



Illinois
State Board of
Education

THE OUTLOOK

A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs

FARM TO SCHOOL ROUNDUP

FARM TO SCHOOL GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the official release of the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (RFA). You can get started on an application at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program>.

The USDA will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the grant program this fiscal year. Each grant will help implement farm to school programming that increases access to local food in eligible schools, connects children with agriculture for better health, and inspires youth to consider careers in agriculture.

A wide variety of entities are eligible to compete for funding through this grant opportunity, including schools and other institutions operating the National

School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and/or Summer Food Service Program.

The USDA will host two webinars to assist with the application process. Click the links to register:

- [“Getting Familiar With the FY 2024 Farm to School RFA,” 2 p.m. Nov. 1](#)
- [“Getting Your Grant Package Together,” 1 p.m. Nov. 2](#)



The webinars will be recorded and made available on the [“Resources for Farm to School Grant Program Applicants” webpage](#). Visit the [“Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program”](#) website to learn more.

Questions can be directed to the USDA at sm.fn.farmtoschool@usda.gov.

LFS FUNDING

There is still time to secure Local Food for Schools funding. If you have not done so already, we recommend you get started with our [“How to Sign Up for Local Food for Schools Funding”](#) document. The application is in WINS. You can also watch the [“Introduction to Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement:”](#) webinar.

CENSUS TIME

Earlier this month, School Food Authorities that participate in the National School Lunch Program should have received an email from Decision Information Resources (DIR) for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm to School 2023 Census. [Please take a moment to read the Census announcement letter](#). Thank you for taking time to complete the survey. Questions can be emailed to farm2schoolcensus@dir-online.com.

NEWS BITES

AWARD OPPORTUNITY

Celebrate the amazing work of your school nutrition program by applying for a **Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Award!** There are eight recognition award categories to select from that can highlight your best practices and provide an opportunity to receive national and local recognition. To learn more, visit www.healthymealsincentives.org.

USDA TEAM NUTRITION

Team Nutrition's [Offer Versus Serve \(OVS\) materials](#) are now [available in Spanish!](#) Check out the five posters and two tip sheets available for download. The posters are designed as signage to educate students in selecting a reimbursable meal under OVS and help students move more quickly through breakfast and lunch lines. The OVS Tip Sheets are designed to provide an overview of OVS guidance for breakfast and lunch meal service.

FOOD BUYING GUIDE

Check out two new training modules on the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG)! These modules join three existing ones and are designed to provide a step-by-step tour through the FBG Web-Based Tool and Mobile App and now include modules on the Exhibit A Grains Tool and the FBG Calculator.

These modules and other trainings can be accessed on the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources](#) and are also available on the Institute of Child Nutrition's [iLearn Portal](#).



Photograph courtesy of Shawnee CUSD 84

Katie Ford, the head cook for Shawnee CUSD 84 in Wolf Lake, receives her trophy during a school assembly on Oct. 11.

Celebrating the School Nutrition Champion!

Representatives from the Illinois State Board of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) visited Shawnee Community Unit School District 84 in Wolf Lake to present Katie Ford with the 2023 ISBE School Nutrition Champion Award on Oct. 11.

Mrs. Katie, as the students call her, is the head cook for the district, which has one kitchen that serves three schools, Shawnee Elementary School, Shawnee Jr. High School, and Shawnee High School.

Katie was nominated by Shawnee CUSD 84 Superintendent Shelly Clover-Hill. In her nominating submission, she wrote:

"When Katie took over as head cook in 2020, she made it her mission to improve our school meals and that is still true today. She actively seeks the input of the students and staff in the

development of the menus Katie takes great pride in offering meals that will be eaten and not thrown in the garbage. She is also a master at getting the students to try new foods and adds those menu items when the vast majority of students ask for it again."

The award presentation coincided with National School Lunch Week (Oct. 9-13). The nominees and award-winner were announced in May.

Read more on the [ISBE School Nutrition and Wellness Champions webpage](#) and in the [May issue of The Outlook](#), ISBE's monthly newsletter for School Nutrition Programs. ISBE administers federal meal and snack programs such as the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and At-Risk After-School Snack/Supper Program, which are funded by the USDA.



