

# Local Wellness Policies

**Note:** [Public Act 102-0359 \(School unused food sharing plan\)](#) became effective August 13, 2021 in Illinois. This Public Act amends the IL School Code by adding Section 2-3.182, which requires school districts to incorporate a food sharing plan for unused food focused on students in need into their Local Wellness Policy. Plans must be consistent with the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as well as accompanying USDA guidance on the Food Donation Program, in addition to following applicable federal and state regulations and sanitation codes. Districts should work closely with their Local Health Department when developing plans. [The Local Wellness Policy content requirements outlined in this chapter](#) are updated to reflect this change.

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## Additional Resources

- ISBE Local School Wellness Policy Information Webpage  
<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Local-School-Nutrition-Wellness-Policy.aspx>
- USDA Local School Wellness Policy Webpage  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>

## Introduction

A Local School Wellness Policy is a written document that sets the framework for a healthy school environment through goal setting and policy making. Local Wellness Policies were established by the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004. In 2010, the requirements of Local Wellness Policies were strengthened by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA). Under 7 CFR 210.31(a), all sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) are required to have a Local Wellness Policy for all participating sites under their jurisdiction.

## Policy Content Requirements

7 CFR 210.31(c) requires, at a minimum, that the content of the Local Wellness Policy must include:

- Specific goals for 1) nutrition promotion, 2) nutrition education, 3) physical activity, and 4) other school-based activities that promote wellness
- Standards for NSLP and/or SBP meals, which must meet the USDA meal pattern requirements and dietary specifications at a minimum
- Standards for competitive food and beverage items sold to students on the school campus during the school day. This includes items sold outside the reimbursable NSLP and/or SBP meals, such as à la carte items and vending machines. Competitive food and beverage items must meet Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards (refer to Handbook Section D—USDA Smart Snacks for additional guidance).
- Standards for all foods and beverages provided, but not sold to students, on the school campus during the school day. Examples include food and beverages given away as rewards or during celebrations.
- Policies for food and beverage marketing on the school campus during the school day. USDA regulations only allow marketing of food and beverage items that meet the Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards.
- Identification of the position of the school or organization official(s) responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Local Wellness Policy
- A description of how the school community and the general public are provided an opportunity to participate in the development, implementation, review, and updates of the Local Wellness Policy (refer to the “Public Involvement and Notification” section for additional guidance)
- A description of the assessment plan of the Local Wellness Policy and the manner in which policy content and assessment results will be reported to the public (refer to the “Triennial Assessment” section for additional guidance).

Additionally, [Public Act 102-0359](#) became effective August 13, 2021 and requires Illinois school districts to incorporate a food sharing plan for unused food focused on students in need into their Local Wellness Policy.

ISBE's [Local Wellness Policy Content Checklist](#) may be used by sponsors to ensure federal and state content requirements are being met when developing policies.

## Triennial Assessment

Requirements at 7 CFR 210.31(e) state that sponsors must assess each participating site's compliance with the Local Wellness Policy at least once every three years. This is referred to as the triennial assessment. The first triennial assessment was required to be completed no later than June 30, 2020. Please note, some sponsors may have extended their triennial assessment due date to [June 30, 2021](#) or [June 30, 2022](#) under USDA waivers due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

The triennial assessment must measure:

- The extent to which schools are in compliance with their Local Wellness Policy
- The extent to which the Local Wellness Policy compares to model policies
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals outlined in the policy

Sponsors may develop their own triennial assessment tool or may use the ISBE Triennial Assessment Template, which can be found on ISBE's [Local Wellness Policy webpage](#). Completed triennial assessments should be kept on file with the sponsor for review by an ISBE monitor during an Administrative Review of the School Nutrition Programs.

## Leadership

Sponsors must establish one or more officials within the organization who have the authority and responsibility to ensure each participating site complies with the Local Wellness Policy. Sponsors may use their discretion when selecting an official. The position title of the official(s) must be identified in the policy. While not required, sponsors are encouraged to also provide contact information.

## Public Involvement and Notification

7 CFR 210.31(d) requires sponsors to permit participation by the general public and the school community in Local Wellness Policy processes in order to promote transparency and inclusion. The school community may include, but is not limited to, parents, students, SFA representatives, teachers, school health professionals, school board members, and school administrators.

Examples of the general public include local healthcare providers and community organization representatives. It is at the discretion of the sponsor on how stakeholders are invited to participate. Examples include sending letters to households, website and social media postings, and partnering with community organizations to spread information. Language regarding communication/promotion practices are required to be present in the Local Wellness Policy.

Additionally, sponsors must inform the public about the content and implementation of the Local Wellness Policy, and make the policy and any updates available to the public on an annual basis. Sponsors are also required to inform the public about progress made toward meeting the goals of the Local Wellness Policy, including compliance with the policy by making the results of the triennial assessment available to the public in an accessible and easily understood manner.

## Recordkeeping

7 CFR 210.31(f) requires sponsors to maintain record of the Local Wellness Policy. This includes keeping a copy of the current wellness policy on file and maintaining documentation of 1) the most recent assessment of the policy, 2) how the wellness policy and assessments were made available to the public, and 3) efforts to review and update the policy, including the individuals involved and the efforts made to notify stakeholders of their ability to participate in the process.

## Training and Resources

ISBE has developed several resources to assist schools with Local Wellness Policy implementation, all of which can be found on ISBE's [Local Wellness Policy webpage](#):

- Local Wellness Policy Fact Sheet
- Local Wellness Policy Template for Schools
- Local Wellness Policy Template for Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs)
- Local Wellness Policy Content Checklist
- ISBE Triennial Assessment Template
- Content Requirements & Triennial Assessment Training Webinars

Additional resources can be found on USDA's [Local Wellness Policy webpage](#), including:

- Local School Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit
- Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Booklet
- Policy Guidance Documents

