

ILLINOIS
STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

THE
OUTLOOK

A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs

BACK-TO-SCHOOL TRAININGS

DIRECT CERTIFICATION & HEAs

Registration is under way for online trainings on [“Electronic Direct Certification”](#) (10-11:30 a.m. July 29) and [“Certification of Household Eligibility Applications”](#) (1:30-3 p.m. July 30).

Direct Certification is a School Nutrition Programs process conducted by local educational agencies (LEAs) to certify eligible children for free meals

without the need for Household Eligibility Applications.

If not directly certified, households can annually apply to a participating school to receive free or reduced price meal benefits via the completion of an HEA. (Those participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) do not collect HEAs.)

SUMMER LEARNING INSTITUTES

Thank you to all who have signed up for our free one-day **Summer Learning Institutes!** We do have openings at some of the locations scheduled across the state in July and August. Space is limited. You can check registration on the [ABCs of School Nutrition](#)

[Events webpage](#).

The Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department partners with the University of Illinois Extension to provide training and resources to support School Nutrition Programs.

ISBE SNP UPDATE WEBINARS

We will be continuing our **ISBE School Nutrition Programs Updates** in the fall, including a back-to-school edition 2-3 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 14.

The agenda for the August webinar includes a back-to-school checklist, a Food Distribution Program update, Local Food for Schools funding, the Plant-Based School Lunch option (Public Act 102-0761), and more.

[Register for the fall semester ISBE SNP Updates online by clicking here](#). You can use the same link to sign up for ISBE SNP Updates scheduled for Aug. 14, Sept. 4, Oct. 2, and Nov. 4.

Attendees can submit questions during the presentation for a question-and-answer session at the conclusion of the webinar.

NEWS BITES

SY 2024-25



Make a goal for next school year to plan something special for **National School Lunch Week**, which is set for Oct. 14-18. The theme is “School Lunch Pirates: Find Your Treasure.” The School Nutrition Association leads the charge for the special event. Get started planning on the [SNP website](#). USDA [Team Nutrition](#) also has a lot of resources, including “[Stronger With School Meals Educational Materials](#).”

FARM TO SCHOOL



Registration for the 2024 **Great Apple Crunch** is set to begin Aug. 10 on the [Illinois Farm to School Network's webpage](#). The annual celebration of fresh, local apples is on the second Thursday of October, which is National Farm to School Month. Schools and other child education programs across Illinois can participate by serving local apples on the lunch tray or in the classroom, and ‘crunch’-ing into them together all at the same time. The Illinois Farm to School Network helps participants locate local orchards and provides promotional tools and educational materials that teach students about Illinois apples.

UPCOMING TRAININGS



Registration is under way for two online trainings: “[Food Allergies in School Nutrition](#)” (2:30-4:30 p.m. Aug. 29) and “[Serve It Safely Food Handler Training](#)” (2-4:30 p.m. Sept. 12). They are available from the University of Illinois Extension as part of the [ABCs of School Nutrition](#) partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department.

HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBILITY RESOURCES

SY 24-25 HEA Materials Ready

The [Household Eligibility Resources webpage](#) is updated with School Year 2024-25 documents. This includes the English and Spanish versions of the application, letter to households, and instructions.

Local Education Agencies must distribute a Household Eligibility Application, instructions, and appropriate letter to all households that have not been directly certified.

For more information, please review the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#), specifically the [Electronic Direct Certification](#) and [Certification of Eligibility – Processing Household Eligibility Applications](#) sections.

Reimbursement Rates Released

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced **reimbursement rates for fiscal year 2025** (July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025).

The new reimbursement rates are [available on the Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department website](#). Rates are adjusted annually each July to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Food Distribution Program SY 24-25 Funds Get Boost

All school districts have more Food Distribution Program funds to spend for next school year! Please spend your additional funds on USDA Foods and/or DOD Fresh.

In July, the final Planned Assistance Level (PAL) Factor for School Year 2024-25 was released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is \$0.45, which is an increase from the estimated PAL factor of \$0.36 used during the annual order period. As a result, beginning PAL balances in the

[Illinois Commodity System](#) have been updated and have significantly increased.

See the ICS Message Board post for more details. Visit the [Food Distribution Program webpage](#) for additional resources and information.

Please email fdp@isbe.net if you have any questions or need assistance. You can also call (800) 545-7892 or (217) 524-6124 and ask for a member of the FDP team.

School Nutrition Programs

Sy 2024-25 Checklist



- ☐ Bookmark the main [ISBE Nutrition Department webpage](#). The What's New? section is a great way to stay up-to-date.
- ☐ Reference the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#) for guidance on program requirements and procedures.
- ☐ Use the [A to Z Index of School Nutrition Programs](#) to find the topic you're looking for on the website. A link is under "Resources" at www.isbe.net/nutrition.
- ☐ Check the [Illinois Commodity System \(ICS\)](#) and be sure to spend all of your Food Distribution Program money!
- ☐ Update contact information in the [Web-Based Illinois Nutrition System \(WINS\)](#) and the [Entity Profile System \(EPS\)](#).
- ☐ Subscribe for updates on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Recalls & Public Health Alerts website](#).
- ☐ Keep our email and phone numbers handy for questions: cnp@isbe.net, (800) 545-7892, (217) 782-2491. Include your RCDT number in messages.
- ☐ Double check your [annual application](#) for Program Year 2025. If it isn't completed and approved, you will not be able to submit meal claims.





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Nutrition Department**

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Announcements, Events, & Deadlines

- **July 25** – [“Incorporating Plant-Based Options in Schools” webinar](#)
- **July 29** – [“Electronic Direct Certification” webinar](#)
- **July 30** – [“Certification of Household Eligibility Applications”](#)
- **July 30** – [Summer Learning Institute in Mattoon](#)
- **Aug. 2** – [Summer Learning Institute in Carterville](#)
- **Aug. 5** – [Summer Learning Institute in Robinson](#)
- **Aug. 7** – [Summer Learning Institute in Centralia](#)
- **Aug. 14** – [ISBE SNP Update Back to School Edition](#)
- **Aug. 27** – [Comment deadline for “Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs” rule](#)
- **Aug. 29** – [“Food Allergies in School Nutrition” webinar](#)
- **Sept. 2** – ISBE offices closed for Labor Day
- **Sept. 4** – [ISBE SNP Update](#)
- **Sept. 13** – [Turnip the Beet Award Nomination Deadline](#)

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

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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

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