

ILLINOIS
STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

THE OUTLOOK

A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs

EXPLORE CEP

Registration Under Way for Webinar

Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department staff will present a webinar on the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** from 1:30-3 p.m. on March 28. The online presentation will cover the School Year 2024-25 application process as well as an overview on CEP.

[Registration is under way online; just click this link to sign up.](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



The webinar will cover the online CEP Evaluation and Application Module, as well as CEP requirements. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture has lowered the minimum identified student percentage eligibility percentage to 25%](#), down from 40%. This means more schools will 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.

The CEP application will open April 1 and close on June 30 for SY 24-25.

CEP is an alternative to collecting, approving, and verifying Household Eligibility Applications

ISBE SNP Updates

The next **ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update** is scheduled for 2-3 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5. We'll cover important reminders and hot topics. Attendees can submit questions during the presentation for a question-and-answer session at the conclusion of the webinar. This is a webinar series. Other our scheduled for March 5, April 1, and May 6. [Register for each one you would like to attend online here.](#)

for free and reduced price eligible students in high poverty local educational agencies (LEAs) for schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Students at CEP schools are offered reimbursable breakfast and lunch for no charge. Districts are reimbursed based on their calculated identified student percentage.

Please [visit the CEP website](#) for more information.

NEWS BITES

INSTITUTE OF CHILD NUTRITION

You can [submit an interest form](#) for the Institute of Child Nutrition's Training Resources Exploratory Task Force Meeting Series. ICN is planning a series of four virtual task force meetings to gather recommendations and guidance from child nutrition professionals. For questions, email dnbarret@olemiss.edu.



FOOD SAFETY

The Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department routinely shares food recall notices and alerts announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Food Safety and Inspection Service](#) (FSIS) and the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) that could affect any of our Illinois sponsors participating in Child Nutrition Programs. We highly recommend bookmarking these links and also watching What's New? at www.isbe.net/nutrition.

UPCOMING TRAINING

The University of Illinois Extension will



present online "Serve It Safely Food Handler Training" on March 7. The training is set for 2-4:30 p.m. [Sign up online](#). This training is approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health; participants will receive a certificate good for three years. ISBE partners with the U of I Ext. to provide resources and trainings to support school nutrition programs in Illinois.

School Breakfast Mandate Reminder

For the School Breakfast Mandate ([105 ILCS 126/15](#)), every public school building in which at least 40 percent of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in October of School Year 2023-24 must plan to operate a School Breakfast Program for School Year 2024-25.

A district wishing to utilize the opt-out provision must submit cost analysis to their Regional Superintendent

of Education no later than Feb. 15, 2024. Please contact your ROE for questions about the process.

Please review the links to the [Illinois Compiled Statutes](#) for details about the opt-out provision. More information is also in the Illinois State Board of Education's [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#), specifically [Section J: Miscellaneous Regulations](#).

Providing Meals During E-Learning/Remote Days

Winter is a good time to remind districts about the rules and recommendations providing meals during e-learning days.

Providing meals during e-learning days is not required. However, providing meals can be an important part of a student's day, regardless of whether instruction is in person or via electronic means. As such, districts are encouraged to offer meals to all enrolled students during e-learning days to the extent practical and possible and according to the individual needs of each student.

If a district or school switches to e-learning/remote learning for any unanticipated school closure (COVID-19, fire, flooding, weather related {heat, cold, snow}, strikes, etc.), the district may offer meals to all enrolled students. To receive federal reimbursement, the school district must submit a waiver request through the Web-Based Illinois Nu-

trition System (WINS) and may offer non-congregate meals to all enrolled students under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Meals offered must continue to meet the federal program requirements. Districts must continue to charge, track, and claim meals provided by individual student eligibility. CEP approved sites must track and claim meals daily.

For the waiver process, log into IWAS and then WINS. On the left side of your dashboard, click "Waivers" under the "Sponsor Tasks" tab. Start by clicking the blue "Apply New Waiver" button and select the Waiver Type. These waivers should be completed prior to the day(s) necessary if possible. [Instructions are available](#) on the [Waivers and Public Notices webpage](#).

