

Monthly Update



School Nutrition Programs

September 28, 2023

Distributed to the School Nutrition Program Authorized Representatives Listserv and the Food Service Directors Listserv and posted at <https://cnw.ksde.org>, SNP, Monthly Update.

Verification

Verification is confirmation of eligibility for reduced price and free meals under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The following sponsors do not complete verification:

- Sponsors participating in ONLY the Special Milk Program
- Residential Child Care Institutions that do not also operate a day school
- Sponsors that are participating district-wide in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

All other sponsors must select and verify eligibility for a sample of applications approved for benefits. One person should coordinate all verification activities for the sponsor. Important deadlines for the verification process are:

- October 1 (October 1 is a Sunday, you may count on Monday, October 2 or Friday, September 29) – Count applications and students approved for reduced price and free meals. Applications and students that are in “carry-over” status on October 1 are NOT included in this count. Complete the Pre-Verification Worksheet in KN-CLAIM to determine the Sponsor’s sampling method. Once the Pre-Verification Worksheet is submitted, go into the Post-Verification Results screen to see the number and type of applications that must be verified. Verify ONLY the number required unless verified “for cause”.
- October 31 – Update counts of students approved for reduced price and free meals on the Pre-Verification Worksheet in KN-CLAIM. Do NOT update number of applications. CEP sponsors only: Enter the number of students directly certified for Food Assistance (FA) as of 10/31/2023. This total should be the same as row 1a. Enter the total for CEP sites and for non-CEP sites. If sponsor is 100% CEP, put a zero for non-CEP sites.
- November 15 – Complete all verification activities. This deadline is the same whether it falls on a weekday or weekend.
- December 15 – Complete reporting of Post-Verification Results in KN-CLAIM.

To navigate to the Verification screens in KN-CLAIM, select School Nutrition Programs, Program Year 2024 and then click on the “Forms” tab on the Sponsor Summary page. On the same line as “Pre-Verification Worksheet” click the <Add> button which can be found at the right-hand side of the screen and has the image of a + sign. For step-by-step instructions, the Verification Quick Reference Guide can assist you in completing the Pre-Verification Worksheet correctly. Please download the guide at <https://cnw.ksde.org>, KN-CLAIM, Quick References, School Nutrition Program Verification.

USDA requires KSDE to annually report verification data for each sponsor. The USDA report is completed using the data you provide on the Pre-Verification Worksheet and the Post-Verification Results screens in KN-CLAIM. Please make sure that the information entered is accurate, complete, and submitted on time. For instructions on the verification process and all related forms (including KSDE’s Spanish translations), go to <https://cnw.ksde.org>, SNP, Food Service Facts, Chapter 8: Verification of Eligibility. **If you missed the verification webinar, an on-line class is available as well as Pre-Verification Worksheet and Post-Verification Worksheet tutorials in the School Nutrition Program section at <https://learning.ksde.org>.**



Summer (Supplemental) 2023 PEBT – Action Needed by October 13th!

All school-aged students who were eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals at school through the National School Lunch Program at the end of the 2022-2023 school year are eligible to receive the Summer (Supplemental) 2023 PEBT benefit. This list should include students who graduated. All Sponsors are required to complete this excel spreadsheet listing students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals at the end of the 2022-2023 school year: [Summer 2023 Supplemental PEBT Excel Spreadsheet Template](#). Include students that were enrolled at the end of the 2022-2023 school year and were Directly Certified, Categorically Eligible or eligible by a Free and Reduced Income Application.

Sponsors must upload their spreadsheet directly to DCF through this secure link: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/dnqfFTnB2sgMLqg6BCj0>. A box will display with a button saying, “Add Files”. After clicking the button, the user will have the ability to select the file for upload. When the process is complete, a “Finished Uploading” message will display. **Sponsors can start uploading files now and are encouraged to upload as soon as possible. DCF cannot receive any files after 10/13/2023.** If a sponsor is unable to meet the deadline, those students will not be included in the auto-issued PEBT benefit and will need to apply when the application opens in February. Additional information about Summer (Supplemental) 2023 PEBT can be found on the DCF website at: www.dcf.ks.gov/Pages/P-EBT.aspx.

October 26 Thursday Town Hall at 2

Plan now to join KSDE for the October 26th Thursday Townhall at 2 pm using this link: <https://ksde.zoom.us/j/87204779621?pwd=NEhrcHloRjBobGtOZTJEWfJtR0tUQT09>. The agenda will include but not be limited to: New Kansas Food Code, Supply Chain Assistance Funds-Round 4, Summer P-EBT Update, Equipment Grants, Farm to School Census and any new USDA Guidance. Bring your favorite crunchable produce item for a “Virtual Crunch” to celebrate Farm to School Month during Town Hall!

Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools Final Rule

USDA published a final rule in the Federal Register on September 26, 2023, to expand access to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) by lowering the minimum identified student percentage (ISP) participation threshold from 40 percent to 25 percent. The rule gives more high-need schools the option to elect CEP and offer all students healthy school meals at no cost when it is financially viable for them to do so. The final rule is available to view on the [Federal Register](#). Visit [Community Eligibility Provision | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#) for more information, including the [Summary of Final Rule](#). Next week, USDA is hosting a webinar for school food authority staff focused on the final rule.

- Webinar for school food authorities: Thursday, October 5, 2023, 2:00 PM EST. Please register for the Zoom webinar using the following link: https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_Y1zYX1IfST6fFqMMBV4uQQ

KSDE will provide more information in October once USDA releases implementing guidance about next steps if you are interested in electing CEP mid-year due to this new rule.

Kansas Online Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals – Reminder

Sponsors using the Online Kansas Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application must print the applications or store them electronically within 30 days of receiving.



Fiscal Year 2023 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grants

Kansas has received an allocation of \$252,243 to competitively award equipment assistance grants to eligible Sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) including those operating the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). This year priority does **not** have to be given to high-need schools where 50% or more of the enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Priority will be given to those schools who have not received a previous NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant. These funds will allow Sponsors who apply and are awarded equipment assistance grants to purchase equipment to improve nutritional quality of school meals, safety of food served, increase efficiency of procurement, food storage and service, support expanded participation in the NSLP, ability to use local foods, strategies for adopting lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population such as Grab and Go or Kiosks and/or to support the establishment, maintenance or expansion of the School Breakfast Program through innovative service models. The Kansas grant application is available at <https://cnw.ksde.org>, SNP, What's New. Applications are due by close of business on November 17, 2023. Contact Diane Dysart at ddysart@ksde.org with questions. Diane is available to review applications to make sure they are complete prior to the deadline.

Supply Chain Assistance Funds Update – Fourth Round

Sponsors will receive a grant award notification of funding for the Fourth round of the Supply Chain Assistance Funds once the KSDE enrollment numbers based on the September 20th count date are available. USDA has indicated that another attestation statement is not needed if the Sponsor has previously signed an Attestation for Supply Chain Assistance funds. The only action needed will be for those Sponsors who do not want to accept the Fourth Round of Supply Chain Assistance Funds to return the Grant Award notification and indicate they are opting out. These funds do not have to be spent by the end of this school year and can remain available until fully used.

Celebrate National School Lunch Week – October 9-13, 2023

Let's get ready for #NSLW23! Created by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, National School Lunch Week (NSLW) was established to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child's life and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom. Celebrate with special menus, events, and activities, all with the goal of:

- Increasing student participation
- Spreading the message that you are serving healthy, delicious lunch at school
- Earning media coverage from local papers, TV stations and bloggers

This year's theme, **"Level Up with School Lunch"**, highlights the importance of a healthy school lunch to student's success both in and out of the classroom. SNA has created resources to help you plan your celebration available at <https://schoolnutrition.org/about-school-meals/national-school-lunch-week/#resources>

Professional Development Opportunities

Many opportunities for learning are available for School Nutrition Program Sponsors. Go to <https://cnw.ksde.org>, Training, CNW Calendar to access the class list with dates, times and ZOOM links. Training is also offered through the KSDE Training Portal 24/7.

New to the portal: Pre-Verification Worksheet Tutorial, Post Verification Worksheet Tutorial, and SNP Verification

**KSDE Training Portal Tips:**

- Portable devices (tablets and phones) do not work well with the portal. Please use a laptop or desktop computer to complete the class.
- Recommended browsers: Microsoft Edge, Firefox or Apple based. The portal does not consistently work well with Google Chrome.
- Close the training each day when finished - do not leave the training open. The system will remember where you left off if you close out of the training. Click the "Complete Video Later" or "Exit Activity" button (top right) rather than just closing the browser.
- If there is a problem with connectivity while watching a video, exit the module immediately. Refresh the screen once connectivity is re-established and re-enter the video.
- The connection between the video and the reporting system is a lot like a phone call - if something happens to disrupt the signal, the connection needs to be re-established. If you don't, you can keep talking but the other person doesn't hear you. In the training portal system, if the connection breaks, you can keep participating, but the system doesn't know you are still there for that activity and will not register completion.

Local Foods Culinary Training – Coming in October!

Celebrate Farm to School Month by participating in the Local Foods Culinary Training. Available in October on the KSDE Training Portal, this 2-hour training features Kansas products and producers, gives helpful information to how to implement Farm to Plate in Kansas Child Nutrition Programs, and provides recipes and culinary tips for incorporating the Kansas products featured in the training into local menus! Each school kitchen with a staff member completing the training is eligible to receive a culinary toolkit consisting of dough cutter, wire whisk, digital scale, and blender (1 kit per school kitchen). Instructions for completing the survey to receive the toolkit will be posted at the end of the online training. Go to <https://learning.ksde.org> to access this training in early October.

