

ILLINOIS  
STATE BOARD OF  
EDUCATION

# THE OUTLOOK

A Monthly Newsletter for School Nutrition Programs

# VERIFICATION



# REMINDER

Thanks to everyone who joined us for the “Verification Process for School Year 2024-25” webinar on Sept. 17. In case you missed it or need to review, a recording of the training is now available online. Go to the [“SY 2024-25 Verification and VSR” on the website](#), where you will find the video, a PDF of the slides, and other Verification forms and resources.

All School Nutrition Program sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) who receive and approve Household

Eligibility Applications between July 1 to Oct. 1, 2024, must conduct Verification. (Sponsors that are district-wide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) do not need to complete the Verification process or the VSR.)

We also strongly encourage SFAs to review the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#) section on Verification. A [FAQs document is available on our website](#) to assist schools with the Verification process and the VSR. There are also [Error Prone Instructions](#) and other resources.

## The Verification Timeline

**ASAP:** Watch the [“SY 2024-25 Verification and VSR”](#) training and read the [Verification section](#) of the School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook. Continue accepting Household Eligibility Applications and try to directly certify students. If you have not started already, we recommend checking for and identifying error-prone applications.

**July 1 to Oct. 1:** Prior to and on Oct. 1, districts/sponsors must attempt to direct certify as many students as possible that are currently on approved applications. Use of the [Electronic Direct Certification](#) system is done prior to the Oct. 1 application count. Applications with students who are directly certified will no longer need to be included in the Oct. 1 count. The reduction of total applications will reduce the number of applications that must be verified.

**Oct. 1:** This marks the beginning of the annual Verification

process. The Verification Summary Report (VSR) Step 1 opens in the Web-Based Illinois Nutrition System (WINS). The link to access the report can be found on the sponsor dashboard under the “Reports” section.

**Nov. 1:** Steps 2-5 of the VSR open in WINS. You may begin entering completed Verification results and data in the VSR.

**Nov 15:** Marks the completion of the Verification process. Each year, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that processed Household Eligibility Applications to provide free or reduced-price meal benefits to students are required to have completed the Verification process by Nov. 15. Sponsors should be complete with correspondence with households selected for Verification.

**Dec. 15:** The deadline to submit the Verification Summary Report (VSR) is Dec. 15; ISBE is allowing an extension to Monday, Dec. 16. The VSR must be submitted in WINS to avoid claim withholding.

## NEWS BITES

### CIVIL RIGHTS

There is a new ordering process for **And Justice For All** posters. To request posters for the School Nutrition Programs, please complete the [civil rights poster request form](#).

School Nutrition Programs include the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Seamless Summer Option, and After-School Care Program.

### ILSNA CONFERENCE

The **Illinois School Nutrition Association 2024 Annual Conference & Expo** is set for

Oct. 23-24 in Springfield. Visit the [ILSNA web-site](#) for more

information. The event offers opportunity to engage with industry professionals and individuals representing school districts from across the state. Speakers will include staff from the ISBE Nutrition Department.



### FARM TO SCHOOL

There is still time to sign up for the **Illinois Great Apple Crunch**, which is set for Oct. 10. Registration is under way on the [Illinois Farm to School Network's webpage](#). Schools and other child education programs across Illinois can participate by serving local apples on the lunch tray or in the classroom, and "crunching" into them together all at the same time. The Illinois Farm to School Network helps participants locate local orchards and provides promotional tools and educational materials that teach students about Illinois apples.



## USDA Releases Whole Grain Resource Update

The [Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#) has been revised to reflect the Final Rule, "[Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)."

The document is a must-have resource for anyone involved in planning school meals. This important

resource provides examples of various grain products often served in schools and walks through the process of determining whether products are whole grain-rich, creditable as enriched, or not creditable.

Access the Whole Grain Resource at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/whole-grain-resource-national-school-lunch-and-breakfast-programs>.

## Serving School Meals to Preschoolers Worksheet

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Team Nutrition's Serving School Meals to Preschoolers training worksheet has been updated to be consistent with the Final Rule, "Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans."

This four-page worksheet assists National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program operators in planning menus that meet the preschool meal pattern.

