

# Local Wellness Policy

## *Triennial Assessment FAQ*

Sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) are required to have a local wellness policy. At a minimum, the local wellness policy must be assessed once every 3 years; this is referred to as the “triennial assessment.” Frequently Asked Questions regarding the triennial assessment are below.

### 1. Who must complete a triennial assessment of the local wellness policy?

Each sponsor participating in the NSLP and/or SBP is required to establish a written local wellness policy for all sites under its jurisdiction. Therefore, all NSLP and/or SBP sponsors must complete a triennial assessment of their local wellness policy at each site participating in the meal program(s) under their jurisdiction.

### 2. What must be included in the triennial assessment?

Triennial assessments of the local wellness policy must assess:

- 1) the extent to which the policy complies with USDA requirements,
- 2) the extent to which the policy aligns with model policies, and
- 3) progress made towards attaining the goals outlined in the policy

### 3. Who is responsible for conducting the triennial assessment?

This is determined at the local level. Sponsors must designate at least one official as responsible for determining the extent to which each participating site is in compliance with the wellness policy. The sponsor may conduct the triennial assessment on behalf of each participating site under its jurisdiction, or may allow each site to conduct its own assessment. In addition to the sponsor’s official(s) identified, other stakeholders must be permitted to be involved in the review process. Sponsors have discretion in how they implement this requirement since each organization is best suited to determine its distinctive needs.

### 4. When is the first triennial assessment due?

Under original USDA guidance, the first triennial assessment was due June 30, 2020. However, some sponsors may have been approved for a later due date as a result of COVID-related USDA waivers. USDA issued three triennial assessment extensions with the following due dates: [June 30, 2021](#), [June 30, 2022](#), and [June 30, 2023](#). These links provide a list of sponsors approved for the corresponding extended due date. For existing sponsors not on any of these lists, the first triennial assessment was due June 30, 2020. For any new NSLP and/or SBP sponsors, the first triennial assessment is due 3 years from the meal program start date approved by ISBE.

### 5. When is the next triennial assessment due?

Triennial assessments are required to be completed at least once every 3 years. If you’ve already completed your first triennial assessment, the next one is due no later than 3 years from that date. For example, if you completed the first triennial assessment on June 30, 2020, the next one will be due no later than June 30, 2023. Please note, sponsors are responsible for tracking the dates their triennial assessment was completed and maintaining their 3-year triennial assessment cycle.

### 6. Our first triennial assessment was late. When will the next one be due?

If a sponsor missed the due date of their first triennial assessment, and was not approved for an extended due date, their next triennial assessment is still due based on their original due date. For example, if a sponsor’s due date was June 30, 2020, but they completed their first triennial assessment late on January 25, 2021, then their second triennial assessment would still be due by June 30, 2023 because their original due date was June 30, 2020.

7. If we were approved for an extended due date, when is our next triennial assessment due?

Sponsors approved for one of the three due date extensions ([June 30, 2021](#), [June 30, 2022](#), or [June 30, 2023](#)) have new due dates for their second triennial assessments, and are not held to the original timeline based on the June 30, 2020 due date. For example, if a sponsor approved for the June 30, 2021 due date extension completed their triennial assessment on June 15, 2021, then their next triennial assessment is due no later than June 15, 2024.

8. Where do I submit the triennial assessment once completed?

Completed triennial assessments should be kept on file at your organization. Triennial assessment documentation will be reviewed by an ISBE monitor during your next Administrative Review of the School Nutrition Programs, rather than submitting your triennial assessment to ISBE (*see question #11 of this FAQ for additional information*).

Additionally, sponsors must make triennial assessment reports available to the public, such as by posting the results on their website.

9. How do I know if we've previously completed a triennial assessment?

If your organization has completed a triennial assessment in the past, the organization should have that assessment on file with the date it was completed.

10. Is there a form for the triennial assessment?

ISBE has developed the Triennial Assessment Template to assist sponsors with completing the triennial assessment. This form is located on ISBE's [local wellness policy webpage](#). However, sponsors are not required to use this form. Another tool that may be used as documentation for the triennial assessment is the [CDC's Wellness Policy in Action Tool](#). Sponsors also have the flexibility to develop their own triennial assessment tools, ensuring that they are documenting all 3 required components of the triennial assessment: 1) the extent to which the policy complies with USDA requirements, 2) the extent to which the policy aligns with model policies, and 3) progress made towards attaining the goals outlined in the policy.

11. How is the triennial assessment reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education?

During an Administrative Review of the School Nutrition Programs, which is conducted by an ISBE monitor, sponsors must provide documentation of their written local wellness policy, and documentation that the policy itself was made available to the public. Additionally, sponsors must provide documentation of triennial assessments of the policy for each participating site under its jurisdiction, as well as documentation demonstrating the sponsor made the triennial assessments, and any policy updates, available to the public. Sponsors must also provide documentation of compliance with community involvement requirements.