Preparing for an Administrative Review

The [list of School Food Authorities Tentatively Selected for School Year 2023-24 Administrative Reviews](#) is now available on the ISBE [Monitoring and Review Information webpage](#).

The Administrative Review is an assessment conducted by the Illinois States Board of Education (ISBE) of the School Food Authority's (SFA) administration of the NSLP and SBP, and other School Nutrition Programs. The objectives of the Administrative Review are to determine whether the SFA meets program requirements, provide technical assistance, secure any needed corrective action, and assess fiscal action, if applicable.

We've assembled some resources to assist sponsors.

Helpful AR Checklists

- [SNP Administrative Review Checklist](#)
- [SNP Administrative Review Checklist for CEP Districtwide Sponsors](#)

Webpage Highlights

- [Household Eligibility Resources](#)
- [Local School Wellness Policy Information](#)
- [Meal Pattern and Nutrition Standards](#) (Check out the various training videos available!)
- [Verification and the VSR](#)

Webinars to Review

- [Monitoring, Part 1](#)
 - ◇ [PDF of slides](#)
- [Monitoring, Part 2](#)
 - ◇ [PDF of slides](#)
 - ◇ [Build a Binder for Success](#)
- [Direct Certification](#)
- [Certification of Household Eligibility Applications](#)
- [School Year 2023-24 Verification Process and Verification Summary Report](#)
 - ◇ [PDF of slides](#)
- [Local Wellness Policy Content Requirements](#)
 - ◇ [PDF of slides](#)



Navigate the ISBE Website

- [A to Z Index of School Nutrition Programs](#): Search the website by topic.
- [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#): All sponsors are expected to be familiar with the handbook. You can search by section or open the [PDF of the complete handbook](#) and search by clicking Ctrl f.
- [What's New?](#) Watch for the latest announcements from the ISBE Nutrition Department.

ILLINOIS GREAT APPLE CRUNCH



Oct. 12 was the Illinois Great Apple Crunch. Thank you to Shawnee CUSD 84 for sharing photos from their celebration of the special day, which is part of National Farm to School Month. The ISBE Nutrition Department also celebrated with local apples. Visit the [Illinois Farm to School Network website](#) to learn more!



Important P-EBT Announcements

The U.S. Department of Agriculture authorized administrative funding to assist with the administrative costs associated with the administration of the School Year 2022-23 P-EBT benefits. These funds were vouchered on Sept. 27 to eligible sponsors.

For documentation of this funding, please access the FRIS inquiry system, payment report. The disbursement is listed under program code 4210, sub code BT. The funding amount per eligible sponsor is \$653 for less than 1,000 P-EBT eligible children, \$3,256 for 1,001-5,000, and \$6,180 for more than 5,000.

ATTENTION ELIGIBLE P-EBT SCHOOL STAFF: The Illinois Department of Human Services P-EBT team may reach out to eligible P-EBT schools to ensure that all eligible students receive the correct amount of P-EBT benefits through the end of the Public Health Emergency, when P-EBT expired. Data cleanup is ongoing for School Year 2021-22 and School Year 2022-23. We encourage eligible schools to work directly with the DHS P-EBT team to ensure accurate program benefits for all eligible students. Questions may be directed to the DHS P-EBT team directly at dhs.fcs.pebt@illinois.gov. If school staff have P-EBT questions for ISBE, please email pebt@isbe.net.



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Events, Meetings, and Deadlines

- Nov. 1 – [“Getting Familiar With the FY 24 Patrick Leahy Farm to School Request for Applications” webinar](#)
- Nov. 2 – [“Getting Your \(Farm to School\) Grant Package Together”](#)
- Nov. 13 – [ISBE SNP Update](#)
- Nov. 13 – [ICN virtual training: “Basic Culinary Math”](#)
- Dec. 4 – [ICN virtual training: “Financial Management for Managers”](#)

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



What's New?

- [Don't Forget the Verification Process and VSR](#)
- [SFAs Tentatively Selected for SY 23-24 Administrative Reviews](#)
- [Sign Up for Local Food for Schools \(LFS\) Funding](#)
- [Check Out Our Recipe for Success Toolkit for Menu Item Inspiration](#)

Watch for announcements under What's New? 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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