

Monthly Update

School Nutrition Programs



September 3, 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

You Are Appreciated!

The KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team appreciates your continued dedication to nourishing and supporting Kansas children. As the school year gets into full swing, we invite you to share photos of your teams in action, special events, creative menu offerings, and other highlights from your program. Post on Facebook using the hashtag **#FuelingKSKids** or email photos to any member of our team.

September Town Hall – September 10

We look forward to seeing you and kicking off the school year with important reminders and program updates on September 10 at 2 p.m. Plan now to join the KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team at this link: [Join the meeting now](#) (Meeting ID: 241 814 717 448 Passcode: hW7Wy3Ax). The link is also available on the [CNW Calendar](#).

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 will be outlined in the resource titled "Claim Deadlines – Program Year 2027," which will be 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 a.m. 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 a.m. 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 desa.gifford@ksde.gov.

Excess Cash Balance in 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 Food Service Fund balance exceeds three months' average expenditures by more than 10%, the Annual Financial Report will include a section titled "Plans and Actions to Reduce Excess Cash Balances." The sponsor will enter their planned expenditures to reduce the excess balance. KSDE will then review and approve the plans. Only allowable expenses will be considered approvable. Before purchasing, sponsors must obtain approval for any capital equipment expenses not on the "CNP Equipment List." Complete the "Equipment Purchase Request Form" to request approval of capital equipment not on the pre-approved list. The "CNP Equipment List" and "Equipment Purchase Request Form" are available in [Chapter 13 of SNP Food Service Facts](#).

**REQUIRED: Verification Tasks & 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 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 on the [CNW website](#) under KN-CLAIM, Quick References, School Nutrition Program 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 Training – September 8

This training will review the verification steps and timeline, demonstrate how to complete verification activities, and review frequently asked questions. Plan now to have all staff members responsible for verification activities attend on September 8 from 1 to 4 p.m. The training link is available on the [CNW Calendar](#). The training will be recorded and posted 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](#) under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: Tutorials, SNP Tutorials.

Verification Office Hours – October 1 & 30

KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness will be hosting office hours to assist program operators with the completion of verification. Any program operator with specific questions pertaining to the verification processes is encouraged to join the CNW team during the designated office hours, which will be held on October 1 from 2 to 3 p.m. and October 30 from 9 to 10 a.m. The meeting links are available on the [CNW Calendar](#).

HACCP Help

September is National Food Safety Education Month. Resources to help create a culture of food safety are available on [FDA's Food Safety Education Month website](#). 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 2026 Edition of HACCP Help will be posted soon in [SNP Food Service Facts, Chapter 22](#).

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](#) under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: General Classes. For food safety questions, contact Holly Steinlage at holly.steinlage@ksde.gov.

Coming Soon: FY2026 Equipment Assistance Grant

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) has been awarded the USDA FY2026 Child Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grant. National School Lunch Program (NSLP) sponsors may apply to obtain new equipment or to renovate or replace existing equipment. KSDE has \$183,851.00 available for competitive grants. Sponsors will complete an application and submit to KSDE to be considered for an Equipment Assistance Grant. Applications are expected to be available October 2026. More information will be provided soon regarding the application process and grant opportunity.

Celebrate National School Lunch Week – October 12-16

President John F. Kennedy created National School Lunch Week (NSLW) in 1962 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. Schools are encouraged to 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
- Connecting with teachers and administrators at your school or in your district to spread the word that school meals are healthy and delicious

This year's "Cafeteria Circus" theme shines a spotlight on the creativity, teamwork, and dedication that make school meals a daily success. Explore promotional materials, activity ideas, marketing resources, and more to bring the excitement of the big top to your school community. Resources are available on [SNA's National School Lunch Week website](#).



8th Annual Mountain Plains Crunch Off – October 2026

Each October, the USDA Mountain Plains Region holds a Crunch Off in celebration of National Farm to School Month. The Crunch Off is a friendly competition between the Mountain Plains Region States (KS, MO, NE, CO, WY, MT, ND, SD) to see who can get the most "crunches" into local fruits and vegetables throughout the month of October. Participate in the Crunch Off and register your crunch here: [2026 Crunch Off](#)

Staffing Updates

Angelica Scaff has joined the KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness team as a Child Nutrition Consultant. Whitney Myers has joined the team as Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) Coordinator and Child Nutrition Consultant. Welcome, Angelica and Whitney!

