

Monthly Update

School Nutrition Programs



October 1, 2025

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

Important Updates, Reminders, & Deadlines

October Town Hall – October 9

The October Town Hall will cover important reminders and updates for both SNP and CACFP. Farm to Plate month will be celebrated with program updates, sponsor best practice sharing, and a “crunch off” event! Plan to bring a local product to crunch into during the meeting and add a [Farm to Plate background](#) to your video. Join KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness on October 9 at 2 pm at this link: [Join the meeting now](#) (Meeting ID: 241 814 717 448 Passcode: hW7Wy3Ax)

7th Annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off in October

Make plans to participate in the 7th Annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off during Farm to School month. Celebrate by crunching into local products any day in October. Register your event at this link to receive a toolkit and list of crunch ideas: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NK578JH>

October Payment Dates – Change to Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) Schedule

SNP vouchers will be posted on the first three Tuesdays of the month as typical; FFVP vouchers will be posted on 10/7 and 10/21 instead of the second and fourth Tuesdays. Any questions related to FFVP Site or Sponsor Claims should be directed to Arleen Anderson, RD Specialist, at arleen.anderson@ksde.gov or 785-296-6716. Should you have any questions regarding payments for Child Nutrition Programs, contact Dessa Gifford, Public Service Administrator, at either desa.gifford@ksde.gov or 785-296-4965.

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 notified Sponsors who have exceeded the threshold that they need 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 for SY 2025-26, Sponsors that have excess cash balances will be allowed to indicate that higher food and labor costs paired with lower reimbursement rates and uncertain participation may impact the food service fund. This can be used as acceptable reasoning on a spend-down plan.

Verification – Important Upcoming Deadlines

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 (RCCI) 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 – Enter the number of applications approved for reduced price and free meals in each category on the Pre-Verification Worksheet in KN-CLAIM. Applications that are in “carry-over” status on October 1 are NOT included in this count. 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 additional applications are verified “for cause”.
- October 31 – Enter the number of students approved for reduced price and free meals in each category 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 10/31/2025 for CEP sites and non-CEP sites. This total should be the same as row 1a. 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 2026, 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 on the right-hand side of the screen and has the image of a + sign. For step-by-step instructions, the Verification Quick Reference Guide is available in KN-CLAIM under PY 2026, Quick References, View SNP References, Verification. Verification guidance and all related forms (including KSDE’s Spanish translations) are available at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under SNP, Food Service Facts, Chapter 8: Verification of Eligibility.

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.

Verification Office Hours – October 31

KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness (CNW) will be hosting office hours to assist program operators with the completion of verification. Join the session on Friday, October 31 from 9:30 to 10:30 am at this link: [Join the meeting now](#) (Meeting ID: 284 311 747 779 4 Passcode: y2VQ9Ju3)

Any program operator with specific questions pertaining to the verification of free and reduced price eligibility processes is encouraged to join the CNW team during the designated office hours. Please share this information with your verifying official(s).

Online Verification Trainings Available

Training covering the steps required to complete verification within all established deadlines was held in early September. The recording is now available on the KSDE Training Portal at <https://learning.ksde.org> under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: SNP.

Pre-Verification Worksheet (20 min) and Post-Verification Worksheet (10 min) tutorials are also available on the KSDE Training Portal at <https://learning.ksde.org> under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: Tutorials, SNP Tutorials.



Celebrate National School Lunch Week – October 13-17

Let's get ready for #NSLW25! 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, **"Taste the World: Your School Lunch Passport"**, invites students to experience and appreciate global cuisines, fostering a sense of connection and understanding. Resources created by SNA to help you plan your celebration are available at <https://schoolnutrition.org/about-school-meals/national-school-lunch-week/>. **Please let your child nutrition consultant know how you will be celebrating, and don't forget to share pictures of the celebrations on social media using #FuelingKSKids!**

Professional Development & Training

Training Opportunities

Many opportunities for learning are available to SNP sponsors. Go to <https://cnw.ksde.gov>, Training, CNW Calendar to access the schedule of live classes with dates, times, and links. Upcoming live virtual trainings include:

- **Handling a Food Recall** on October 1 from 2-3 pm
- **Food Safety Basics** on October 15 from 2-5 pm
- **CACFP Administrative Review Training** on October 28 from 1-2 pm
- **Is Your Attitude Showing?** on November 5 from 2-3 pm

On-demand training is offered 24/7 on the KSDE Training Portal. Create an account at <https://learning.ksde.org>. For detailed instructions on creating an account, go to <https://cnw.ksde.gov>, Training. **New to the portal:** SNP Verification Training (2 hrs)

If you would like to schedule an in-service, culinary coach session, or have questions about professional development, contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.

Culinary Coaches – NEW Training Program!

