

School Nutrition Update

October 23-27, 2023



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Program Operations Information

Complete Quarterly Supply Chain Assistance Report – Due 10/31

As a reminder, Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) Reports are to be completed *quarterly* by all School Food Authorities (SFA) that received SCA funds in 2022 and 2023. This is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirement and continues until all the SCA funds are exhausted. If you have any questions, contact your Area School Nutrition Consultant.

Upcoming reporting dates for 2023 are listed below:

- July, August, September 2023 – **Report on Tuesday, October 31, 2023**
- **October, November, December 2023 – Report no later than Friday, December 29, 2023**

The reporting is short, simple, and done electronically, with only a few questions.

- Access the [survey](#) for completing the required quarterly report.
- Utilize [step by step guidance](#) to complete the survey.
- Reference a [Q & A](#) on Supply Chain Assistance funds.

Please keep in mind the following:

- USDA requires that SCA funds be used exclusively for the purchase of domestic food products that are unprocessed or minimally processed.
- Fluid milk and other dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt and 100% juices count as minimally processed.
- Produce that is cut, pureed, frozen, canned, or dried is considered minimally processed.
- Baked goods, chicken nuggets, and pre-packaged sandwiches or meals are understood to be significantly processed or prepared and cannot be purchased using SCA funds.

Have You Registered for a SummerPalooza! Summit Yet? – Deadline 11/17

All public school units, private nonprofits, public organizations, and advocates interested in eliminating summer hunger for youth are encouraged to participate in the upcoming SummerPalooza! Summits. The summits are the place to be to learn late-breaking new regulations for 2024 Summer Nutrition Programs, how to make the most of County Profiles, innovative meal service strategies including non-congregate meals, and the top ten steps to set up your summer meal sites for success. Success will also be celebrated by recognizing the 2023 N.C. Summer Nutrition Program Champions. [Register](#) by **November 17** for a summit at one of the locations below. For more SummerPalooza! info or questions, reach out to summernutritionprogram@dpi.nc.gov.



- November 28 – Western - Hickory Metro Convention Center, 1960 13th Ave. Drive SE, Hickory

- November 29 – Central - McKimmon Center, 1101 Gorman Street, Raleigh
- November 30 – Eastern – Eastern AHEC, 2600 W. Arlington Boulevard, Greenville

Look for Upcoming School Nutrition Updates on a Bi-Monthly Schedule

Based on input from School Nutrition administrators, the School Nutrition Update e-letter is moving to a bi-monthly schedule starting in November 2023. Issues will be sent out on the second and fourth full week of each month. **Copy ready submissions** for the SN Update should be submitted to Tracey Bates, School Nutrition Promotion Specialist, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov, by **12 pm** on **Wednesday of the first and third full weeks of the month**. The schedule will be adjusted as needed to accommodate for holidays. The SN Update will take a winter break at the end of December through the beginning of January. See below for dates for upcoming scheduled issues. If an urgent news item occurs, a communication will be sent out through the School Nutrition listserv. Please make sure your contact information is correct in the School Nutrition Technology System.

- Issue November 13-17, Submission deadline – Wednesday, November 8
- Issue November 27-30, Submission deadline – Tuesday, November 21 *Due to Thanksgiving
- Issue December 11-15, Submission deadline – Wednesday, December 6
- Issue January 8-12, Submission deadline – Thursday, January 4 *Due to New Years
- Issue January 22-26, Submission deadline – Wednesday, January 17

Be a Host for the 2024 N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute! – Reply by 12/1

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition in conjunction with Chef Cyndie Story and the K-12 Team are thrilled to bring back the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute for summer 2024! We will be offering six workshops across the state and are looking for public school units (PSUs) to serve as hosts for this three-day, hands-on workshop for School Nutrition managers.

We are looking for hosts for the following dates (The first day is for setup only.):

- June 24-28, 2024
- July 8-12, 2024
- July 22-26, 2024
- July 29-August 2, 2024
- August 5-9, 2024



The benefits of being a host include:

- Convenient opportunity for training your School Nutrition managers (no travel/lodging costs),
- Easier chance to observe the workshop and the benefit to your School Nutrition managers,
- Reimbursement for costs for food and consumables related to conducting the workshop, and
- Potential positive media exposure for your School Nutrition Program.

Please reach out to Katrina Perry, Professional Development Consultant, katrina.perry@dpi.nc.gov, for more information if your PSU is interested in serving as a host site for any of the dates listed above.

Learn More About and Reply to the 2023 Farm to School Census

The USDA, Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program is conducting its fourth Farm to School Census in Fall 2023!



