



# THE OUTLOOK

A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs

# USDA FOODS SHOW

## Come Join Us Dec. 8 in Springfield

**T**here is still time to register online for the Illinois State Board of Education's USDA Foods Show, which is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022, at the Wyndham Springfield City Centre (700 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701).

A link to registration and additional information is available on our USDA Foods Show website: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/USDA-Foods-Show.aspx>.

The USDA Foods Show provides an opportunity for schools to meet processors, sample food items, and log professional standards training hours. This one-day event is free for attendees.

Attendees can earn up to 3.5 hours of continu-



ing education units. The agenda includes a training segment and the food show.

- Check-In and On-Site Registration, 10-10:30 a.m.
- Training: 10:30 a.m. to Noon
- Food Show: Noon to 2 p.m.

This year's theme is "Finding a Bountiful Balance." The Food Distribution Program offers three spending options – USDA Foods, DOD Fresh, and Diversion to Processors.

Visit our ISBE Nutrition Department's website for more information about the [Food Distribution Program](#). The [USDA Foods Show](#) was held virtually in 2020 and 2021.

## NEWS BITES



The closing date for **FY 23 Farm to School Grant** applications is Jan. 6, 2023. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the Farm to School Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2023. Get started by visiting the [Grants.Gov webpage](#) and ["Resources" webpage](#).



### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The [Institute of Child Nutrition](#) has more Virtual Instructor-Led Trainings in December. The trainings are free but are limited to 25 participants per session. Training topics include "Food Production & Operations Management," "Procurement and Inventory Management," and more. ICN is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Register at <https://theicn.org/vilt/>.



### U OF I EXTENSION

The [University of Illinois Extension's ABCs of School Nutrition initiative](#) has three online trainings scheduled in the new year, including food handler training.

[Registration is under way online.](#)

ISBE partners with the U of I Ext. to provide free resources and trainings to support School Nutrition Programs in Illinois.

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

# SY 24 Annual Order Period Opens Jan. 9

**T**he School Year 2023-24 annual order period for the Food Distribution Program opens Jan. 9. The three spending options include, USDA Foods, DOD Fresh, and diversion to processors.

The diversion to processors option will close in in the Illinois Commodity System from Feb. 20 to Feb. 24, so that ISBE Nutrition Department staff can compile truck loads. It will re-open Feb. 27 for final changes. All diversion to processor requests are

due by March 6.

Please refer to the [ICS Instructions](#) for step by step instructions on placing an order. Please refer to the [How to Place an Annual Order](#) recorded training for additional guidance. For those interested in the diversion to processor spending option, please attend our in-person [USDA Foods Show](#) on Dec. 8, in Springfield, IL. We also have a [webinar](#) available.

Please email [fdp@isbe.net](mailto:fdp@isbe.net) with questions.

# VSR Deadline is Dec. 15

**T**he deadline for completion of the Verification Summary Report is Dec. 15.

All School Nutrition Programs sponsors who collected Household Eligibility Applications from July 1 to Oct. 1, 2022, must conduct the Verification process and complete the VSR in WINS.

Please note that sponsors in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) districtwide do not collect HEAs so they do not have to complete the Verification process or submit the VSR.

We hope everyone is on pace with the Verification process to meet the deadline for the annual report. If you have not started the Verification process, you will want to ASAP be-

cause it takes some time after the initial Oct. 1 count to send notices to households and to proceed with the necessary follow-up and final notices.

If you do need assistance, we have two trainings under our [School Year 2022-23 Verification and VSR section on the website](#):

- [Verification Process and VSR](#)
- [Verification Summary Report Steps 2-5](#)

General information about the Verification process is in the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#).

There is also a [Verification and VSR Frequently Asked Questions](#) document available online.

# Know the Requirements for School Districts

**P**ublic Act 096-0734 (amends Public Act 095-0155), amends Section 20 of the Childhood Hunger Relief Act (105 ILCS 126/20). This amendment requires a school district to implement a summer breakfast and/or lunch program for the duration of the summer school program in all schools where 50 percent or more of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price meals AND that have a summer school program.

This amendment applies to all schools that meet the above criteria, including those schools not currently participating in any federal Child Nutrition Program. There is an opt-out clause in the legislation, but it must be completed by Jan. 15.

[The Public Act](#) along with [Question and Answers](#) are accessible [on the ISBE Website](#). For more information about Summer Meals, visit ISBE's [Summer Food Service Program](#) and [Seamless Summer Option](#) webpages.

Staff from our Nutrition Department is available at (800) 545-7892 or (217) 782-2491 for technical assistance with reimbursement or program operations.

## Important Dates to Remember

**Jan. 15:** Deadline to submit written Opt-Out Request to your regional superintendent of schools.

**Feb. 15:** Deadline to develop and keep on file the district plan to conduct a summer lunch and/or breakfast program for each school where at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or



reduced-price school meals AND that have a summer school program.

Sign up for the Summer Food Service Program training if participating in the SFSP. For more information on SFSP, visit <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Summer-Food-Service-Program.aspx>.

**Prior to March 1:** Regional superintendent of schools must convene a public hearing to hear testimony from the school district and interested community members.

**March 1:** Deadline for regional superintendent to:

- Inform the school district, in writing, of his or her decision, along with the reasons why the exemption was granted or denied.
- Provide a listing to the Nutrition Department of all districts that applied to opt-out, along with the affected schools, whether the exemption was granted or denied, and the reasons for the action.

**Public Act 096-0734 requires all school districts in Illinois planning to operate an academic summer school or enrichment program in a building with 50 percent or more of the students eligible for free or reduced-price meals must operate a summer feeding program for at least the duration of the program.**



**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](mailto:cnp@isbe.net)  
Web: [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net)

## Events, Meetings, and Deadlines

- Dec. 8 – [USDA Foods Show](#) in Springfield
- Dec. 15 – [Verification Summary Report](#) deadline
- Dec. 26 – ISBE offices closed for Christmas Day
- Jan. 2 – ISBE offices closed for New Year’s Day
- Jan. 6 – [FY 23 Farm to School Grant application deadline](#)
- Jan. 11 – [“Serve It Safely: Food Handler Training”](#)
- Jan. 16 – ISBE offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

*Please note this is not a complete list of Nutrition Department events, meetings, and deadlines. Visit us online at [www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition).*

## What’s New?

- [USDA Releases “How School Lunch is Made and How You Can Help”](#)
- [CACFP: Read the New Issue of Mealtime Minutes](#)
- [Review the Nov. 30 ISBE Update](#)
- [Sign Up for Free Institute of Child Nutrition Trainings](#)

*Watch for our latest news and posts under What’s New? at [www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition).*

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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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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