The document is available for download today at [fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-school-meals-preschoolers).

## Crediting Tip Sheets Revised

The Crediting in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet series has been revised to reflect the changes with the Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The Crediting in the Child Nutrition Programs tip sheet series consists of seven tip sheets covering the five meal components: fruits, vegetables, meats/meat alternates, fluid milk,

and grains (three separate tip sheets).

The revised versions introduce the menu-planning flexibilities beginning July 1, 2024, and changes that will be implemented in the coming school years in a quick-reference format.

Access the entire tip sheet series at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-tip-sheets-child-nutrition-programs>.

# Print Material Available to Order

Schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program and other Child Nutrition Programs can request free print copies of U.S. Department of Agriculture Team Nutrition materials, while supplies last. Order today!



**STICKERS ARE BACK!** Back by popular demand. Each item includes one roll of 200 stickers:

- [I've Got Great Taste!](#)
- [Make Today a Try-Day!](#)
- [MyPlate Nate and Kate](#)
- [Official Taste Tester](#)
- [Stronger with School Meals](#)  
(each roll includes 5 different designs)

## FOR FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH (OCTOBER)

- [Dig In! Poster Set](#)
- [Grow It, Try It, Like It! Fun with Fruits and Vegetables at Family Child Care](#)
- [Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring MyPlate](#)

## FOR NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK (OCT. 14-18)

- [Be a Food Critic! Poster](#)
- Local School Wellness Policy Refresh!  
Infographic: [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- MyPlate Guide to School Lunch for Families:  
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Offer versus Serve Posters: [Elementary](#), [Middle](#), and [High School](#)
- [Stronger With School Meals Activity Booklet](#)
- [Taste-Test Poster](#)
- [Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Booklet](#)

## ICN Announces Fall Virtual Trainings

The Institute of Child Nutrition announced its fall lineup of Virtual Instructor-Led Trainings (VILTS). The online sessions are free but will fill quickly. [Register on the ICN website](#). Trainings include:

- Basic Culinary Math
- Buy American: US Agriculture Supporting Healthy School Meals
- Customer Experience, Merchandising and Food Presentation
- Food Safety Basics
- Food Safety in Schools: Facts
- About Foodborne Illness
- Food Safety in Schools: Food Safety Fundamentals
- Food Safety in Schools: Keeping Food Safe
- Food Production and Operation Management
- Forecasting the Procurement of Foods
- Meal Accommodations
- Procurement and Inventory Management
- Reimbursable School Meals
- Utilizing the Cafeteria as a Classroom
- Workplace Safety

## Watch our CEP webinar

In case you missed our webinar on "The Basics of Operating as a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Approved District or Schools in Illinois," a recording is available on the [SNP Training and Professional Standards webpage](#) along with a PDF of the slides.

New CEP sponsors will not want to miss this training, as well as CEP sponsors who need a refresher to ensure they are following all rules and regulations. Those interested in applying for CEP next spring for School Year 2025-26 are also encouraged to review the webinar.

More information on CEP is available at [www.isbe.net/cep](http://www.isbe.net/cep).



**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)

## Announcements, Events, & Deadlines

- **October** – [National Farm to School Month](#)
- **Oct. 1** – [“Food Allergies in School Nutrition”](#) webinar
- **Oct. 2** – [ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update](#)
- **Oct. 4** – National Taco Day (Recipe Highlight: [Barbacoa Beef Street Tacos with Cilantro Lime Cauliflower Rice](#))
- **Oct. 10** – [Illinois Great Apple Crunch](#)
- **Oct. 11** – World Egg Day (Recipe Highlight: [Quiche With Self-Forming Crust](#))
- **Oct. 14** – ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day
- **Oct. 14-18** – [National School Lunch Week](#)
- **Oct. 17** – National Pasta Day (Recipe Highlight: [Creamy Chicken Pasta With Roasted Squash and Broccoli](#))
- **Oct. 22** – [Serve It Safely Food Handler Training](#)
- **Oct. 23-24** – [ILSNA 2024 Annual Conference & Expo](#)
- **Nov. 4** – [ISBE School Nutrition Programs Update](#)

*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).*

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

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