

ILLINOIS  
STATE BOARD OF  
EDUCATION

# THE OUTLOOK

A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs

## NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK

# CELEBRATE!

There is still time to do something special for National School Breakfast Week, which is set for March 4-8. This year's theme is "Surf's Up With School Breakfast." Here are a few ideas:

- Download the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Booklet](#) and more from the [School Breakfast Materials webpage](#).
- Share the [MyPlate for Families: Guide to School Breakfast](#) with parents to highlight healthy foods that are part of a balanced school breakfast.
- Sign up for the Food Research & Action Center's webinar on "School Breakfast 101: Implementing Innovative Breakfast Models." The webinar is set for 2-3 p.m. March 7. [Click here to register online](#).
- Check out these [10 fruit and vegetable-forward recipes](#) that were developed to meet the new [proposed meal pattern requirements for added sugars](#). These are from the [International Fresh Produce Association](#) and include nutritional information, USDA crediting information, and guidance for grab-and-go settings. The recipes range from Southwest savory vegetable



quesadillas to sweet and flavorful strawberry French toast.

- [Register for the Illinois State Board of Education School Nutrition Programs Update](#), which is scheduled for 2-3 p.m. March 5. Nutrition Department staff will review What's New? and highlight the School Breakfast Program and Summer Meals. You can also register for the April 1 and May 6 ISBE SNP Update webinars at the same link.
- Explore the School Nutrition Association's website. The School Nutrition Association leads the effort for the special observance. They have a bunch of [great resources on the SNA website](#), including the #NSBW24 Toolkit and coloring sheets and an activity guide.
- Post on your social media with #NSBW24. Some ideas include celebrating your staff with a group picture or sharing a photo of your most popular breakfast. You could also utilize [USDA Sharable Graphics](#) to help spread the word about the benefits of school breakfast.



## NEWS BITES

### FOOD SAFETY

Registration is under way for the online [Serve It Up Safety Food Handler Training](#) set for 2-4:30 p.m. March 7. This ABCs of School Nutrition training is free and will satisfy the Illinois Department of Public Health food handler requirement for those working with food in schools. Participants receive a certificate good for three years.

The Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department partners with the University of Illinois Extension to provide resources and training to support school nutrition programs in Illinois.

### SUMMER EBT

[Registration is under way for a ISBE Nutrition Department webinar on Summer EBT.](#) “Summer EBT and Illinois Schools — Summer 2024” is set for 1-2:30 March 6. Summer EBT provides grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children when schools are closed for the summer. ISBE will be assisting the Illinois Department of Human Services, which administers the new federal program. Read more at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt>.

### INSTITUTE OF CHILD NUTRITION

The Institute of Child Nutrition announced additional webinars scheduled in March. The Virtual Instructor-Led Trainings are free but they do fill up quick. [Registration is online.](#) Courses cover procurement and inventory management, food production and operations management, and more.

# Registration Open for CEP 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.



the economic feasibility of the program since reimbursements for a district operating CEP vary based on the identified student percentage.

[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 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 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 identified student percentage.

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

## Register for ISBE SNP Update Webinars

Join Nutrition Department staff for updates on School Nutrition Programs! 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. Please regis-

ter for each one individually that you would like to attend at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/1693915743647517015>. Webinars are scheduled for:

- 2-3 p.m. Tuesday, March 5
- 2-3 p.m. Monday, April 1
- 2-3 p.m. Monday, May 6

# Nutrition Education Connection

The [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Team Nutrition](#) has resources for kids and parents on the topic of healthy snacking:

- Encourage kids to snack like superheroes! Check out the [Snack Like a Superhero handout](#) from the [Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Booklet](#).
- Share easy ways to make fun snacks at home with this [Nibbles for Health Newsletter: Healthy Snacks with Smiles](#).



- Try healthy snack favorites for kindergarteners in the [Discover MyPlate Snack Time! parent handout](#).
- Play the [Choose Healthy Snacks game](#) with middle school students, part of this [8th grade lesson plan](#) from Fueling My Healthy Life. USDA Child Nutrition Program operators can request free printed copies of certain Team Nutrition materials, while supplies last, at <https://pueblo.gpo.gov/TN/TNPubs.php>.

## SY 24-25 Food Distribution Program Annual Order Period Closes Soon

The School Year 2024-25 Food Distribution Program Annual Order Period began Jan. 8. Orders can be placed in the Illinois Commodity System (ICS). The three spending options include USDA Foods, DOD Fresh, and diversion to processors.

Please note that the diversion to processors option will close in ICS the week of March 4-8. This is so ISBE can compile truck loads. It will re-open March 11-15 for final changes. The order period will close March 15.

Resources on the Food Distribution Program webpage include [ICS Instructions](#), [a Diversion to Processor Fact Sheet](#), and more. Email [fdp@isbe.net](mailto:fdp@isbe.net) with questions.

## Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

Schools are among those eligible to apply for a new funding opportunity from the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

The new [Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program](#) (RFSI) aims to build resilience in the middle of the food supply chain, to provide more and better markets to small farms and food businesses, to

support the development of value-added products for consumers, fair prices, fair wages, and new and safe job opportunities.

There are two funding opportunities. [Read more on the RFSI webpage](#).

The Request for Applications was posted Jan. 22 and the application period is open until March 15.

## Grant Opportunities Funded by USDA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced two new funding opportunities, the Spark Awards and the Innovation Collaborative Awards.

The Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub is administering these grants. They foster collaborations that nourish students, connect schools with local farms and businesses, and celebrate the region's cultures and communities.

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

The application period is now open for both grant opportunities.

[Visit their webpage for more information](#), including featured project ideas for inspiration. The deadline to apply is April 30.



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## Announcements, Events, & Deadlines

- **March 4-8** – [National School Breakfast Week](#)
- **March 5** – [ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update](#)
- **March 6** – [“Summer EBT and Illinois Schools – Summer 2024”](#)
- **March 6** – [ICN’s “Utilizing the Cafeteria as a Classroom” webinar](#)
- **March 7** – [Serve It Safely Food Handler Training](#)
- **March 10** – [ISBE recommends claims be submitted by the 10th of the month following the month you are claiming.](#)
- **March 15** – [Deadline to submit FDP Annual Order in ICS](#)
- **March 15** – [Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program application deadline](#)
- **March 25** – [ICN’s “Keeping Food Safe – Lesson From Food Safety in Schools”](#)
- **March 28** – [ICN’s “Preventing Foodborne Illness – Lesson From Food Safety in Schools”](#)
- **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](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition).*

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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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