

Staying on Track

March 2026



Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education

School Year
2025-2026



Intended Audience

This training is intended for School Food Authorities (SFAs) operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in Arizona.



TRAINING HOURS

Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title: March Staying on Track

Key Areas: 2000 - Operations, 3000 - Administration, 4000 - Communications and Marketing

Learning Codes: 2430, 2450, 3110, 4120

Length: 1 hour

Presenter: Jennifer Blankenship



Disclaimer

This training was developed by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services Division (HNS). The content in this training is intended for professionals operating one or more United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) in Arizona under the direction of ADE. The information in this training is subject to change. Attendees are encouraged to access professional development materials directly from the training library to prevent the use of outdated content.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Review monthly communication distributed from HNS to ensure vital emails were not overlooked;
- ✓ Provide detailed training on important topics and deadlines;
- ✓ Provide directors an opportunity to submit questions, that ADE can expand on in later communications.

HNS is here to help!

We are here to provide assistance and help you make the very best of your program.



Questions

- Questions can be submitted in the Q&A at any point, and HNS will respond in the follow-up document that will be released after the webinar.
- Once the webinar concludes, HNS will compile all the questions received and create a follow-up Q&A document that will address all questions.
- If you require additional assistance following HNS's communication, please reach out to your HNS Specialist through HelpDesk.



Agenda

Section 1: HNS Communications Recap

Section 2: Communication Hot Topics

Section 3: Last Month's Training Opportunities

Section 4: Upcoming Deadlines and HNS Communications

SECTION 1
HNS
Communications
Round-Up



Memorandums



HNS 02-2026: SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027 FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS OPEN

MARCH 1, 2026

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce that applications for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for School Year 2026-2027 (SY 2026-27) will be available starting March 1, 2026. FFVP funding for SY 2026-27 is comprised of Period 1 (July 1, 2026 through September 30, 2026) and Period 2 (October 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027). Operators of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) seeking consideration for funding are required to submit both Period 1 and Period 2 FFVP applications by March 31, 2026, via the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Grants Management application within the ADEConnect system.

All memorandums that pertain to operators of Child Nutrition Programs in Arizona are available online at www.azed.gov/hns/memos/.



SP 03-2026, CACFP 02-2026, SFSP 02-2026: INCORPORATING LOCAL BEEF INTO CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM MEALS

This USDA Food and Nutrition Services memorandum provides helpful resources and strategies for Child Nutrition Program operators and ranchers to incorporate local beef into school meals. Resource topics cover procurement, funding resources, food safety, crediting, and technical assistance contacts from the Farm to School Program.

Additional memorandums that pertain to operators of Child Nutrition Programs in Arizona are available online at www.azed.gov/hns/memos/.

Program Alerts



COMPILED CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS REIMBURSEMENT RATES - UPDATED TO INCLUDE THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM RATES FOR 2026

USDA has announced the adjusted reimbursement rates for meals served in the Summer Food Service Program for Program Year 2026. The [Compiled Child Nutrition Programs Reimbursement Rates for Program Year 2025-2026](#) resource has been updated by ADE Health and Nutrition Services to reflect the new rates effective from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026.

Access it: Visit the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\) webpage](#) or the [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) webpage](#). Click on the “Reimbursement Rates” button at the bottom of the webpage.

Compiled Child Nutrition Programs **Reimbursement Rates for Program Year 2025-2026** Effective July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Summer Food Service Program *Effective January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026

ADMINISTRATIVE RATES			OPERATIONAL RATES		COMBINED RATES		
	Rural or Self-Prep	Urban or Catered	All Sites			Rural or Self-Prep	Urban or Catered
Breakfast	\$0.2875	\$0.2275	Breakfast	\$2.91	Breakfast	\$3.1975	\$3.1375
Lunch/Supper	\$0.5300	\$0.4400	Lunch/Supper	\$5.07	Lunch/Supper	\$5.6000	\$5.5100
Snack	\$0.1450	\$0.1150	Snack	\$1.18	Snack	\$1.3250	\$1.2950

The administrative component of rates is higher for sponsors located in rural areas and for sponsors that prepare their own meals at the SFSP site or central facility rather than purchasing them from vendors.

The catered rates apply to all sponsors using the services of a food service management company, unless the sites being served are in rural areas as determined by [USDA's Rural Designation Mapper](#).

