Monthly Update

School Nutrition Programs

November 4, 2026

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

We Are THANKFUL for You!

The KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team appreciates your continued commitment to nourishing Kansas children through the SNP. Your work makes a meaningful difference every day. We invite you to showcase your program's successes by sharing photos of meals, snacks, and activities using the hashtag **#FuelingKSKids** or by emailing photos to any member of our team.

State Holiday – November 11

The KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness office will be closed on Wednesday, November 11 in observance of Veterans Day. KSDE offices will also be closed on November 26 and 27 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

November Town Hall – Canceled

The November Town Hall scheduled for November 12 has been canceled. The next town hall meeting will be on December 10 from 2-3 p.m.

REQUIRED: Verification Tasks & Deadlines

- 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 the number of applications.
    - CEP sponsors only: Enter the number of students directly certified for Food Assistance (FA) as of 10/31/2026 for CEP sites and non-CEP sites. This total should be the same as row 1a. If the 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 2027, 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 2027, Quick References, Verification. Verification guidance and related forms are available on the CNW website under SNP, Food Service Facts, Chapter 8: Verification of Eligibility.

USDA requires KSDE to submit annual verification data for each sponsor. This report is compiled using the information you provide on the Pre-Verification Worksheet and the Post-Verification Results screens in KN-CLAIM. Please ensure that the data entered is accurate, complete, and submitted by the deadline.

Verification Validation Service Available

The Post-Verification Results page includes a data validation service. This allows users to check their data for any potential errors before the data is sent to USDA. Note: The October Claim must be filed before this service is available.

- Step 1: Once the correct number of applications has been entered on the Post-Verification Results page in KN-CLAIM, a blue "Check Data" button will display. Click the "Check Data" button.
- Step 2: The results of the data check will be compiled into a Validation Report. Click "View Validation Report" to review possible errors associated with the verification data.
- Step 3: Contact your child nutrition consultant for assistance in resolving any data errors discovered during the data validation process.

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 under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: Tutorials, SNP Tutorials.

REQUIRED: Annual On-Site Accountability Reviews – Complete by February 1

Sponsors with more than one serving site must complete on-site accountability reviews by February 1. The reviews must be completed at all sites approved to participate in the National School Lunch Program and 50% of sites approved to participate in the School Breakfast Program. It is a best practice to rotate the review of breakfast sites to ensure all sites are monitored at least every other year. The School Food Service On-Site Accountability Review (Form 9-G) can be accessed in SNP Food Service Facts, Chapter 9. A tutorial demonstrating how to complete annual on-site monitoring is available on the KSDE Training Portal under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: Tutorials, SNP Tutorials, Developing Counting and Claiming Policies and Procedures (45 min).

The purpose of the on-site review is to ensure the accountability system (as reported on the site application) is being used correctly and yields an accurate number of reimbursable free, reduced price, and paid meals. Someone who is not involved with the daily operation of the system must complete the review. If the review discloses problems with a school's meal counting or claiming procedures, corrective action must be implemented by the sponsor. A follow-up review must be conducted within 45 calendar days following the first review to determine that the corrective action resolved the problems. Keep completed reviews on file with other food service records for review or audit.

SNP & FFVP Reimbursement Claim Reminders

Original and upward claim revisions are due within 60 days of the end of the claiming month. 60-day deadlines for PY 2027 are outlined in the resource titled "Claim Deadlines – Program Year 2027," available in SNP Food Service Facts, Chapter 11.

Please note that voucher dates are not dependent on or altered by claim due dates. Vouchers, including for School Nutrition Programs and the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program, are typically posted on the first and third Tuesdays of each month between 8 and 9:30 am. This allows direct deposit payments to be made on Fridays, as posting of vouchers is a four-business-day process before payment is received via ACH direct deposit (if ACH is not set up, physical checks are mailed on Thursdays of the vouchering week). Site and Sponsor Claims in "Approved" status by 8 am on each applicable Tuesday will be batched and paid that corresponding Friday. Multiple claims can be paid in one batch. For questions regarding claims or meal reimbursement payments, please contact Dessa Gifford, Public Service Administrator for School Finance, at (785) 296-4965 or dessa.gifford@ksde.gov.

FSMC Fall Monitoring & Advisory Committee Reminder

Sponsors contracting with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) must also monitor the operation of the FSMC by conducting on-site visits and completing the *Kansas Food Service Management Company (CONTRACTOR) Monitoring Form, Form 14-A,* for each site. This review ensures the FSMC is following the terms of the contract and any other applicable Federal, State, and local rules and regulations. The monitoring form is to be completed for each food service site at least two times per school year. Sponsors are to maintain documentation of monitoring and any corrective action taken.

The Food Service Advisory Committee is also required to meet twice a year and document the meeting with notes or minutes. Ideally, the committee consists of parents, students, and staff. Many sponsors use their Site Council, Student Council, or Wellness Committee and add an agenda item for food service discussion. The committee may discuss menus (liked and disliked menu items), service (friendly and helpful staff), whether food is served hot, whether food is served on time, if any taste tests are offered, whether there is enough time to eat, if lines are reasonable, etc.

Timeline for Completing Monitoring Reviews & Advisory Committee Meetings

- August through December: Complete the first Monitoring Review for each food service site. Conduct the first Food Service Advisory Committee meeting. **Keep documentation on file.**
- January through April: Complete the second Monitoring Review for each food service site. Conduct the second Food Service Advisory Committee meeting. **Keep documentation on file.**

Submitting Monitoring Reviews and FSMC Advisory Board minutes

- Copies of all completed and **signed** Kansas FSMC Monitoring Form(s) (Form 14-A) along with FSMC Advisory Committee minutes from each semester must be submitted with the annual FSMC Renewal Addendum each spring. Sponsors that are procuring a new FSMC contract will also submit their completed and **signed** Kansas FSMC Monitoring Form(s) (Form 14-A) along with FSMC Advisory Committee minutes to KSDE each spring.

