

# Monthly Update



## School Nutrition Programs

September 5, 2024

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

### September Claims Processing

School Nutrition Program (SNP) vouchers will resume being posted on the first three Tuesdays of each month beginning with Tuesday, 9/10/2024, allowing payments to direct deposit on Fridays. To ensure timely payments, please make certain Site and Sponsor Claims are in "Approved" status by 8:00 a.m. each applicable Tuesday morning. Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) claims will be vouchered on Tuesday, 9/24/2024, allowing payments to be directly deposited on Friday, 9/27/2024. Claims will then be vouchered 1-2 times per month throughout the school year. Questions related to claims and reimbursement payments can be directed to Dessa Gifford at [drgifford@ksde.org](mailto:drgifford@ksde.org) or (785) 296-4965.

### September Town Hall

The September Town Hall will provide important School Nutrition Program reminders, clarifications and updates. Join the meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm using the following link:

<https://ksde.zoom.us/j/87204779621?pwd=NEhrcHloRjBobGtOZTJEWfJtR0tUQT09>

Meeting ID: 872 0477 9621. Passcode: 746337

### Summer EBT

The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (Summer EBT) is a new federal nutrition program that provides grocery benefits during the summer months to families with children eligible for free or reduced price school meals. Kansas has elected to participate in Summer EBT beginning in summer 2024. For more information about Summer EBT in Kansas, go to [Summer EBT - Economic & Employment Services \(ks.gov\)](https://www.ks.gov). Households can contact the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) at 1-866-369-4777 for more information about eligibility benefits. **Eligible children that were not automatically issued benefits by DCF by the end of July may complete an online application up until September 11, 2024, at [www.dcfapp.kees.ks.gov](http://www.dcfapp.kees.ks.gov).**

### Important – Medicaid Direct Certification!

Only students found on the Direct Certification list as eligible for free or reduced price meals due to Medicaid can be directly certified. A Medicaid number submitted by a household on a paper or online application cannot be used to certify students for free or reduced price meals because not all Medicaid programs meet Child Nutrition Program Income Eligibility Guidelines.

If a student was initially approved for free benefits through an application, TAF, MED-F, or Foster status but is later found on the direct certification list as FA, the POS accountability system needs to be updated to show free benefits based on FA.

### Direct Certification with Medicaid Q&As

**Q:** A household says they are eligible for Medicaid and should be receiving free or reduced price meals, but I know they have to be on the direct certification list. Who should I have them contact to see why they are not on the list?



**A:** Direct them to the Medicaid Clearinghouse by calling 1-800-792-4884 or they can go to the Self Service Portal, <https://cssp.kees.ks.gov/apspssp/ssp.portal>, and take a self-assessment.

**Q:** If a student is on the Direct Certification list as MED-R, but the family goes ahead and completes an application because they believe they are eligible for free meals based on income and are determined eligible for free, would they receive free meals instead of reduced?

**A:** Yes, if the household completes an income application and qualifies for free, they would receive free benefits based on the income application and the income application would be included in the verification pool.

**Q:** Can a Medicaid Number be accepted on an Income Application and used to certify students for Free Meals?

**A:** No. Not all Medicaid programs meet Child Nutrition Program Income Eligibility Guidelines. Only students found on the Direct Certification list can be certified for free or reduced meals based on Medicaid.

### Indirect Cost Rates

Indirect Cost Rates for 2024-2025 have been posted at <https://cnw.ksde.org>, SNP, What's New. Food service uses the unrestricted rate in the last column. Please note that non-public Sponsors use the de minimis rate which has increased to 15%.

### Excess Cash Balance – Food Service Fund

To maintain the nonprofit status of the Food Service Fund, the fund balance or net cash resources of the fund should not exceed three (3) months' average expenditures. If the balance exceeds this threshold, the sponsor must take steps to reduce the balance or have an acceptable plan for using surplus revenues. **KSDE will notify Sponsors who have exceeded the threshold in September to develop a plan.** The plan must be reviewed and approved by KSDE. Only allowable expenses to the Food Service Fund are approvable. Due to the uncertainty of costs and participation in school meal programs for SY 2024-25, Sponsors that have excess cash balances will be allowed to indicate that higher food and labor costs and uncertain participation may impact the food service fund and can be used as acceptable reasoning on a spend down plan.