What you should know:

- The 2023 Farm to School Census is collecting data on farm to school participation for the 2022-23 School Year.
- This Census is the only national survey that examines local food purchasing, school gardens, and agricultural education efforts in schools.
- All SFAs should respond to the Census whether they participate in farm to school or not.
- High participation rates will help illustrate the scale and impact of farm to school within North Carolina, our region, and the nation.
- School Food Authority (SFA) contacts were sent an email from Decision Information Resources (DIR) on October 2 with a unique link to respond to the Census survey.
- SFAs have until the end of December 2023 to respond.
- School Nutrition administrators can work with school and community partners to gather data for and share the survey link to respond to the Census.

Want to learn more?

- Check out the [USDA Farm to School Census Partner Resources](#) including an informational webinar, sample survey, preparation worksheet, Q & A, promotional artwork, and more.
- View a recording of the [North Carolina Farm to School Census webinar](#) offered on October 24 by USDA, NCDPI, the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, N.C. Cooperative Extension, and the Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina.

School Nutrition Spotlight

Identify N.C. Summer Nutrition Program Champions – Deadline 10/27

North Carolina Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Summer Seamless Option (SSO) sponsors are implementing innovative and creative practices to expand their Summer Nutrition Programs. We encourage all sponsors to consider applying to one or multiple of the North Carolina Summer Nutrition Champion Awards. Sponsors may be self-nominated or nominated by a third party such as a community partner.

- Going the Distance Innovation Award
- Rising Star Award
- Superior Site Award
- Farm to Summer Best Practices Award



A PowerPoint presentation of 3-5 slides, no more than forty words per slide plus notes, is required for submissions along with supporting documentation, as needed. For any of the 2023 Summer Nutrition Champion Awards, please send the presentation and all attachments in ONE email to carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu with the title "2023 Summer Nutrition Champion Awards – Your Sponsor/Stakeholder Name" in the subject line

of the email. Label the documents and/or attachments with the title of the award you are entering and your sponsor/stakeholder title. All nominations should be submitted no later than **5 pm on October 27**. This is an opportunity for you to show how you met and exceeded your goals in 2023! N.C. Summer Nutrition Champions will be recognized at the SummerPalooza! Summits. [Learn more](#).

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 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. 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.



Davie 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 ready-for-print 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. **Submissions received after the deadline will be included in the following issue of the SN Update.**

Grant Opportunity

Apply for a 2023 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition is pleased to notify all SFAs of a grant opportunity specifically intended to help SFAs purchase commercial equipment for use in preparing and/or serving nutritious meals to students that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The one-time appropriation of \$909,188.00 has been made available to NCDPI for sub-grants for equipment purchases in eligible schools and sites in traditional, charter, and non-public schools and residential childcare institutions operating the NSLP.

Given the limited funds available and the commitment to distribute these funds as equitably as possible, SFAs are encouraged to be realistic in their requests. Based on this recommendation, if an SFA would like to request a “partial grant” with the plan of using other SFA funds to purchase a larger piece of equipment, you may do so. For example, a single request for \$40,000 is unlikely to be successful, but a partial grant in the amount of \$20,000 is much more likely to be successful and that amount can defray the overall cost of the equipment.

SFAs must use their individual School Nutrition Procurement Plan to determine whether a formal or informal purchasing method is indicated and all procurement documents, including the solicitation and the vendor’s bid/quote must be submitted with the application/proposal packet. All funds must be fully expended by March 31, 2025. Funds not fully paid to the vendor by this date will be returned to USDA.

Access the EAG announcement memo and application from the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition [website](#). Applications are due to NCDPI by **5:00 PM on Wednesday, January 10, 2024**. If you have questions, please contact Jacquelyn McGowan, School Nutrition Program Specialist, jacquelyn.mcgowan@dpi.nc.gov.

Nutrition Education & Promotion

Help Reach All 100 Counties with the #NCCrunch!

To celebrate Farm to School and Early Care and Education Month and encourage literacy among North Carolina students, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt recorded [reading](#) the N.C. Farm to School Program *Digging for Sweetpotatoes* storybook. In addition, N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler recorded [reading](#) the *A Visit to the Apple Orchard* storybook. Watch and share the storybook readings to help you celebrate Farm to School and Early Care and Education Month and the N.C. Crunch!