Seamless Summer Option

BREAKFAST		LUNCH		SNACK	
	RATES		RATES		RATES
NON-SEVERE NEED	\$2.46	REGULAR: Schools which served LESS than 60% Free and Reduced Lunches	\$4.60	SNACKS	\$1.26
SEVERE NEED	\$2.94	REGULAR +9 CENTS: Schools which served LESS than 60% Free and Reduced Lunches +9 Cents	\$4.69		
		HIGH RATE: Schools which served MORE than 60% Free and Reduced Lunches	\$4.62		
		HIGH RATE +9 CENTS: Schools which served MORE than 60% Free and Reduced Lunches +9 Cents	\$4.71		

Announcements and Resources



USDA RAMADAN WAIVER: OPT-IN FOR OPERATORS

All NSLP operators wishing to utilize this waiver must opt into this waiver by completing the Ramadan Participation Form. The form must be submitted via HelpDesk ticket by February 16th, 2026, and must include a list of sites (with the site CTDS numbers) that will be participating in the waiver. This waiver may also be requested by CACFP operators of Emergency Shelters, Adult Day Care Centers, Outside-School-Hours Care Centers, and At-Risk Afterschool Care Centers. This waiver is intended to support eligible program operators in continuing to offer nutritious meals to participants who are in attendance and fasting in observance of Ramadan.

If approved, this waiver would be effective February 17, 2026, through March 19, 2026.



TRY IT LOCAL...IT'S EASY!

Through Try it Local: Arizona's Local Food for Schools Program (LFS), schools are reimbursed for domestic, unprocessed or minimally processed, and local or regional foods used in school meals. On September 25, 2023, ADE entered into a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to provide \$4.3 million to support school meals. Arizona still has \$1.9 million available for eligible purchases. But, time is running out! Submit your local food receipts TODAY. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis up to June 30, 2026, or until all funds are obligated, whichever is first.

Announcements and Resources



IF YOU WERE GIVEN CREDIT TO SHOP FOR FOOD, WOULD YOU USE IT?

You could be receiving nutritious, all-American ingredients to enhance your school meals at REDUCED or NO COST! The USDA Foods in Schools program supports domestic nutrition programs and American agricultural producers through the purchase of 100% American-grown and produced foods for use by schools and institutions participating in the National School Lunch Program. When your school participates in the USDA Foods in Schools program, you are entitled to an allotted amount of funds that can be used to purchase these choice foods.



REMINDER: SCHOOL BREAKS CAN IMPACT YOUR USDA FOODS DELIVERIES!

The Arizona Department of Education Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) would like to wish everyone a happy Spring! School Food Authorities are reminded to check their USDA Foods shipment schedules to ensure deliveries are not scheduled during spring break. When deliveries cannot be accepted due to school break closures, penalty fees can be assessed.

We are here to help!

If you need assistance rescheduling shipments, please email USDAFoods@azed.gov to be connected with an HNS specialist.

Announcements and Resources



COMPLETE USDA FOODS CATALOG REQUISITIONS

School Food Authorities (SFAs) that previously participated, or wish to participate, in the USDA Foods in Schools program in the upcoming school year are now able to begin allocating their entitlement funds for usage next year! Log into [CNP MyFoods](#) within ADEConnect today and check out all the products we have to offer!

Start by logging into CNP MyFoods to view the entity's planned assistance level (PAL) or entitlement amount allocated for next school year. First, allocate the amount of your PAL that will go toward Direct Delivery, Processing, and Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Then, start selecting the foods you want to receive and when you want to receive them for the 2026-2027 school year.

USDA Foods Catalogs Requisitions close on different dates beginning in March 2026. Select the catalogs for SY 2026-2027 for NSLP to view the applicable close dates.

If you have any questions, please email USDAFoods@azed.gov to be connected with an HNS Specialist who can provide technical assistance throughout this process. You may also schedule an appointment with a specialist to complete your catalog requisitions. Those who indicated on the USDA Foods Annual Preference Survey that they would like assistance with the process will be contacted directly.

SECTION 2
Hot Topics



CNPWeb

UPGRADED FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH GOOGLE CHROME AND MICROSOFT EDGE

To maintain continued access, security, and performance, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) has upgraded CNPWeb to work with modern web browsers. Starting **March 3, 2026 at 8:00 AM**, ADEConnect will automatically divert external users to the upgraded CNPWeb platform. After this time, CNPWeb **will no longer function in Internet Explorer.**

We are here to help!