If you have questions, please contact ISBE's Nutrition Department at cnp@isbe.net.

LFS Open Enrollment Closes Soon

School Food Authorities (SFAs) that are interested in utilizing **Local Food for Schools (LFS) funds** to purchase local unprocessed or minimally processed foods with LFS funds but have not yet signed up should do so by Feb. 29, 2024.

SFAs that want to sign up for LFS funds can do so by simply [completing the LFS Agreement in WINS](#). For those that complete the LFS Agreement prior to Feb. 29, [their allotment of LFS funds](#) will be held.

As of March 1, 2024, any SFAs that have not signed up for LFS may have their allotment of funds reallocated to another SFA that is actively participating in LFS. The LFS Agreement in WINS will be inactivated as of March 1, 2024.

Any SFAs that decide they would like to participate in LFS after March 1, 2024, will need to reach out to ISBE staff at localfoods@isbe.net to inquire if ISBE has any funds still available that they could apply for. If ISBE has the LFS funds available, we will continue to approve SFAs requests until the

New Funding Opportunities

The Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub fosters collaborations that nourish students, connect schools with local farms and businesses, and celebrate our region’s cultures and communities.

Beginning in February 2024, they begin accepting applications for two new funding opportunities: the Spark Awards and the Innovation Collaborative Awards. The application deadline is April 30

with award notification set for June 30. The project start date is Aug. 1, 2024. Additional grant cycles will continue through 2028.

They hope to hear from local food system leaders across Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana — especially in areas that don’t have equitable access to resources.

Get started at <https://innovateschoolfood.org/grants/>.

point in time in which all LFS funds have been allocated.

ISBE will make all reasonable attempts to accommodate requests for funds, however after March 1, 2024, we are unable to guarantee approval of the funds.

The reasoning for this due date is to ensure that Illinois uses all of the LFS funds that our state was allotted. This will allow for our staff to better determine how much LFS funding Illinois has that can be reallocated to SFAs that will use the funding. We want to ensure that every cent of our Illinois LFS funds get utilized.

Sign Up for Institute of Child Nutrition Trainings

The [Institute of Child Nutrition](#) (ICN) announced the latest round of Virtual Instructor-Led Training sessions. The online courses are free but please note that they fill up quickly. Here is the February schedule:

- **“Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains in the CACFP,”** 9-11:30 a.m. Feb. 1
- **“Food Safety Fundamentals,”** 2-4 p.m. Feb. 1
- **“Special Dietary Needs”** 3-4:30 p.m. Feb. 6
- **“Norovirus in Child Care,”** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Feb. 8

- **“Procurement and Inventory Management”** 8 a.m. to noon Feb. 8
- **“Food Production & Operations Management,”** 3-4:30 p.m. Feb. 13

Register online at <https://theicn.org/vilt/>.

ICN, which is part of the School of Applied Sciences at the University of Mississippi, is the only federally funded national center dedicated to applied research, education and training, and technical assistance for child nutrition programs.



**Illinois State
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Announcements, Events, & Deadlines

- Feb. 5 – [ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update](#)
- Feb. 6 – [“Special Dietary Needs” ICN training](#)
- Feb. 8 – [“Procurement and Inventory Management” ICN training](#)
- Feb. 10 – [ISBE recommends claims be submitted by the 10th of the month following the month you are claiming.](#)
- Feb. 13 – [“Food Production & Operations Management” training](#)
- Feb. 15 – [School Breakfast Mandate opt-out petition deadline](#)
- Feb. 16 – [Next deadline to accept and receive SCA funds](#)
- Feb. 29 – [Local Food for Schools open enrollment closes](#)
- March 3 – [Deadline to submit FDP Diversion to Processor requests in ICS for SY 24-25](#)
- March 5 – [ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update](#)
- March 7 – [Serve It Safely Food Handler Training](#)
- March 15 – [Deadline to submit FDP Annual Order in ICS](#)
- March 28 – [CEP Overview and Application Process webinar](#)

Please note this is not a complete list of Nutrition Department events, meetings, and deadlines. Visit us online 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

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