

# School Nutrition Programs

## Application Overview & Checklist

Below is a step-by-step checklist to assist organizations through the application process for the School Nutrition Programs (SNP), including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, and/or the Afterschool Care Snack Program. Questions can be submitted to [snpnewapplicant@isbe.net](mailto:snpnewapplicant@isbe.net).

### Step 1: Review School Nutrition Program Requirements

The School Nutrition Programs are federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Organizations that operate these programs must follow state and federal regulations as described in the following resources. **Both resources below are required to be completed as part of the School Nutrition Programs application process. The sponsor must review all required trainings prior to beginning Step 7: Complete Menu Certification Process.** Organizations applying for the Special Milk Program or Afterschool Care Snack Program only should communicate with the ISBE Nutrition Department on which resources apply.

- Review all trainings, sign, and return the list of [Training Resources for New Applicants](#)
- Read the [SNP Administrative Handbook](#)

### Step 2: Determine Food Service Director

All School Food Authorities (SFA) must have a dedicated Food Service Director who is responsible for administration and oversight of the meal program. **The Food Service Director must be directly employed by the SFA.**

- Food Service Director: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 3: Determine Meal Service Type

The following are general descriptions of the types of meal service options. Mark all that apply. Organizations applying for the Special Milk Program only may skip this step.

- Self-Operated: The School Food Authority employed staff are responsible for managing all aspects of the school food service program including, but not limited to, ordering, preparing, and serving meals.
- Food Service Management Company (FSMC): The FSMC manages some aspects of the school food service program. Generally, the FSMC conducts product ordering, prepares and serves the meals and/or manages the school meal program(s).
- Vended Contract: The Vendor provides the meals only (generally pre-packaged/pre-plated) and does not manage any aspect of the school food service. *If the Vendor's employees are responsible for the management of the program and/or for the final preparation and/or serving of pre-packaged/pre-plated school meals, then the contract is considered a FSMC contract and is no longer considered a vended contract.*
- School-to-School Agreement: The School Food Authority contracts with another School Food Authority to provide meals.



#### Step 4: Submit Initial Application Forms

To begin the SNP application process, submit the following forms to [snpnewapplicant@isbe.net](mailto:snpnewapplicant@isbe.net).

- [New Applicant Form](#)
- [W-9 Form](#)
- Federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt letter (*non-public entities only*)
- Copy of Residential License (*RCCLs only*)

Applicants must also complete the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\)](#) registration process and be qualified to do business with the State of Illinois. Questions related to GATA can be directed to ISBE's GATA Department at [GATA@isbe.net](mailto:GATA@isbe.net).

- Complete GATA requirements

#### Step 5: Begin Contract Process (if applicable)

Organizations planning to contract for meals must work closely with ISBE Procurement staff to ensure federal and state procurement regulations are being followed. **Please note, the contract process must be completed before the Menu Certification Process (Step 7) can begin.** *Organizations planning to be self-operated may skip this step.*

- Begin coordinating with ISBE Procurement staff by emailing [nutritionprocurement@isbe.net](mailto:nutritionprocurement@isbe.net)
- Contract finalized and required documents submitted

#### Step 6: Complete New Site & Civil Rights Questionnaire

Upon receipt of your initial paperwork (Step 4), an ISBE Nutrition Department staff member will contact your organization. If all applicable documents are completed, the New Site & Civil Rights Questionnaire will then be provided for your completion.

- Submit New Site and Civil Rights Questionnaire

#### Step 7: Complete Menu Certification Process

Daily and weekly meal pattern requirements must be followed in the School Nutrition Programs. SFAs must submit one week of menus to be reviewed by ISBE staff for compliance. There are three options for completing the menu certification process, which is described on ISBE's [menu certification webpage](#). Organizations planning to be self-operated will complete these materials themselves. **Organizations planning to contract for meal service should work with their contractor to complete these materials, therefore, the meal service contract must be awarded (Step 5) before completing this step.**

- Select certification option 1, 2, or 3 (review options [here](#))
- Submit menu certification documents as required based on option 1, 2, or 3

#### Step 8: Complete Resource Management & Procurement Questionnaires

After the Menu Certification Process has been successfully completed, your organization will be provided with two questionnaires: one regarding Resource Management and one for Procurement. Complete the questionnaires based on your organization's practices in both areas. Based on the



responses provided by your organization, an ISBE Nutrition Department staff member may contact you to schedule a Technical Assistance (TA) meeting relating to Resource Management and/or Procurement.

- Submit Resource Management Questionnaire
- Submit Procurement Questionnaire
- Complete TA meeting with ISBE Resource Management and/or Procurement staff (*if applicable*)

### **Step 9: Complete Technical Assistance (TA) Visit**

ISBE Nutrition Department monitors review operations of the organizations participating in the School Nutrition Programs to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations. An ISBE monitor will be assigned to complete a TA visit with your organization. This may be in-person or via phone or video conference. During this visit, your monitor will provide your organization with one-on-one assistance in any necessary topic areas and review operational plans.

- TA visit complete

### **Step 10: Complete Pre-Operational (Pre-Op) Visit**

Following the TA visit, your organization's ISBE monitor will complete an in-person Pre-op visit, which must take place within the first 30 days of operating your meal program. If the meal program is found to be compliant with federal and state regulations, your monitor will recommend your organization for approval to operate the program. If the program does not meet all regulations, a corrective action plan and/or a follow-up visit may be required. **Please note that the official start date of your program must be based on documentation supporting full compliance with all federal and state requirements, as well as applicable federal timeline regulations. Therefore, a start date and consequent reimbursement cannot be guaranteed.**

- Pre-op visit complete
- Corrective action plan submitted (*if applicable*)
- Follow-up visit complete (*if applicable*)

### **Step 11: Submit Web-Based Illinois Nutrition System (WINS) Application**

WINS is the system used to submit the annual SNP renewal application and monthly claims for reimbursement. WINS is also used to complete other required SNP tasks. Once your organization is approved as a sponsor to operate the School Nutrition Programs, an ISBE staff member will set up online access to WINS and provide instructions on completing the application.

- Obtain ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) access (*if needed*)
- Obtain WINS access (*if needed*)
- Complete Sponsor and Site applications
- Submit first monthly reimbursement claim (subsequent monthly claims are due by [these dates](#))

