

School Nutrition Update

February 27-March 3, 2023



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Program Operations Information

Complete Verification Reapplied and Reapproved Survey – Deadline 3/3

North Carolina School Food Authorities (SFAs) must complete the [Verification Reapplied and Reapproved Survey](#) by Friday, March 3. This survey has been developed for all SFAs that completed a verification report with the exception of Special Milk Program SFAs, District-wide Community 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, 2023.

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, 2022 and February 15, 2023.

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";
- 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".

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact your Zone Consultant or Jacquelyn McGowan at jacquelyn.mcgowan@dpi.nc.gov.

Learn About Proposed Rule CACFP and SFSP Changes – 3/1, 2:30 pm ET

On February 3, the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) announced a new proposed rule, "[Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)". USDA will host a webinar for State Agencies and Program Sponsors/Operators on proposed changes to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) on March 1 at 2:30 pm ET. In order to participate in the webinar, State Agencies and Sponsors should [register](#) in advance.

All proposed rule webinars will be offered with closed captioning. Participants who require a different accessibility tool to participate should reach out to Sheila Kopczynski, sheila.kopczynski@usda.gov, for assistance as soon as possible.

The standards are available for public comment for 60 days from February 7 through April 10, 2023. School Nutrition professionals and other stakeholders are encouraged to review the [proposed rule and related materials and submit comments](#).

Access USDA Foods Resources

In January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods in Schools ordering catalog for School Year 2023-24 was opened to begin accepting orders for deliveries beginning in July 2023. The USDA Foods List of Materials SY 2023-24 was updated to provide an estimated price per pound, per case, and per truck for all USDA Foods

items available. This information can be used by States and school districts to estimate the entitlement value of USDA Foods orders placed for the upcoming school year.

Remember that USDA Foods entitlement may also be used to order a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables for weekly delivery through the USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Contact the [N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services \(NCDA&CS\)](#) if you are interested in participating in this program.

As a reminder, orders for many products can be placed or modified throughout the year to allow as much flexibility as possible. USDA works with each industry group to determine how much advance notice they need to produce the foods that School Food Authorities (SFAs) request. It is important to remember that USDA Foods supports domestic growers and processors, and these industries need forecasts to produce enough of the right products to meet the needs of school districts nationwide. For some foods, such as seasonal fruits and vegetables, orders for the entire year are needed in the spring so the industry has firm order quantities and knows how much product to plant or package for USDA Foods. For other foods, such as meat, cheese, and grains, USDA purchases product much closer to the time of delivery (e.g., 60 days in advance), so USDA offers order due dates throughout the year to allow States the flexibility to add, cancel, or change orders during the year. Schools should work with their State agency to see which foods require firm commitments for the entire school year and which products may have more ordering flexibility.

Where to Find USDA Foods in Schools Product Information:

- The [USDA Foods Available List](#) contains basic information such as the WBSCM material code and description, the food group it belongs to, form (i.e., canned, frozen, dried, fresh), pack size, and if the material is a whole grain or has a commercial Kosher certification.
- The [USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets](#) are organized by food group and can be identified by its USDA Foods Description and Web-Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) material code. These are useful for menu planning as they provide a more detailed product description, crediting and nutrition information, case yield, and culinary tips and recipes.
- [Product Specifications](#) can be found on the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) website. Products can be searched by food type (i.e., fruits, vegetables, eggs, chicken, dairy, etc.) and form. Each product specification contains detailed information such as defined serving sizes, limits on specific nutrients, ingredients that are included or restricted, which commercial kosher certifications a product may have, or if a product is raw or cooked.
- The [USDA Foods Database](#) provides access to vendor-specific nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information for direct delivered USDA Foods for child nutrition programs. Products can be searched by food category and WBSCM material code. The USDA Foods Database has similar information to the Product Information Sheets but also includes nutrient, allergen, ingredient, and certification information that is unique to each vendor that supplies a particular USDA Foods product.

Share Affordable Connectivity Program Information

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provides eligible low-income households a subsidy of up to \$30 per month on internet service plans offered by participating service providers and up to \$75 per month for eligible households on Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if the household contributes more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price. Households with income at or below 200% of the poverty level are eligible for the subsidy. Households are automatically eligible for the ACP without the need to prove their

income if at least one member of the household is receiving benefits from certain government assistance programs.

To help schools and districts as they assist with Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) sign-ups, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology (OET) developed FAQs and resources to facilitate communication with families about their eligibility. This includes a template letter to let families know their child receives free or reduced-price school meals and therefore meets the ACP’s eligibility criteria. OET also provides a sample form that can be used to obtain families’ consent to share their child’s eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals with ACP-participating providers. Learn more about the Affordable Connectivity Program and view the support resources on the OET [website](#).