### 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 – 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 10/31/2024. 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 2025 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. The guide is available 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.

### Verification Training

Plan now to have all staff members responsible for verification activities attend Verification Training on September 5 from 1:30 pm-3:30 pm. Join at <https://ksde.zoom.us/j/89573630758?pwd=Nk40bm4yQ0h0dS8zNjFmMU1uQUIEz09> Passcode: 402598

### Training Opportunities

Many opportunities for learning are available for SNP Sponsors. Go to <https://cnw.ksde.org>, Training, CNW Calendar to access the class list with dates, times and Zoom links. Upcoming trainings, besides those listed below, include: SNP Administrative Review Training on September 17 from 2-3 pm, Food Safety Basics on September 18 from 2-5 pm, and Farm to Plate on October 2 from 2-3 pm.

Training is also offered 24/7 through the KSDE Training Portal. Create an account at <https://learning.ksde.org>. For detailed instructions on creating an account, go to <https://cnw.ksde.org>, Training. New to the portal: PY2024-2025 CACFP Annual Administrative Training (3 hours).

### Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Fall Monitoring Training

All sponsors contracting with a Food Service Management Company are strongly encouraged to participate in the FSMC Fall Update & Monitoring Training on September 19 at 2 pm. This training will provide updates for the 2024-25 school year as well as review sponsor responsibilities for monitoring FSMC contracts. Join at <https://ksde.zoom.us/j/85233893225?pwd=L0g5YmFCWStldHJRd05WaHI5Y0RJUT09> Meeting ID: 852 3389 3225 Passcode: 879481



### School Nutrition Association of Kansas 2024 Fall Conference

Make plans to attend the SNA-KS Fall Conference in Manhattan, Kansas October 11-12, 2024. To register go to: [SNA-KS 2024 Fall Conference \(constantcontactpages.com\)](https://www.constantcontactpages.com).

### Culinary Coaches – NEW Training Program!

KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness is excited to be launching a Culinary Coaches Program in SY 2025! This training opportunity allows sponsors to request in-person, hands-on culinary training conducted at their site. The sessions will be led by trained culinary coaches and will focus on developing culinary skills that will better enable child nutrition program sponsors to prepare scratch and speed scratch recipes. If interested in the culinary coaches training, please contact Holly at [hsteinlage@ksde.org](mailto:hsteinlage@ksde.org).

### Local Foods Culinary Training

Available 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.

### HACCP Help

September is National Food Safety Education Month. Resources to help create a culture of food safety are available at <https://www.fightbac.org/nfsem/>. KSDE has also developed a 'HACCP Help' newsletter to promote National Food Safety Education Month. The newsletter provides important updates and answers to common food safety questions. The 2024 Edition of HACCP Help is posted at <https://cnw.ksde.org>, SNP, Food Service Facts, Chapter 22 Food Safety & Sanitation, HACCP Guidance & Resources, HACCP Help - September 2024. Reminder: Food Safety Basics Training is offered monthly via Zoom and available 24/7 on the KSDE Training Portal. For food safety questions, email Holly Steinlage at [hsteinlage@ksde.org](mailto:hsteinlage@ksde.org).

### Celebrate National School Lunch Week – October 14-18, 2024

Let's get ready for #NSLW24! 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, **"School Lunch Pirates: Find Your Treasures"**, 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/>

### Healthier Kansas Menus Revisions

The CNW team will soon begin work on revising the Healthier Kansas Menus and would like to hear from Kansas Sponsors. Watch your email inbox for a short survey.



### **FY 2024 Farm to School Grant**

KSDE CNW was recently announced as a 2024 Farm to School Grant Awardee! Through the grant, subgrants and technical assistance will be provided to advance eligible farm to plate programming activities including gardening, chicken houses, raising livestock, and more. Regional training will be offered in collaboration with K-State Research and Extension and the Kansas Farm Bureau. More information will be available soon!

