



THE OUTLOOK

A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs

CEP: APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) application opened April 1 and closes on June 30, 2025, for School Year 2025-26.

CEP is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting Household Eligibility Applications. The federal reimbursement for CEP approved sites meals are calculated by student level data for a school or group of schools.

Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department staff recently presented a "Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for Illinois Schools – Overview and Application Process" webinar. A recording and a PDF of the slides are available on the CEP webpage (www.isbe.net/cep) under the "Application Process" section. The webinar provides an overview of the CEP requirements as well as the online CEP Evaluation and Application Module.

The minimum identified student percentage eligibility percentage is currently 25%. This means schools may qualify to operate CEP but districts will still need to carefully consider the economic feasibility of the program since reimbursements for a district operating CEP vary based on the identified student percentage.

ISBE SNP Updates

The last ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update webinar for the spring semester is set for 2-3 p.m. on May 7. [Register online.](#)

If you missed any webinars, you can go to our SNP Training and Professional Standards webpage to watch the recording and view a PDF of the slides.

These updates can count annual training hour requirement for the [Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs.](#)

There is a [Quick Reference Guide: CEP Evaluation & Application Module](#) available to assist with the application process. Visit the CEP website (<https://www.isbe.net/cep>) for more information, including evaluation worksheets, outreach data, and more.

Please be sure to review the "CEP for Illinois Schools – Overview and Application Process" webinar before directing questions to cnp@isbe.net.

NEWS BITES



SPRING 2025 VILTS

The Institute of Child Nutrition announced its Spring 2025 Virtual Instructor-Led Training offerings. Both are part of the Designing and Delivering Training Programs. **“How Adults Learn”** is set for 9-10:30 a.m. April 8. **“Delivering Effective Trainings”** is scheduled for 1-2 p.m. April 17. Trainings are free but do fill up quickly. Register online at <https://theicn.org/info/vilt/>.

UPCOMING WEBINAR

The Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition webinar series continues on April 3 (2-3 p.m.) with a presentation on **“Setting Up Your Kitchen for Scratch and Speed-Scratch Success.”** Speakers will share key steps on how they successfully transitioned to scratch and speed-scratch cooking, along with practical tips on optimizing workflow, utilizing kitchen equipment efficiently, implementing culinary assembly line techniques, and more. [Registration is underway online; click here.](#)

2025 CONFERENCES

Save the dates! The [Illinois School Nutrition Association](#) Annual Conference will be on Oct. 16-17 in Tinley Park. You can learn more about the 2024 conference on the ILSNA website with the link above. The [School Nutrition Association’s](#) Annual National Conference is set for July 13-15 in San Antonio, Texas. Registration is underway on the [SNA website; click here.](#)



ISBE School Wellness Conference Coming Up

Join ISBE Nutrition staff at the ISBE School Wellness Conference on **April 8-9** in Normal for an opportunity to earn annual training hours and network with other school nutrition professionals and others dedicated to the well-being of Illinois schoolchildren. The theme is “Thriving Together: Comprehensive School Wellness Solutions.”

Nutrition related hour-long breakout sessions include **“A Fresh Take on Farm to School,” “Boost Breakfast for Your Students to Fuel the Day,” “Beyond the School Day: Feeding Kids After School and Over the Summer,” “Local Wellness Policies: What School Staff Need to Know,”**

and **“Build a Safe School Day: Accommodating Children With Special Dietary Needs.”**

The conference includes two pre-conference administrator academies on April 7, a social event (Avoiding Burnout Through Laughter Comedy Night) on April 8, and inspirational keynote speakers scheduled on April 8 and 9. Registration for the main two-day conference is \$20 (April 7 pre-conference sessions are \$10 each). Cost of registration includes breakfast and lunch on April 8, as well as breakfast on April 9.

The complete schedule, registration, and hotel information is [available on the ISBE website; click here.](#)

Contract Renewal Reminder

This reminder is for sponsors who currently have a food service management company (FSMC) contract or Vended Meals contract that contains the option to renew the existing contract at least one more year. If you are conducting a new procurement instead of renewing your contract or you do not have such type of contract you may disregard this notice.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Nutrition Department recently emailed the required Contract Renewal Agreement Form and instructions directly to the Authorized Representative listed in the Web-Based Illinois Nutrition System (WINS). If you have not received the guidance, please [visit our website to obtain a copy](#). Please do not use old renewal forms.

School Food Authority (SFA) contracts that do have the option and plan to renew their contract for next school year must submit the renewal forms to ISBE for review and approval prior to the date their current contract expires.

Once complete, please send a copy of the contract renewal along with any other applicable documents to nutritionprocurement@isbe.net for the required ISBE review and approval by May 15.

Failure to submit the required contract renewal forms by May 15 may result in a mandatory re-solicitation and/or the inability to use federal Child Nutrition Program funds to pay for goods and/or services rendered without the State Agency Approval as required in [7 CFR 210.16](#).

LFS Funding Available

Local Foods for Schools (LFS) funding will continue to be available through Jan. 31, 2026.

LFS is funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for new local foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed to be served in your school meal programs.

Schools currently participating that would like to request additional funds, [please see our instructions](#) on how to submit a request to our office.

Schools interested in learning more and signing up to participate in the program should visit ISBE's [Farm to Child Nutrition Programs webpage](#) for more information and to view the [recorded training module](#). Once you have viewed the recorded training module, email ISBE staff at localfoods@isbe.net with your district/school name and RCDT number indicating that you would like to participate in LFS.

USDA notified ISBE on March 7, 2025 that a second round of funding titled Local Foods to Schools and Child Care (LFSCC) has been terminated. Please [click here for more information from ISBE](#).



Cobden Unit School District uses Local Foods for Schools funding to boost its reimbursable meals. A bulletin board shows the students what Illinois farms supply their food. They celebrated National School Breakfast Week with a meal featuring local pork, local yogurt, and local oats and honey.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK



Thank you to Jeannine Coffey, Food Service Director at Herrin CUSD 4, for sharing these photos from their National School Breakfast Week celebration the week of March 3-7. This year's theme was "Clue In to School Breakfast." We love to see your success stories! Email cnp@isbe.net.





**Illinois State
Board of Education
Nutrition Department**

100 N. First St.
Springfield, IL 62777
Phone: (800) 545-7892
Fax: (217) 524-6124
Email: cnp@isbe.net
Web: www.isbe.net

Announcements, Events, & Deadlines

- **April 2** – [“ISBE SNP Update” webinar](#)
- **April 3** – [Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition webinar](#)
- **April:** National Grilled Cheese Month,
Recipe Highlight: [Tuscan Grilled Cheese Sandwich](#)
- **April 7-9** – [ISBE School Wellness Conference](#)
- **April 8** – [Designing and Delivering Training Programs webinar:](#)
“How Adults Learn”
- **April 17** – [Designing and Delivering Training Programs webinar:](#)
“Delivering Effective Trainings”
- **May** – National Strawberry Month,
Recipe Highlight: [Rise n’ Shine Strawberry Oats](#)
- **May 2** – [School Lunch Hero Day](#)
- **May 7** – [“ISBE SNP Update” webinar](#)
- **May 26** – Memorial Day (ISBE offices closed)
- **June 19** – Juneteenth (ISBE offices closed)

Please note this is not a complete list of events, meetings, and deadlines. Visit the ISBE Nutrition Department at www.isbe.net/nutrition.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant’s name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