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact your assigned Health and Nutrition Services Specialist or submit a request for service through HelpDesk by using this link:

<https://helpdeskexternal.azed.gov/>



CNPWeb

UPGRADED FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH GOOGLE CHROME AND MICROSOFT EDGE

Child Nutrition Program National School Lunch Program - NSLP

Applications | Claims | CNP Overview

NSLP Applications Index

You are in NSLP Home > Applications Index

If you do not see certain Applications it may be due to security settings in place for your login.

Program Year: 2026

Search For: Sponsor

Search by Name: Begins with... [] Go

Search by CDS: [] (Enter as a number with no punctuation)

Friendly House, Inc. (07-86-11)

Sponsor Applications (11)

Reminder: When submitting applications, you must submit all your site applications before submitting your sponsor application.

Action	Revision	Type	Status	Effective Date	Checklist
View	Original	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 1	Regular Application	Approved	July 2025	View Checklist
View	Revision 2	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 3	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 4	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 5	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 6	Regular Application	Approved	January 2026	View Checklist
View	Revision 7	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 8	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 9	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
View	Revision 10	Regular Application	Approved	February 2026	View Checklist

Create New Application

Associated Site

Friendly House Academia Del Pueblo Elem (07-86-11-001)

Action	Revision	Status	Effective Date
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View	Revision 4	Rejected	
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Create New Application

Page 1

NSLP

Applications Index for PY 2026

You are in NSLP Home > NSLP Home Application Index

If you do not see certain Applications it may be due to security settings in place for your login.

Program Year: 2026 Apply

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View	Revision 9	Regular Application	Rejected		View Checklist
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Create New Revision

Associated Sites (1)

Friendly House Academia Del Pueblo Elem (07-86-11-001) (7 Applications)

Action	Revision	Status	Effective Date
View	Original	Approved	July 2025
View	Revision 1	Rejected	
View	Revision 2	Rejected	
View	Revision 3	Rejected	
View	Revision 4	Rejected	
View	Revision 5	Approved	January 2026
View	Revision 6	Approved	February 2026

Create New Revision

CNPWeb

UPGRADED FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH GOOGLE CHROME AND MICROSOFT EDGE

- **Scheduled Outage:** ADE will take CNPWeb offline from March 2, 2026 at 5:00 PM to March 3, 2026 at 8:00 AM to complete the upgrade.
- **ADEConnect Users:** Users that log in through ADEConnect will not need to make any changes. ADEConnect will automatically route the user to the upgraded platform.
- **Common Logon Users:** After the upgrade, all Common Logon users must access CNPWeb through ADEConnect. Users without an ADEConnect account must request access through their Entity Administrator.
- **Familiar Interface:** Users will continue to experience a similar interface, with only minor updates to buttons, icons, and layout.
- **Multiple Sponsor Accounts:** Individuals that manage multiple entities will now be able to view each entity under a single account login.



Annual Reporting of Identified Students and Enrollment Data

Prepare to collect data for the REQUIRED annual identified student reporting.

All SFAs must report identified student and enrollment data as of **April 1st**, for each site in their LEA, to HNS by **April 15th**. Identified students are students directly certified for free meals through any means other than a household application.

Required Annual ISP Reporting	
Collect Identified Student and Enrollment Data for each Site	April 1, 2026 <i>*Do not take counts prior to April 1</i>
Review Partial Matches	Prior to Reporting
Report the required data for each site within <i>CNP Direct Certification</i> in ADEConnect 'CEP Data Collection'	Prior to April 15, 2026

Annual ISP Reporting Timeline

April 1

SFAs determine identified student and enrollment counts

April 15

Deadline for LEAs to submit identified student and enrollment counts to ADE for each site within CNP Direct Certification in ADEConnect 'CEP Data Collection'

May 1

ADE publishes a site level notification list of all eligible and near eligible CEP sites

June 30

CEP application and supporting documentation are due to ADE

Quiz Time

True or False. Only schools operating CEP need to collect their identified students and enrollment as of April 1 and report it as of April 15.

A True

B False

Quiz Time

True or False. Only schools operating CEP need to collect their identified students and enrollment as of April 1 and report it as of April 15.

A True

B False

Every school is required to collect identified students and enrollment as of April 1 and report it as of April 15.

