

Monthly Update

School Nutrition Programs



September 3, 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

September Town Hall – September 11

The September Town Hall will cover important reminders and updates. Plan now to join KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness on September 11 at 2 pm at this link: [Join the meeting now](#) (Meeting ID: 241 814 717 448 Passcode: hW7Wy3Ax)

Reimbursement Rates

Reimbursement rates for PY 2026 are available at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under Key Links, Reimbursement Rates.

Claims Processing Reminders

School Nutrition Program (SNP) vouchers are typically posted on the first three Tuesdays of each month, allowing payments to direct deposit on Fridays. To ensure timely payments, please make certain Site and Sponsor Claims are in “Approved” status by 8 am each applicable Tuesday morning. Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) claims will be vouchered on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Questions related to claims and reimbursement payments can be directed to Dessa Gifford at dessa.gifford@ksde.gov or (785) 296-4965.

Indirect Cost Rates

Indirect Cost Rates for SY 2025-26 are available at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under SNP, What’s New. Food service uses the unrestricted rate in the last column. The rate for private schools is 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 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

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 at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under KN-CLAIM, Quick References, School Nutrition Program 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 Training – September 4

Training covering the steps required to complete verification within all established deadlines will be held on **September 4 from 1-4 pm**. All staff members responsible for verification activities are encouraged to attend the training. Join the training at this link: [Join the meeting now](#) (Meeting ID: 259 271 167 944 Passcode: 5HE2dJ9i). Sponsors unable to complete the live virtual session can complete the training on the KSDE Training Portal at a later date.

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.

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 2025 Edition of HACCP Help will be posted soon at <https://cnw.ksde.gov> under SNP, Food Service Facts, Chapter 22: Food Safety & Sanitation, HACCP Guidance & Resources, HACCP Help - September 2025.



Reminder: Food Safety Basics Training is offered virtually on the third Wednesday of every month and is available 24/7 on the KSDE Training Portal. For food safety questions, contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.

7th Annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off – October 2025

Mark your calendars for the 7th Annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off during Farm to School month. Celebrate with crunchable 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>

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/>

Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Award – Congratulations USD 445 Coffeyville!

Congratulations to USD 445 Coffeyville for receiving a Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Recognition Award for Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals! This award recognizes schools with innovative strategies for planning and preparing scratch recipes for school breakfast and lunch. More information about the HMI Recognition Awards can be found here: <https://healthymealsincentives.org/recognition-awards/>

Professional Development & Training

Kansas Certificate in Child Nutrition Management

As of July 1, the Kansas Certificate in Child Nutrition Management program is being paused, and KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness (CNW) will not be accepting applications until further notice. CNW will begin the process of evaluating the certificate requirements and will develop a revised set of criteria for certificate completion. Please direct any questions to Kelly Chanay at kelly.chanay@ksde.gov.

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:

- **Verification Training** on September 4 from 1-4 pm
- **Food Safety Basics** on September 17 from 2-5 pm
- **SNP Administrative Review Training** on September 23 from 2-3 pm
- **FSMC Fall Monitoring Training** on September 25 from 9-11 am
- **Handling a Food Recall** on October 1 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 Determining Eligibility (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 may now take the training through the KSDE Training Portal. The training is posted at <https://learning.ksde.org> under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: SNP.

Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Fall Monitoring Training – September 25

All sponsors contracting with a Food Service Management Company are strongly encouraged to participate in the FSMC Fall Monitoring Training on September 25 from 9-11 am. This training will provide updates for the 2025-26 school year as well as review sponsor responsibilities for monitoring FSMC contracts. Join the training at this link: [Join the meeting now](#) (Meeting ID: 260 349 961 019 Passcode: 9ZJ6p7ji)

Save the Date! Director's Forum – October 3

KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness will be hosting an SNP Director's Forum on Friday, October 3 from 1-5 pm. The forum is free and open to all SNP Directors; it will be held in conjunction with the SNA-KS Annual Conference at the DoubleTree by Hilton Wichita Airport Hotel. Make plans to attend the meeting to hear updates from KSDE and connect with other directors! For more information, contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov. Please register at the following link by September 26: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3CKWVFW>

School Nutrition Association of Kansas (SNA-KS) Annual Conference – October 3-5

Make plans to attend the SNA-KS Annual Conference & Industry Showcase (Food Show) in Wichita on October 3-5, 2025. More information and a link to register are available at <https://snakansas.com/events/2025conference/>.

SNA-KS Conference Farm Tour – October 3

KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness is excited to be part of the SNA-KS Conference with a Farm Tour being offered on Friday, October 3 from 11 am to 5 pm. A lunch will be provided by USD 266 Maize with a local food presentation and tour of the district's local food education opportunities. Afternoon transportation will be provided for the area farm tours. The tour is available for free when you register at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XVJVYS2>



Jump Start for New Directors – October 7 & 8

A two-day training opportunity for new directors (authorized representatives and/or food service directors) will be held in Manhattan on October 7 and 8, 2025. This orientation training is designed to give an overview of program responsibilities to new directors with less than three years of experience. Participants will receive valuable tips, guidance, and ideas from KSDE child nutrition consultants while also meeting other new directors. For more information or to register, contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.

New Resources

Earn a Free Culinary Kit for Your School Kitchen

Participate in the Local Foods Culinary Training that is available 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 this 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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