suppliers and vendors. Please consult the U.S. Department of Agriculture website for [guidance on competitive procurement standards](#).

Take a Look at the School and Summer Nutrition Suppliers Database

NCDPI, School Nutrition Services and the Carolina Hunger Initiative worked together to offer a webinar and survey for suppliers interested in working with School and Summer Nutrition Programs. Through the survey, suppliers provided information on how best to contact them, what food and supplies they offer, what their delivery area is, and what their payment options are. Survey responses have been compiled into a database which was recently updated with information on additional suppliers and corrected contact info for others. The spreadsheet is now sorted by type of supplier. The database is posted in the School Nutrition Technology System and on the NCDPI, School Nutrition [website](#).

Looking for Local Farmers?

School Food Authorities and Community Sponsors may be interested in identifying additional sources from which to purchase local food. USDA maintains a [database](#) of GAP-certified companies or farms. The list of North Carolina farms from this database is posted in the School Nutrition Technology System (SNTS). In addition, in the SNTS and on the NCDPI, School Nutrition [website](#), we have posted a list of local dairy farms and plants with the ability to process, package or bottle and direct sale milk in North Carolina.

Submit Meal Counts Daily

North Carolina is still in a state of emergency related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). As such, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) must report daily meal counts to the N.C. Emergency Operations Center. Please use the [new link](#) to the updated survey to submit meal count data daily by 6 pm. If you have questions or issues submitting the data, please reach out to [Janet Johnson](#).

Check Out the N.C. Online Meal Ordering System

If you have not yet set up online ordering for school meals but are short on time, resources, or software to make the dream a reality, the N.C. Online Meal Ordering System may be of assistance. The N.C. Online Ordering System Template is a free and easy tool created by Chef Cyndie and the N.C. K-12 Culinary Team using Google Forms which allows School Nutrition Programs to set up your own online meal ordering system. Use the [video tutorial](#) and instructions to learn the steps for customizing the tool and using it to manage online meal orders. The instructions include a link to the customizable online ordering tool.



School Nutrition Spotlight

Liz Cartano Named Hometown Hero

Liz Cartano, Child Nutrition Director for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, was named a Hometown Hero by WCHL (97.9 FM) for all her work with Food for Students program. Read more about the honor [here](#). Learn more about the Food for Students program [here](#).



Pam Bailey Presented Key to MACS Diner Food Truck

A five-year dream came to reality when Executive Director of School Nutrition for Alamance-Burlington Schools Pam Bailey was officially presented the key to the [MACS \(Meals for Alamance County Schools\) Diner Food Truck](#). The food truck, funded with community support, will help to deliver meals to children for the Summer Nutrition Program. How exciting!



Submit a School Nutrition Spotlight

We love lifting up our #NCSchoolNutritionHeroes! If you know of a North Carolina School Nutrition professional that has received an award, honor or other recognition, please share for an upcoming School Nutrition Spotlight. Please send details to Tracey Bates, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov.

Nutrition Education & Promotion

Need Ideas for Farm to School Month and the N.C. Crunch?

October is Farm to School and Early Care and Education Month. For this, the Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina, the N.C. Farm to Preschool Network and partners are encouraging schools, early care and education centers, agencies, organizations, groups, families and individuals to participate in the N.C. Crunch. This year's N.C. Crunch offers an opportunity to acknowledge N.C. agriculture, healthy eating and our farm to school heroes that grow, deliver, prepare, serve and teach others about North Carolina grown produce. Kids and adults are encouraged to crunch into a North Carolina fruit or vegetable at 12 noon on October 21st or anytime during the month that works with their schedule.

With COVID-19, we know that this year's Crunch may be different. That's ok. We can be creative and innovative in offering both kids and adults an opportunity to taste and learn about North Carolina grown fruits and vegetables. Here are some ideas:

- Sign up to participate in the N.C. Crunch.
- Include North Carolina grown produce in meals/snacks.
- Highlight North Carolina grown items on menus.
- Share educational resources with teachers.
- Host a virtual N.C. Crunch
- Share recipes with families.
- Feature #farmtoschool heroes.
- Nominate a Community Food Champion to receive a \$500 honorarium from the National Farm to School Network for their collaboration and creativity feeding kids. [Learn more here.](#)
- Post activities/photos on social media using #NCCrunch2020, @F2SCoalitionNC and @NCSchoolMeals.



A N.C. Crunch Guide has been created with information on sourcing local produce, curriculum connections, and social media and press release templates to help you share your Crunch with the local community, and more. This year's guide includes adaptations for COVID-19. [Learn more and register for the N.C. Crunch!](#)

Utilize North Carolina Farm to School Resources

A variety of farm to school resources are available from the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDACS) and NCDPI, School Nutrition Services that can help you prepare, serve, teach about and promote local foods. The [N.C. Farm to School Cookbook](#) offers quantity recipes featuring North Carolina grown ingredients. [Storybooks](#), [activity guides](#) and [posters](#) follow apples, blueberries, peaches, strawberries, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and watermelons from the field to school meal and thirty [fact sheets](#) are available on fruits and vegetables grown in our state and offered through School Nutrition Programs.



Share Your National School Lunch Week Celebrations

[National School Lunch Week](#) (NSLW), is an opportunity to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a student's life and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom. NCDPI, School Nutrition Services would love to help spotlight your School Nutrition Programs and lift up our essential School Nutrition professionals for their amazing efforts to provide safe, appealing, nutritious school meals every day. Please use #NCSchoolNutritionHeroes and @NCSchoolMeals in your social media outreach. Share your NSLW celebrations and recognitions with your Zone teams.



Connect and Promote through Social Media

We would love to highlight your efforts to provide nutritious meals and nutrition education to children. Remember to tag and follow us on social media (@Ray4NCKids and @NCSchoolMeals).

Continuing Education

Access Virtual Training Opportunities from ICN, SNA and NCDPI

The Institute for 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. Contact information for your Zone teams can be found [here](#).

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