USDA Foods Deliveries During Spring Break

As a reminder, School Food Authorities (SFAs) should not schedule USDA Foods deliveries during Spring Break if no school staff will be on-site to receive the shipment.

To ensure smooth delivery and prevent missed shipments or restocking of material:

- Confirm your district's Spring Break dates before selecting delivery weeks.
- Only schedule a delivery if trained staff will be physically present to receive, inspect, and sign for the order.
- Surplus requisitions are automatically assigned to your next available delivery date (double-check that this date does not fall during a closure or when staff are unavailable).
- If no staff are available, please select an alternate delivery week.

If you need assistance adjusting your delivery schedule, please contact

USDAFoods@azed.gov.

Thank you for your attention and for helping to ensure efficient USDA Foods operation



ENTITLEMENT PLANNING

Once issued entitlement funds, participating operators may use them to purchase foods in three ways:

01

Direct Delivery*

Cases of a variety of food items (canned, frozen, dry, etc)

02

Processing*

Raw products purchased in bulk for further processing (e.g. chicken for chicken nuggets)

03

DoD Fresh**

Seasonal Fresh fruits and vegetables

*From the USDA Foods Product Catalog (Administrative fees apply)

**No administrative fees apply for these food items

USDA Foods Catalog 2026-2027

CHECK CNP MYFOODS FOR CATALOG CLOSING DATES

- Easy to read, printable [guide](#) which allows for organization and proper planning of USDA Donated Foods in SY27.
- Stay organized while utilizing this guide to assist in accurate monthly menu projections for SY27.

NEED HELP? WANT TO APPLY?

Simply email: USDAFoods@azed.gov



SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

USDA FOODS PRODUCT CATALOG

DIRECT DELIVERY AND BULK FOR FURTHER PROCESSING ITEMS

RELEASED FEBRUARY 2026 | ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION


USDA Foods

Market Forecast

This is a list of what is expected to come in March for USDA Foods Direct Delivery: HNS will be providing this list monthly to complement your USDA Foods ordering!

Keep an eye out in your FFAVORS catalog for these featured items for March:

- Carrots
- Kale
- Multi-color cauliflower
- Multiple varieties of apples
- Multiple varieties of oranges
- Romaine lettuce

 USDA FOODS MARKET FORECAST DIRECT DELIVERY MARCH 2026		
Key: ■ Shipped ■ Arrived ■ Cancelled		
VEGETABLES		
	#	Category
BROCCOLI FRZ CTN-30 LB	110473	Vegetables
CORN FRZ CTN-30 LB	100348	Vegetables
CORN WHOLE KERNEL(LIQ) CAN-6/10	100313	Vegetables
MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES		
	#	Category
CHICKEN DICED CTN-40 LB	100101	Meat/Meat Alternates
FRUITS		
	#	Category
APPLESAUCE CUP-96/4.5	110361	Fruits
MIXED BERRY FRZ CUP-96/4.OZ	110859	Fruits
MIXED FRUIT EX LT CAN-6/10	100212	Fruits
PEACHES CLING DICED EX LT CAN-6/10	100220	Fruits
PEACH FREESTONE DICED FRZ CUP-96/4.4 OZ	100241	Fruits
PEARS DICED EX LT CAN-6/10	100225	Fruits
STRAWBERRY FRZ CUP-96/4.5 OZ	100256	Fruits

Try it Local! Local Food for Schools

START WITH THE WEBINAR!