Make sure your schools, public school units, agencies, organizations, counties and/or families are signed up for the 2023 #NCCrunch! The goal is to reach all 100 counties and 500,000 kids and adults. Currently, we have 65 counties plus the Qualla Boundary and 1,060 sites registered to reach 172,309 participants. Most of our North Carolina schools serve locally grown fruits and vegetables as part of school meals. Participating in the N.C. Crunch is a wonderful way to promote your support of local agriculture and farm to school. Sign up for the N.C. Crunch to count your efforts and receive access to free promotional and educational resources. [Learn more](#).

NC Crunch 2023 Participation



Learn About and Promote the N.C. Jr. Chef Competition

High school students can work with their teachers and local School Nutrition Programs to create school lunch entrée recipes that adhere to National School Lunch Program standards, feature at least two North Carolina-grown ingredients and one USDA Foods item, and appeal to students. The first place N.C. Jr. Chef team advances to the Southeast Jr. Chef Competition. Student members of the top three teams at the state and regional level win scholarships. See below for the 2024 N.C. Jr. Chef Competition key dates and action steps. For competition information and materials, visit the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition [website](#). To learn more about details and updates for this year’s competition, [register](#) to participate in a webinar on November 8 at 4 pm ET.



2024 NC Jr. Chef Competition (NCJCC) Timeline:

- January 5, 2024 – Teams submit the online Submission Form, Application (Excel or Google Sheet), Recipe Photo and a signed NCJCC Permission and Release Form for each student team member. The Application includes team information, recipe ingredients and instructions, nutrient analysis, and cost analysis.

- January 22, 2024 – Based on a review of applications and recipes, up to eight finalist teams will be selected to compete in the NCJCC cook-off phase. Teams will be notified regarding finalist selections.
 - February 19, 2024 – NCJCC finalist teams will submit their final application with recipe, nutrient analysis, cost analysis, recipe photo, time management plan, and an unedited recipe preparation video.
 - March 11 or 12, 2024 – NCJCC teams participate in live virtual interviews with panel of evaluators.
 - March 13, 2024 – NCJCC results will be announced via press release and social media. A virtual ceremony will be held to recognize all finalist teams and announce the results.
 - April 25, 2024 – The NCJCC first place team submits their application, recipe, recipe photo, permission forms, and media releases for the Southeast Jr. Chef Competition.
 - May 9-10, 2024 – State teams compete at the Southeast Jr. Chef Competition at Nashville State Community College in Tennessee.
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Continuing Education

Dive into FRAC's Afterschool Nutrition Report – 10/26, 3 pm ET

Join the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) on October 26 at 3 pm ET for a 30-minute deep dive detailing the findings of the *Afterschool Suppers: A Snapshot of Participation* report, which showcases state and national participation in the Afterschool Nutrition Programs in October 2022 and October 2021. [Learn more and register.](#)

Discover Key Components of a Youth-Led Entrepreneurship Cooperative Series

City Blossoms, the Farm-Based Education Network, and the U.S. Botanic Gardens have teamed up to offer a four-part workshop series highlighting the ins and outs of farm and garden youth entrepreneurship programs. Join the series and a group of guest presenters to explore how to support young people as they start, manage, and grow their own youth-driven businesses. The series sessions are on October 26, November 2, November 14, and November 28, 3:30-5 pm ET. [Learn more and register.](#)

Know About Bid Cycles and Forecasts – 11/1, 3 pm ET

Join the national School Nutrition Association (SNA) on November 1 at 3 pm ET to learn what you need to know about bid cycles and forecasts. In this discussion, strategies will be shared regarding the timing of your commodity bid, how to properly forecast your upcoming use, and discover how to navigate mid-year menu changes. [Learn more and register.](#)

Explore New School Breakfast Recipes – 11/2, 3 pm ET

Join the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) on November 2 at 3 pm ET for an exciting culinary demonstration brought to you by the Georgia Department of Education's Culinary Specialists. Georgia's team of expert School Nutrition chefs will showcase innovative and nutritious breakfast recipes designed specifically for school cafeterias. Discover creative ways to revitalize morning meals for students, elevate your School Breakfast Program, and ensure students start their day with delicious and wholesome options. [Learn more and register.](#)

Learn How the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Can Be an Important Step Toward Healthy School Meals for All – 11/2, 3 pm ET

Since its inception, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) has been instrumental in eliminating stigma surrounding school meal participation, reducing burdens on families and districts, and ensuring that all students have access to healthy school meals. In the 2022-23 school year, 82% of eligible schools participated in CEP. With U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent release of the final rule, *Community Eligibility Provision: Increasing Options for Schools*, even more schools will be eligible to participate in this important program. Join the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) and USDA on November 2 at 3 pm ET to discuss what the rule means for students, schools, and districts across the country. [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).

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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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