USDA Updates

TA 01-2026, Resources for Procuring Local Foods in School Year 2026-2027

USDA Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) is pleased to announce the release of [TA 01-2026 Resources for Procuring Local Foods in School Year 2026-2027](#). This memo reminds schools, sponsors, and institutions participating in any USDA Child Nutrition Program (CNP) of the various resources available to help CNP operators procure local foods. This memo is part of a new Harvest to Hallways campaign and supports Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins' commitment to supporting local food procurement and efforts to Make America Healthy Again. USDA FNA has also shared [a letter from USDA Secretary Brooke L. Rollins](#) reminding partners of the many ways to serve local foods in school meals.

Reminder for School Lunch About Nondairy Beverage (Fluid Milk Substitute) Requirements

If a school food authority (SFA) chooses to offer nondairy beverages, such as fortified, plant-based milks – for example, soy milk – to all students at lunch, those milk substitutes must include, at a minimum, the nutrients listed in the table at [7 CFR 210.10\(d\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#). Fluid milk substitutes must be fortified in accordance with fortification guidelines issued by the Food and Drug Administration.

Offering nondairy beverages to all students to meet the fluid milk requirement at lunch is an option, not a requirement. If an SFA chooses to offer nondairy beverages to all students, the SFA is no longer required to notify the state agency that it is serving nondairy beverages and students who request a fluid milk substitute for a non-disability reason are no longer required to submit a written statement requesting a nutritionally equivalent fluid milk substitute. If an SFA chooses not to offer nondairy beverages to all students, the process for requesting a fluid milk substitute for a non-disability reason and reporting to the state agency is unchanged and can be found at [7 CFR 210.10\(d\)\(2\)](#).

For additional information, please refer to the memo titled "[SP 01-2026: Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 – Implementation Requirements for the National School Lunch Program](#)."

Updated: The Real Food Guides to School Breakfast and Lunch for Families

Help students make healthy choices in School Year 2026-2027 with The Real Food Guides to [School Breakfast](#) and [School Lunch](#) for Families. These fact sheets were updated to showcase real, nutrient-dense foods that contribute to a balanced school breakfast and lunch, and align with the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030](#).



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:

- **Regional Consultant Meetings** (*in-person*) in September – see dates below
- **Verification Training** on September 8 from 1-4 p.m.
- **Regional Fall Farm Tours** on September 11 and 18 (*locations below*)
- **Food Safety Basics** on September 16 from 2-5 p.m.
- **SNP Administrative Review Training** on September 22 from 2-3 p.m.
- **FSMC Fall Monitoring Training** on September 24 from 9-11 a.m.
- **Office Hours: Verification Technical Assistance** on October 1 from 2-3 p.m.
- **Director's Forum** (*in-person*) on October 9 in Wichita
- **SNA-KS Annual Conference** (*in-person*) on October 9-11 in Wichita
- **What to Expect When You're Inspected** on October 14 from 2-3 p.m.
- **Jump Start for Directors** (*in-person*) on October 21 and 22 in Chanute
- **Office Hours: Verification Technical Assistance** on October 30 from 9-10 a.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.

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 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.

REQUIRED Training: SNP Annual Administrative Training

At least one representative from each sponsor must complete SNP Annual Administrative Training annually. The virtual training on June 2 was recorded and is now available on the [KSDE Training Portal](#) under K12 Staff, Child Nutrition & Wellness: SNP.

Regional Consultant Meetings (*in-person*) – September

KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness consultants will be hosting meetings throughout the state in September. The meetings will offer school food service staff the chance to network and connect with other food service professionals. Consultants will provide program updates, conduct professional development training on food safety (in honor of National Food Safety Education Month), and facilitate discussions and sharing among attendees. All food service staff are welcome to attend! Attendance can count towards annual professional development training hours. To register, please email the consultant listed below for the location you wish to attend. All meetings will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. We look forward to seeing you in September!