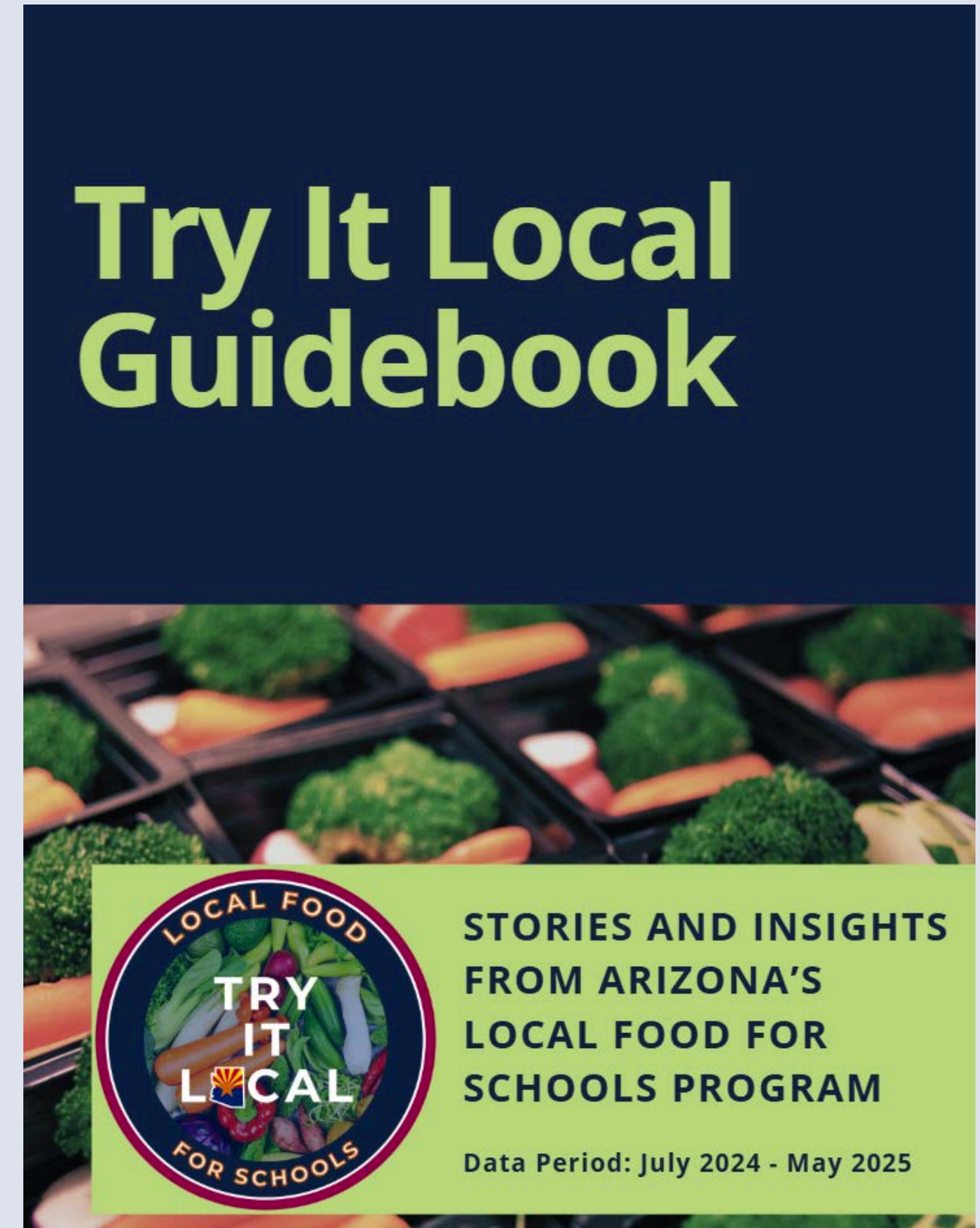
- [TRY IT LOCAL GUIDEBOOK WEBINAR](#)
[PASSCODE: 9N6#+*Q9]

[TRY IT LOCAL GUIDEBOOK](#)

\$1.9 million in remaining funds

[How to Receive Try it Local Funding for Eligible Food Purchases](#) step-by-step instruction.

- Located under the 'Try it Local' accordion



Taste AZ Promotion

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHT OF LOCALLY SOURCED FOOD AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS



TASTE



TEACH



CONNECT

WHAT IS IT?

This promotion showcases Arizona's very own locally grown produce and available food options.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each month, HNS highlights a locally sourced food that is easily available by providing an informative resource. This includes fun facts, availability timelines, and unique recipes. For March, the spotlight is on **Kale!**

WHY TASTE AZ?

HNS is thrilled to facilitate connections between SFAs and the farmers and producers who can incorporate these Arizona foods into school meals! This promotion will draw parallels to the Farm Fresh Challenge and will include the logos for Taste, Teach, and/or Connect when the information complements the challenge criteria.

TASTE AZ March Highlight:

KALE




LOCAL KALE IN ARIZONA:
Harvest Months: **November to April**

Farms to get the local produce:

- Agritopia Farm: Gilbert, AZ
- Blue Sky Organics: Litchfield Park, AZ
- Duncan Family Farms: Goodyear, AZ
- Healing Earth Farms (Formerly True Garden): Mesa, AZ
- New Roots (IRC): Tucson, AZ
- Maya's Farm: Phoenix, AZ
- Westover Farm: Tucson, AZ

Connect with Local Producers!
[SCHOOL INTEREST FORM](#)

TEACH KALE HARVEST FACTS!