USDA Updates

Area Eligibility Mapper – Updated

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Area Eligibility Mapper has been updated for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027.

Final Rule Memorandum: Simplified Geographic Preference Procurement in CNPs

On September 30, 2026, FNA released SP11-2026, CACFP 05-2026, SFSP 05-2026, *Simplified Geographic Preference Procurement in the Child Nutrition Programs*. This memorandum provides information on the direct final rule published by FNA on September 9, 2026, titled, Simplified Geographic Preference Procurement in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 57245) effective November 9, 2026. The rule does not change policy or implementation — it simply clarifies existing requirements to make the geographic preference option easier to understand and use the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program for Children, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program, collectively known as USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. This rule also supports USDA's Harvest to Hallways Initiative to improve school meals and strengthen the connection between American agriculture and America's children.

Now Available! Revised Professional Standards Resources

Team Nutrition recently revised three (3) Professional Standards resources which support school nutrition professionals as they successfully operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The revised resources are the Summary of Professional Standards Flyer, the Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals, and the Professional Standards Training Reward Badges packet. These were revised to include the most current Food and Nutrition Administration policy guidance, specifically hiring flexibilities for school nutrition directors in medium or large local educational agencies.

After you review the revised resources, be sure to check out the Professional Standards Trainings and Tracker Tool (PSTTT) which helps school nutrition professionals search for relevant Professional Standards trainings and track their annually required training hours. Note: USDA does not approve nor require specific training programs for school nutrition professionals.

As you plan your professional standards training for the school year, consider aligning with the Harvest to Hallways initiative to highlight meal quality improvements and community engagement. Learn more: https://www.usda.gov/harvest-to-hallways.

Coming Soon: 2027 USDA Farm to School Census

The USDA's Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program is conducting its fifth Farm to School Census in Spring 2027. The Census assesses the status of farm to school activities over time at schools across the nation. The Census is the only national survey that examines local food purchasing, school gardens, and agricultural education efforts in schools. Surveys will be sent to all public, private, and charter school food authorities (SFAs) operating the National School Lunch Program in all 50 states, Washington D.C, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This month, the study team will directly contact all SFAs in Kansas, asking that they confirm their contact information for the 2027 Census. It is important to respond with updated information for the coming census.

Professional Development & Training

Training Opportunities

Many opportunities for learning are available to SNP sponsors. Go to the CNW Calendar to access the schedule of live classes with dates, times, and links or registration information. Upcoming trainings include:

- **SNP Food Service Fund Fundamentals** on November 4 from 2-3 p.m.
- **Food Safety Basics** on November 18 from 2-5 p.m.
- **Write It Right: Creating Standardized Recipes** on December 2 from 2-3 p.m.

On-demand training is offered 24/7 on the KSDE Training Portal. Detailed instructions on creating an account are available on the CNW website under Training, How to Create Online Account. On-demand training is also available on the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) iLearn platform. **New to the KSDE Training Portal:**

- What to Expect When You're Inspected (1 Hour), under SNP.

If you would like to schedule an in-service, culinary coach session, or have questions about professional development, contact Tandy Rundus at tandy.rundus@ksde.gov.

Culinary Coaches Training Program

This training opportunity allows sponsors to request in-person, hands-on culinary training conducted at their site. **Sponsors can choose from five training topics: Critical Culinary Skills, Knife Basics, Cooking Basics, and Baking Basics: Quick Breads or Yeast Breads.** The sessions are led by trained culinary coaches and 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.

Write It Right: Creating Standardized Recipes – December 2

This training will explain the importance of standardized recipes and walk participants through how to turn a home-style recipe or informal recipe notes into standardized recipes. It will be held on December 2 from 2 to 3 p.m. The training link is available on the CNW Calendar.

New Resources

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. The training is available on the KSDE Training Portal under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: General Classes, Local Foods Culinary Training (2 Hours).

The Procurement Pulse

Did you know you can ask your vendor for a report showing the items and quantities purchased over the past 12 months? This information can be a great starting point for forecasting your next procurement! These reports are commonly referred to as 12-month velocity reports, although not all vendors use the same name. Regardless of what your vendor calls it; it is simply a report that shows the items and quantities purchased over a set period. Your purchasing history can help you estimate future purchasing needs, especially if you do not expect major changes to your menus or participation.

Celebrations/Recognition

Team Nutrition Training Grant

KSDE has been awarded the USDA FY26 Team Nutrition Training Grant. The three-year grant will fund $760,634.00 to strengthen the capacity and skillset of Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) providers to serve healthy meals, deliver nutrition education to participating children, and build and sustain healthy food environments aligned with the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Eat Real Food initiative. More information coming soon!

Congratulations! USD 500 Kansas City Kansas Public Schools – Turnip the Beet Award

USD 500 was recently recognized by USDA as a recipient of the 2025 Turnip the Beet Award. This honor celebrates outstanding sponsors of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) who exceed program standards, delivering exceptional, nutritious meals to children throughout the summer. This year, 170 sponsors have distinguished themselves by earning a gold, silver, or bronze award. USD 500 received the gold level award. For more information about Turnip the Beet, go to:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/turnip-the-beet

If you have questions or need technical assistance, please contact your child nutrition consultant or call the Child Nutrition & Wellness office at (785) 296-2276.

For more information, contact:
Kelly Chanay
Director, Child Nutrition & Wellness
(785) 296-2276
https://cnw.ksde.gov
kelly.chanay@ksde.gov

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3201
www.ksde.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.