This training opportunity allows sponsors to request in-person, hands-on culinary training conducted at their site. Sponsors can choose from four training topics: Critical Culinary Skills, Knife Basics, Cooking Basics, and Baking Basics. 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 scheduling a culinary coach session, please contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.

SNP Annual Administrative Training (REQUIRED)

At least one representative from each Sponsor must participate in the SNP Annual Administrative Training. Sponsors who were unable to attend a live virtual session must take the training through the KSDE Training Portal. The training is posted at <https://learning.ksde.org> under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: SNP.



USDA Updates

Watch New Trainings for Successful School Menu Planning

USDA Team Nutrition added seven short trainings to [The Road to Successful Menu Planning for School Meals](#) training series. These on-demand webinars help schools plan and implement menus that meet school nutrition standards and meal pattern requirements:

- Menu Planning
 - [Menu Planning for the National School Lunch Program Afterschool Snack Service](#)
 - [Nuts and Seeds Flexibilities in School Meals](#)
 - [School Breakfast Menu Flexibilities: Grains and Meats/Meat Alternates and Substituting Vegetables for Fruit](#)
 - [School Lunch Menu Flexibilities: Beans, Peas, and Lentils](#)
- Reducing Added Sugars
 - [Reducing Added Sugars at Breakfast: Menu Planning Tips](#)
 - [Reducing Added Sugars in Recipes](#)
 - [Using Nutrient Analysis Software for Added Sugars](#)

Each training can count toward USDA Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs – Key Area 1000: Nutrition and Training Topic 1100: Menu Planning. They are available now in the [Institute of Child Nutrition's iLearn portal](#) and [USDA's Professional Standards Trainings and Tracker Tool](#).

Download New and Revised Resources for School Breakfast

[Today's Breakfast Poster](#) (New): School nutrition professionals can use this poster to display daily breakfast menu options and remind students to eat a variety of foods.

[MyPlate Guide to School Breakfast for Families](#) (Revised): This infographic highlights healthy foods that are part of a balanced school breakfast and shows parents and caregivers how they can help their child eat a healthy school breakfast.

Look for New Food Yields in the Food Buying Guide

New food yields were added to the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs \(FBG\) Interactive Web-based Tool](#) and the [FBG Mobile App](#)! The following new foods are now available: crushed pineapple, pineapple chunks, pineapple tidbits, dried mango, açai puree, dragon fruit (pitaya), and chopped romaine lettuce. Stay tuned for additional yield data releases soon.

Join Free Training Webinars from the Institute of Child Nutrition

The [Institute of Child Nutrition \(ICN\)](#) offers free trainings on a broad range of topics for child nutrition professionals working in school nutrition and child care settings. Don't miss these upcoming trainings:

- **October 2:** Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) Webinar – Streamlining Food Production: How to Create Operational Efficiencies to Allow for More Scratch and Speed Scratch Food Production
- **October 30:** STAR Webinar – Best Practices for Crafting Cycle Menus

To receive webinar and registration information for upcoming webinars, please [subscribe](#) to the ICN newsletter. A link to register will be sent to subscribers one week before the webinar date. Can't make it to a live webinar? View past webinars and learn anytime, anywhere on ICN's online learning management system, [iLearn](#).



Order Team Nutrition Materials in Print

State agencies, program operators, and sponsoring organizations that participate in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs can request free print copies of Team Nutrition materials, such as the following, while supplies last:

- [Team Nutrition Resources for Schools Catalog](#)
- [Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Booklet](#)
- Visit the [online order form](#) for more resources.

New Resources

Agriculture in the Classroom Resources

[Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom](#) has launched the Vertical Gardening Curriculum. Lesson plans are available at <https://ksagclassroom.org/kansas-lesson-plans/vertical-gardening/>. The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom also has a Local Ag Resource Map, which connects educators to local agricultural resources: <https://ksagmap.org/>. Find your farmer; find your food!

Earn a FREE Culinary Kit for Your School Kitchen!

Does your kitchen need a new digital scale or blender? Participate in the Local Foods Culinary Training on the KSDE Training Portal and earn a free culinary kit for your school kitchen! **Each school kitchen with a staff member completing the training is eligible to receive a culinary toolkit consisting of a dough cutter, wire whisk, digital scale, and blender (1 kit per school kitchen), while supplies last.** Instructions for completing the survey to receive the toolkit are posted at the end of the online training. This 2-hour training features Kansas products and producers, gives helpful information on 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. Go to <https://learning.ksde.org>, K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: General Classes, Local Foods Culinary Training (2 Hours), to access the training.

You are Appreciated!

The KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team appreciates each of you and your work to create healthy habits for a lifetime through the SNP. Be sure to share your best practices by using the hashtag #FuelingKSKids! Not on social media? Don't hesitate to email pictures of the great meals and activities being offered in your programs to anyone on the Child Nutrition & Wellness team!

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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