

ILLINOIS  
STATE BOARD OF  
EDUCATION

# THE OUTLOOK




A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs



Grant  
Awards  
Available  
for Up  
to \$7,000  
Per Eligible  
School



# BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL PROGRAM



The Illinois State Board of Education is seeking grant applications for the [Breakfast After the Bell Program](#). This program is open to public schools in Illinois. School districts, charter schools, and ROEs are eligible. In addition, an entity must be eligible and approved to operate federal School Nutrition Programs. Grant awards are up to \$7,000 per each eligible school.

The Illinois Breakfast After the Bell Grant Program supports implementation of Breakfast After the Bell service models in schools to make school breakfast more accessible to students.

Visit the [Breakfast After the Bell Grant Program website](#) to read the Request for Proposals and to apply. **The application deadline is 4 p.m. Nov. 14.**

For more information about Breakfast After the Bell, please review Section J of the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#).

A state mandate requires every public school in which at least 70 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in October of the preceding year to operate a Breakfast After the Bell program.

Breakfast after the bell means breakfast is provided to children after the instructional day has officially begun and does not prohibit schools from also providing breakfast before instructional day begins. Schools may choose whichever delivery model that best suits the students.

## NEWS BITES

### SAVE THE DATES

The Illinois State Board of Education will present a



**school wellness conference** on April 8 and 9 in Bloomington-Normal. The ISBE Nutrition Department is finalizing session ideas. These are subject to change but include farm to school, accommodations, boosting your breakfast, Local Wellness Policies, and operating summer meals and after school snacks and suppers. [Watch for details online.](#)



### UPCOMING WEBINAR

ICN announced the latest in their Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition webinar series. **"Creating Custom Recipes for Your School Nutrition Programs"** will be presented 2-3 p.m. Nov. 7. The webinar will explore the benefits of customized recipes, including increased student appeal, reduction of sodium and sugar in school menus, and utilization of USDA Foods entitlement. [Registration is under way online.](#)

### KOSHER & HALAL FOODS

Does your Child Nutrition Program serve participants who follow **kosher**



**and/or halal diets**? Join the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service to learn more about how kosher and halal foods fit into Child Nutrition Program meal patterns and how USDA Foods can help. The webinar starts at noon on Nov. 14. [Register today](#) online.

# Watch for the Latest Food Recalls and Alerts

We strongly encourage Child Nutrition Programs sponsors to monitor What's New? at [www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition) for food recalls and food alerts from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Department of Agriculture. You should also bookmark the [USDA's Recalls & Public Health Alerts webpage](#) and the [FDC's Major Product Recalls webpage](#) for the latest announcements.

Many of these recalls are of limited scope, but we share food recalls and alerts affecting Illinois that have the

possibility of risking the health of our program participants. Most often the recalled items are only available via retail, but some Child Nutrition Programs sponsors may buy limited quantities at retail.

We highly encourage sponsors to monitor these websites directly and to also watch for our postings at [www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition) under What's New?

Many alerts and recalls are also shared through our [Illinois Commodities System \(ICS\)](#).

## SFAs Selected for 24-25 Administrative Reviews

The list of [School Food Authorities Selected for School Year 2024-25 Administrative Review](#) is available on the [Monitoring and Review Information webpage](#). Here you can also find a ["Preparing for an Administrative Review" resource guide](#) and

other resources, including a Q&A document, Administrative Review checklists, and recorded trainings. You can also review Section L of the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#) for guidance on reviews.

## Sign Up for ISBE SNP Updates

Join Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department staff for updates on School Nutrition Programs!

[Registration is under way for the spring semester webinars; just click this link to sign up for them all.](#)

The ISBE SNP Updates are scheduled for the first Wednesdays in February, March, April, and May, from 2-3 p.m.

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.

Recordings of the School Year 2024-25 ISBE SNP Updates are available on the [SNP Training and Professional Standards webpage](#).

# VSR Steps 2-5 Open in WINS

If you are collecting Household Eligibility Applications this school year, you should be well on your way with the required Verification process. There was the Oct. 1 count, and sponsors should be now under way with correspondence with households selected for Verification.

On Nov. 1, Steps 2-5 of the Verification Summary Report (VSR) opened in WINS. You may begin entering completed Verification results and data in the Verification Summary Report (VSR).

A video training on Steps 2-5 of the VSR is available at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/School-Based-Child-Nutrition-Documents.aspx>, where you can find other Verification resources and necessary forms.

Nov. 15 marks the completion of the Verification process. You then have until Dec. 15 to submit your VSR. **The VSR must be submitted in WINS to avoid claim withholding.**

If you have not started Verification or need assistance,



Need assistance with Steps 2-5 of the Verification Summary Report? Watch our updated 13-minute video instructions, posted on our [Verification webpage](#).

please start by watching the “Verification Process for School Year 2024-25” training, which is available on the [SNP Training and Professional Standards webpage](#).

## Sign Up for Food Handler and Food Allergy Trainings

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

This initiative is called the [ABCs of School Nutrition](#).

Watch their [Events webpage](#) for upcoming trainings. They have two trainings scheduled in the new year already.

**“Serve It Safely Food Handler Training”** is set for 2-4:30 p.m. Jan. 30. This training is approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health. If you have questions about the food handler training require-

ment, you should contact your local health department. They can direct you to other training options, too.

**“Food Allergies in School Nutrition”** is scheduled for 2:30-4:30 p.m. Feb. 11. Attendees will review the differences between food allergies, intolerances, and food-related autoimmune issues; common allergens and how to identify them on nutrition labels; avoiding cross-contamination; and more.

You can also check out the many resources available on the ABCs of School Nutrition webpages, including recorded trainings, marketing and cafeteria signage, recipes and sample menus, and more.

## Project SCALES Grant Opportunity

With funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Project SCALES, led by Boise State University’s Center for School and Community Partnerships, will fund innovative and sustainable projects that improve the school food system.

Project SCALES will award up to \$8.5 million in funding for Cohort 2; grants are available from \$500,000 to \$1 million for projects up to 3 years in duration. This grant is a part of the \$100 million Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Initiative to enhance the quality of school meals.

To download the RFA and learn more about this opportunity, visit [Apply – SCALES](#). The application deadline is Dec. 13.



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## Announcements, Events, & Deadlines

- **November** – National Roasting Month, Recipe Highlight: [Purple Pirate Potatoes \(Roasted Beets and Sweet Potatoes\)](#)
- **Nov. 4** – [ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update](#)
- **Nov. 5** – Election Day (ISBE offices closed)
- **Nov. 6** – National Nacho Day, Recipe Highlight: [Sweet Potato & Turkey Nachos](#)
- **Nov. 7** – ICN Virtual Instructor-Led Training: [Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership: Meal Accommodations](#)
- **Nov. 11** – Veterans Day (ISBE offices closed)
- **Nov. 14** – ICN Virtual Instructor-Led Training: [Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership: Workplace Safety](#)
- **Nov. 15**: [Verification process deadline](#)
- **Nov. 25** – National Parfait Day, Recipe Highlight: [Seasonal Fruit and Yogurt Parfaits](#))
- **Nov. 28-29** – ISBE offices closed for Thanksgiving

*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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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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