Date (from 2-4 p.m.)	Location	Email to Register
Wednesday, September 9	De Soto	Cassie.Callaway@ksde.gov
Wednesday, September 9	Garden City	Arely.Baeza@ksde.gov
Wednesday, September 9	Haysville	Lynette.Osner@ksde.gov
Wednesday, September 16	Manhattan	Valerie.Donelan@ksde.gov
Thursday, September 17	Atchison	Karen.Seymour@ksde.gov
Thursday, September 17	Chanute	Alicia.Newland@ksde.gov
Thursday, September 17	Hutchinson	Abi.Boxberger@ksde.gov
Thursday, September 17	Newton	Jeanie.Galemore@ksde.gov
Thursday, September 17	Pratt	Hilary.Hanvey@ksde.gov
Thursday, September 17	Salina	Angela.Dittmer@ksde.gov
Thursday, September 17	Topeka	Laura.Hodgson@ksde.gov
Monday, September 21	Lawrence	Hannah.Tillery@ksde.gov
Wednesday, September 23	Hays	Jessica.Reece@ksde.gov
Wednesday, September 23	Hoxie	Dayna.Kriley@ksde.gov
Wednesday, September 23	Wichita	Cordell.Neely@ksde.gov

Verification Training – September 8

This training will review the verification steps and timeline, demonstrate how to complete verification activities, and review frequently asked questions. Plan now to have all staff members responsible for verification activities attend on September 8 from 1 to 4 p.m. The training link is available on the [CNW Calendar](#).

Fall Farm Tours – September 11 & 18

KSDE Child Nutrition and Wellness is excited to host the fourth year of regional fall 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. Sponsors attending the tours will receive education, resources, networking, and inspiration to incorporate local products into Child Nutrition Program menus. Locations are below. To register, email Eryn Davis at eryn.davis@ksde.gov.

- St John – September 11
- Marysville – September 18

SNP Administrative Review Training – September 22

This training is recommended for sponsors who will have a SNP Administrative Review conducted by KSDE in SY 2026-27. The review process, best practices, resources, and frequently asked questions will be covered. It will be held on September 22 from 2 to 3 p.m., and the link is available on the [CNW Calendar](#).

Food Service Management Company Fall Monitoring Training – September 24

All sponsors contracting with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) are strongly encouraged to participate in the FSMC Fall Monitoring Training on September 24 from 9 to 11 a.m. This training will provide updates for SY 2026-27 and review sponsor responsibilities for monitoring FSMC contracts. The training link is available on the [CNW Calendar](#).

**Director's Forum (in-person) – October 9**

KSDE Child Nutrition & Wellness will be hosting an SNP Director's Forum on Friday, October 9 from 1 to 5 p.m. The forum is open to all SNP Directors and will be held in conjunction with the SNA-KS Annual Conference in Wichita. 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 October 2: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3N5CKJC>

School Nutrition Association of Kansas Annual Conference (in-person) – October 9-11

The School Nutrition Association of Kansas (SNA-KS) Conference and Industry Showcase (Food Show) will be held on October 9 to 11 in Wichita. The conference provides a great opportunity to connect with vendors and fellow school nutrition professionals during a weekend of professional development and social activities. For more information or to register, visit the [SNA-Kansas 2026 Conference](#) website.

What to Expect When You're Inspected – October 14

This training will highlight what food safety inspectors typically review, key documentation to have ready, and best practices for interacting with inspectors. It will be held on October 14 from 2 to 3 p.m. The training link is available on the [CNW Calendar](#).

Jump Start for Directors (in-person) – October 21 & 22

A two-day orientation for school nutrition program directors (including authorized representatives and food service directors) will be held in Chanute on October 21 and 22. This training offers a comprehensive introduction to program responsibilities and highlights key resources and tools that support compliance with federal and state regulations. Attendees will gain practical guidance, insights, and best practices from KSDE child nutrition consultants while connecting with fellow directors to build a supportive professional network. To register, email Pam Rosebaugh at pam.rosebaugh@ksde.gov.

New Resources

SY 2026-27 Adopt a Cow Registration Open

The Discover Dairy "Adopt a Cow" program is an exciting, year-long experience for classrooms. Throughout the program, you'll get an inside look at dairy farming and be paired with a calf from a working dairy farm in Kansas. You'll find out what her name is, when her birthday is, where she lives, and how the farmer takes care of her. You'll also receive progress updates, photos of the cow, live chats from the farm, activity sheets for students, suggested lessons that follow Common CORE standards, and even opportunities to write letters to your calf! All updates are easily accessible via an online portal and app for Apple and Android. Enroll in the free program for the 2026-27 school year anytime before January 31 at discoverdairy.com/adopt.

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).

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:

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<https://cnw.ksde.gov>
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