School Nutrition Spotlight

Recognizing School Nutrition Employees in Pitt County

For Pitt County Schools, Human Resources opens nominations each year from the schools to nominate a School Nutrition manager, assistant manager, and/or employee for “School Nutrition Manager of the Year” and “School Nutrition Employee of the Year” for their school. Each school winner can turn in a completed packet of information on them to be considered for a panel interview. Once interviews are completed, a winner for each category is awarded as the *Pitt County School Nutrition Manager* and *School Nutrition Employee of the Year*.

Congratulations to the 2023-24 Pitt County School Nutrition Manager of the Year, Mary Johnson (Ayden Middle School), and School Nutrition Assistant Employee of the Year, Assistant Manager Mary Newton (Wintergreen Primary)!



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.

Share Your School Nutrition Photos

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition wants to highlight the appealing, wholesome, quality meals our School 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.



Cabarrus County Schools

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 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. 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.

Grant Opportunity

Apply for Professional Development Scholarships – Due 3/31

The deadline for School Nutrition Foundation Professional Development Scholarships has been extended to March 31, 2023! School Nutrition Association (SNA) members can achieve their educational dreams with a scholarship from the School Nutrition Foundation. These scholarships are intended to provide funding for tuition and books for the following school year. Three (3) scholarships are available for 2023: Superhero Scholarship from Bart Christian (multiple scholarships available each year), Schwan’s Food Service Scholarship (multiple scholarships of up to \$2,500 each), and the Nancy Curry Scholarship (one scholarship of \$500 is awarded each year, funded by Handgards, Inc., and friends of Nancy). Winners will be announced in Spring 2023. Use the convenient Common Application to apply for all three scholarships. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Going Local Grant – Due 4/15

The North Carolina Farm Bureau is happy to provide agricultural outreach grants to North Carolina teachers through the Ag in the Classroom Going Local program. These grants value up to \$500. Going Local Grants help educators provide Pre-K through collegiate level students with valuable, real-world education and experiences directly related to the agricultural industry and the N.C. Standard Course of Study. Teachers practicing in private and public North Carolina schools, colleges, and universities are encouraged to apply. The deadline to submit an application is April 15, 2023. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Growing Minds Grant – Due 15th of Each Month Through 4/15

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), Growing Minds program wants to help fund your farm to school project in Western North Carolina! This mini-grant program connects K-12 schools throughout the eighteen westernmost counties of North Carolina with local agriculture and gives children positive experiences with healthy local foods through the four components of farm to school: farm field trips, local food cooking and taste tests, school gardens, and local food served in school cafeterias. Farm to school activity mini-grants will be provided up to \$1000. Mini-grant applications are due every month on the 15th through April 15, 2023 and will be awarded by the 30th of each month! [Learn more and apply.](#)

Nutrition Education & Promotion

Check Out Discover MyPlate Nutrition Education for Kindergarten – Updated

USDA Team Nutrition is pleased to announce the new and updated [Discover MyPlate: Nutrition Education for Kindergarten](#) resources. Schools and parents can now access the fun, inquiry-based MyPlate nutrition education resources



designed specifically for kindergarten-aged children. The set now includes additional foods, Spanish-language components, and fun new resources showing where foods come from.

- **Kindergarten teachers** can use the standards-based lessons to help kids learn about nutrition while also reinforcing math, science, English language arts, and health education content.
- **School Nutrition Professionals** can reinforce key Discover MyPlate messages at school meals.
- **Parents/caregivers** can use these fun readers, activity sheets, and more to help their child learn about food while practicing reading and math skills.

Continuing Education

Learn About Culinary Quick Bites – 3/2, 3 pm ET

On March 2 at 3:00 pm ET, the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) will host their monthly webinar, *Culinary Quick Bites: Short-Format Culinary Trainings for School Nutrition Professionals*. This month's webinar will focus on strategies for carving out training time with School Nutrition staff and introduce CICN's newest training resource, *Culinary Quick Bites*. Finding the time to train staff can be challenging. We know that adults learn best when training includes auditory, visual, and tactile elements in a short period of time. This works to the advantage of busy School Nutrition administrators and staff, as working 15-minute short-format trainings into the daily production schedule is typically feasible. [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 [continuing professional education resources](#) for Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists (RDNs) and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTRs).

Questions

If you have any questions regarding these updates, please reach out to your [regional consultants](#).

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

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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.

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