### **Regional Farm Tours – Save the Date!**

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

**Southwest Kansas:** Begins and ends in Garden City, KS on September 20th from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

- Tour will include Diamond W Farm & Ranch (Lakin, KS), Ehresman Packing Company (Garden City, KS), Prairie Wind Produce (Garden City, KS) with a local lunch provided by Garden City Schools and a lunch presentation (TBD)

**Southeast Kansas:** Begins and ends in Pittsburg, KS on September 27th, from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

- Tour will include Cleland Cattle Company (Arma, KS), Misty Morning Farm (Mulberry, KS), Dragon Farms (Pittsburg, KS) with a local lunch provided by Pittsburg Schools and lunch presentation by McCune Farm to Market/Schenker Family Farms

**North Central Kansas:** Begins and ends in Courtland, KS on October 4th from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

- Tour will include Creekside Land & Cattle (Formoso, KS), C & C High Tunnels (Scandia, KS), Depot Market (Courtland, KS) with a local lunch provided by Pike Valley Schools and lunch presentation by R Family Farms

Click the following link to register: [CNW Fall 2024 Regional Farm Tour Registration \(qualtrics.com\)](https://qualtrics.com)  
Registration will be open until September 13.

### **School Nutrition Program Sponsors Receive Kansans Can Awards**

The Kansans Can 2023-2024 Best Practice Awards were presented by Kelly Chanay, Child Nutrition and Wellness (CNW) director for the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), during the August Kansas State Board of Education meeting in Topeka. This is the seventh year for the awards.

**Congratulations to USD 292 Wheatland - Kansans Can Serve Local Food.** In SY 2023-2024, high school students participated in the Mountain Plains Crunch Off by “crunching” on local produce – apples, pears, and melons. Students captured their “crunch” in a selfie station! To build on this excitement, high schoolers taste tested 4 different types of apples, which was coincidentally done on Johnny Appleseed’s birthday. Dina Heier, food service director, also worked with the school librarian to feature books all week that were about apples and Johnny Appleseed. During National School Lunch Week, the high school also celebrated “beef week” by incorporating local beef in the menu. The district showcased local beef by having FFA students present about the different cuts of beef, giving out fun coloring pages, and displaying different types of grain consumed by cattle. Dina and her team enjoy incorporating trivia activities during National School Breakfast and National School Lunch week and have incorporated a fresh Garden Bar that is offered daily.



**Congratulations to USD 207 Ft. Leavenworth - Kansans Can Provide Outstanding Customer Service.** USD 207 is extremely unique in the education world. They are located on the Fort Leavenworth Military Installation which also houses the Command General Staffing College (CGSC). Most of their families are only with them for a single school year. A very large percentage of those families are international, so they may or may not speak and understand much English. So, every year they have to get the families to "buy into our program" as something completely new to them. They deal with quite a few allergies every year and make it their mission to have something for everyone as often as possible so that all students and families feel included in everything they do. They help them with words by association with photos on our menus and quite often on our serving lines. Menus are also translated into the first languages of students served. The food service team greets every student with a smile and tries to learn something about each of them as they are able. They have turned some rough mornings for students into some great afternoons just by the way they engage the students.

### The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off – October 2024

Mark your calendars for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off! Celebrate with any crunchable local product any day in October to participate in the crunch off. Crunchable local products can be found in many places – school/childcare gardens, farmer's market, or local distributors. Register your crunch at [https://ksde.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6QBF0bpkiChGNSe](https://ksde.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6QBF0bpkiChGNSe)

### Kansas Department of Transportation – Safe Routes to School

Register for [Kansas Safe Routes to School – International Walk and Roll to School Day](#) held on October 9, 2024. The Kansas Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program will send registrants resources including an event planning toolkit, posters, flyers, social media templates, and more to help make your event a success! Register by September 20, 2024, to make sure you get the good stuff in time to plan your event. For more information, visit [Kansas Safe Routes to School \(ksdot.gov\)](#).

### Staffing Update

Please join the CNW team in welcoming the newest members to the CNW team. Cassie Calloway has joined the Child Nutrition & Wellness team as a Child Nutrition Consultant. Jonathan Miller has joined the Child Nutrition & Wellness team as consultant for the Body Venture exhibit. Welcome Cassie and Jonathan!

As always, if you have questions or need technical assistance, please contact your Child Nutrition Consultant or the Topeka office.

### The CNW Team



For more information, contact:

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