USDA Team Nutrition Updates**On October 12, Celebrate Lunch Trays Many Ways Meal Talk Webinar**

In celebration of National School Lunch Week, Team Nutrition will present a [Meal Talk Webinar](#) to highlight the many ways to offer school lunch with inspiration from across the country. Speakers from the Arizona Department of Education and Bellingham Public Schools in Washington will share strategies and success stories related to incorporating student food preferences and locally grown foods in USDA standardized recipes. Participants will also learn about USDA's Team Nutrition resources and the Healthy Meals Incentive Recognition Awards. This webinar will be held on October 12, 2023, from 3:00 – 4:00 pm Eastern Time. [Register now!](#)

On October 17, Level Up Your Professional Standards Tracking Webinar

On Tuesday, October 17, from 3:00 - 4:00 pm Eastern Time, USDA's Team Nutrition will present the webinar, "Level Up Your Professional Standards Tracking". This webinar will review the basic features of the [Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool](#) (PSTTT) and explore the latest updates to the PSTTT such as logging certifications and enhanced search and filter capabilities. Register for the free webinar [here!](#)

New yields are now available in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based (FBG) Tool and FBG Mobile App!

New yield data is available for: individually quick-frozen (IQF) black beans, IQF pinto beans, roasted soybeans, roasted chickpeas, fresh oranges, grape tomatoes, and ready-to-use diced and sliced onions. Stay tuned for additional yield data releases coming soon. Explore the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) today!



Order Now for National School Lunch Week!

Child Nutrition program operators can order free print materials to help celebrate National School Lunch Week! Check out some examples below. Explore all print materials by visiting the [Team Nutrition Resource Order Form](#).

- **Stickers:**
 - Taste Test
 - I've Got Great Taste
 - Make it a Try Day
- **Student Resources:**
 - Stronger with School Meals Activity Booklet
 - MyPlate Guide to School Lunch
- **Decal Sets:**
 - Discover New Foods
 - Fueling My Healthy Life
- **Posters:**
 - Offer vs. Serve High School Lunch
 - Offer vs. Serve Middle School Lunch
 - MyPlate
 - Be a Food Critic!
 - Taste-Test

Team Nutrition/USDA MyPlate Resources

[USDA MyPlate Life Stages](#): parent resources, quizzes, tips sheets. Many resources are available in both English and Spanish.

October is Farm to School Month

2023 Farm to School Census

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) is gearing up for the 2023 Farm to School Census! FNS has contracted with Decision Information Resources (DIR) and Mathematica to conduct the Census with all public, charter, and private school food authorities (SFAs) that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) nationwide. Your full participation is crucial to ensure that the Census data is representative of all SFAs in the country and in your State.

On October 2, 2023, DIR will e-mail you a link to the Census and instructions. It will come from Farm2SchoolCensus@dir-online.com. Please add this email address to your approved senders list so that you don't miss the email. When completing the Census, you will provide information about your SFA for school year 2022-23. You will have through December to complete the Census.

Additionally, in the email with your Census link, you will also receive an invitation to a webinar open to all SFAs that will provide an overview of the Census, guidance on filling out different sections, and an opportunity to ask questions about the Census. We encourage your attendance to learn more about this important research effort.

Responding to FNS research requests is required under the National School Lunch Act, and it is important that **all SFAs participate, regardless of their participation in farm to school activities**. The Farm to School Census is our best tool for collecting important information to help us support your farm to school efforts. If you are curious about how your results will be used, you can see the results of the 2019 Farm to School Census at <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/census-results-overview>. You can explore data at the SFA, State, or national level.

If you have any questions, please contact the project team toll-free at 866-986-2230 from 9 AM to 9 PM ET, or e-mail Farm2SchoolCensus@dir-online.com. Thank you in advance for your support of the 2023 Census.



Regional Farm Tours – Last Chance to Register!

The KSDE Child Nutrition and Wellness team is excited to host regional Farm Tours across Kansas. Tour participants will ride on a bus to visit farms and hear from food partners about sourcing Kansas products. Sponsors attending the tours will receive education, resources, networking, and inspiration to incorporate local products into Child Nutrition Program menus. The Farm Tours are free to attend and will take place in the Northeastern, South Central, and Northwestern regions of Kansas. A free local foods lunch will be served at an area school as part of the tour.

Northeast Kansas: Begins and ends in Lawrence, Kansas, **September 29, 8 AM – 4:00 PM**

Tour will include Juniper Hill Farms (Lawrence, KS), Lawrence Public Schools School Gardens and local lunch at Lawrence Public Schools (Lawrence, KS), JET Produce and Meats (Leavenworth, KS), and lunch presentation from the KC Food Hub.

South Central Kansas: Begins and ends in Haven, Kansas, **October 6, 8 AM – 4:15 PM**

Tour will include Teck Farms (Hutchinson, KS), Pretty Prairie School Farm and local lunch at Pretty Prairie Schools (Pretty Prairie, KS), Basinger's Beef (Pretty Prairie, KS), Eck Agriculture (Kingman, KS), and lunch presentation from Stafford County Flour Mill.

Northwest Kansas: Begins and ends in Hoxie, Kansas, **October 13, 8 AM – 3:30 PM**

Tour will include sorghum/wheat producer (Grainfield, KS), 4B Farms (Grinnell, KS), M Arrow Ranch (Colby, KS), with a local lunch from Colby Public Schools (Colby, KS).

Click the following link to register: [CNW Fall 2023 Regional Farm Tour Registration \(qualtrics.com\)](https://qualtrics.com/registration/cnw-fall-2023-regional-farm-tour)

The 5th Annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off – October 2023

This year's registrants can crunch on not only apples, but ANY local crunchable produce! Kansas is participating in the Mountain Plains Crunch Off with seven other regional states. The Kansas goal is 50,000 crunches statewide. Our regional goal is 230,000 crunches. Celebrate with local produce any day, September 29th–October 31st, to participate in the crunch off. Make your event plans and register at https://ksde.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3Cw1w1Uz2WwKLOW. Resources for crunch off events can be found at <https://cnw.ksde.org>, Farm to Plate, What's New. Crunchable local produce can be found in many places – school/childcare gardens, farmer's market, local distributors or <https://shopkansasfarms.com/map/>. If you have any questions, please contact Barb Depew, Farm to Plate Project Director at bdepew@ksde.org or Eryn Davis, Farm to Plate Project Coordinator at edavis@ksde.org.

Harvest of the Month

The Kansas Farm to Plate Harvest of the Month Program is almost here! The program will be launching in October, featuring one Kansas-grown product each month. Recipes, educational and promotional materials will be available including posters, table tents, newsletters, videos, and social media graphics at <https://cnw.ksde.org>, Farm to Plate, What's New. Static clings will be available for order by emailing Eryn Davis at edavis@ksde.org. The program kick-off will feature Apples – just in time for the Mountain Plains Crunch Off!



Beef Resource Guide for K-12 School Food Service Available on Beef, It's What for Dinner

The [Beef Resource Guide for K-12 School Food Service](#) is available on Beef. It's What's for Dinner. Thank you to Wisconsin State Beef Council for leading the charge to create this comprehensive resource to share with other States; this resource highlights the ways beef delivers nutrition, taste and menu versatility to school meals offering practical approaches for including beef on school menus.

The Beef Resource Guide is located on the Beef Nutrition web page for Teens and Tweens along with additional nutrition resources for this age group. Check out the full web page here: [Nutrition for Adolescents and School Age Children on Beef. It's What's for Dinner.](#)

Kansas Safe Route to School Pilot Planning and Programming Grants – New in 2023!

Starting in Fall 2023, the KDOT Safe Routes to School program will provide planning assistance and kick-start grants to schools and communities interested in Safe Routes to School. The application period is open September 22-November 17, 2023!

Eligible projects include:

- Safe Routes to School plans
- Creation and reproduction of promotional and educational materials
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety curricula, materials, and trainers
- Training, including SRTS training workshops for school- and community-level audiences
- Costs for data gathering, analysis, and evaluation reporting at the local project level
- Startup costs for additional law enforcement or equipment needed for enforcement activities around schools
- [Demonstration projects](#)
- [Traffic gardens](#)
- And more!

For more information about Safe Routes to Schools Planning and Programming Grants, please join us for a webinar on September 28, 1 pm to 2 pm or on September 29, noon to 1:00 pm. The first 30 minutes of each webinar will repeat the information presented at the SRTS summit on September 22; the second 30 minutes will be a Q&A session. For more information, please contact Ann Katt, SRTS Coordinator, 785-296-3873, ann.katt@ks.gov

Staffing Update

Diana Floyd is retiring from the KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team at the end of September after 11 years of outstanding service to Kansas Child Nutrition Sponsors. Best wishes as you begin your next chapter. Congratulations Diana!

Autumn Thoughts

Please share National School Lunch Week, Farm to School Month and “Crunch” activities and pictures at #FuelingKSKids. These occasions are perfect to increase enthusiasm about school meals in your community. If you are a new Authorized Representative or Food Service Director and feeling overwhelmed with day-to-day activities, let alone these celebrations, and would appreciate a technical assistance visit from the CNW team, please reach out to the Topeka office or your area consultant. We are here to assist you!

As always, if you have questions please call or email us or your area Child Nutrition Consultant.

Cheryl, Karen, and Kelly



For more information, contact:

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