- Kale contains Vitamins A, C and K, calcium, iron and is a good source of fiber.
- Kale is called a Superfood because it is high in nutrients and low in calories.
- Use kale within 5 days. The longer you store kale, the stronger and more bitter its flavor becomes.
- Popular kale varieties include curly kale (with ruffled leaves), Lacinato kale (also known as dinosaur kale or Tuscan kale, featuring long, dark green leaves), and Red Russian kale (with flat, fringed leaves and purplish-red veins).
- Kale is part of the Brassicaceae family (also called Cruciferae) which includes vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, and broccoli.
- Kale leaves are naturally tough and fibrous, but massaging them with salt or lemon juice can help soften them for salads.

TASTE LOCAL KALE RECIPE: Kale and Apple Salad



This refreshing salad starts with a dressing of honey, salt, pepper, lemon juice, vinegar, and oil. Mix it with kale and dried cranberries, then refrigerate overnight. The next day, add diced apples to the marinated mixture and chill at 41°F until serving.

HACCP
To ensure food safety with **kale** always thoroughly wash under running water before cutting and eating.

QUICK MATH: KALE



1 pound fresh, raw kale as purchased (AP) yields

Raw trimmed with stems = 17.5, ½ cup servings (credits as ¼ cup dark green)	Cooked trimmed with stems = 5, ½ cup servings (credits as ½ cup dark green)
Raw trimmed without stems = 24, ½ cup servings (credits as ¼ cup dark green)	Cooked trimmed without stems = 5, ½ cup servings (credits as ½ cup dark green)



March 2026 | TASTE AZ | The Arizona Department of Education
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

TASTE AZ March Highlight: Kale



Farm Fresh Challenge
PROGRAM YEAR 2026

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
April 1-30, 2026

The Program Year 2026 Farm Fresh Challenge is an HNS initiative designed to **empower** CNP operators to cultivate excitement around **fresh** and **locally** sourced foods. Participating operators must complete a series of challenges within the month of **April** that promote participants' tasting, teaching, and connection to foods local to Arizona. **Challenge Criteria will be announced soon!**

START

TASTE

TEACH

CONNECT

FINISH

HINT: If you've taken part in Try it Local, you're already ahead of the game!

The poster features a vertical path of four colored brushstrokes: purple for 'TASTE', blue for 'TEACH', orange for 'CONNECT', and red for 'FINISH'. A dashed line starts at the 'START' text at the bottom left and follows the path through the brushstrokes to a trophy icon at the top right. The trophy is a watermelon slice on a stand with a star. The background of the poster is a collage of fresh vegetables like carrots, onions, and leafy greens.

2026 Farm Fresh Challenge

BEGINS APRIL 1

The Program Year 2026 Farm Fresh Challenge is an HNS initiative designed to empower CNP operators to cultivate excitement around fresh and locally sourced foods. Participating operators must complete a series of challenges within the month of April that promote participants' tasting, teaching, and connection to foods local to Arizona.

HINT: If you've taken part in Try it Local, you're already ahead of the game!

Farm Fresh Challenge Criteria

Farm Fresh Challenge

PROGRAM YEAR 2025

TASTE

PROCURING LOCAL FOODS

Fruits and vegetables are a great place to start thinking about purchasing from local growers, but dairy, meat, poultry, and grains may be sourced locally as well. Purchasing local foods during their peak season is a great way to support local agriculture, introduce new foods at their peak freshness, and obtain products at a competitive price. Local ingredients can be purchased from 1) direct sources -farmers, farmers markets, producer food hubs/co-ops, or gardens, or 2) indirect sources - food distributors, food retailers, food banks, meal vendors, or food service management companies *as long as all procurement principles and regulations are followed.*

WHERE TO START:

- What's **ALREADY** local on your menu?
 - Look at your records or ask your distributor or meal vendor for a report on items you purchase that meet your definition of local.
- What **COULD** be local?
 - Conduct a menu audit. Can any menu items be easily replaced by local items?
- Use the Good Food Finder when menu planning.
 - The [Farm to School: Good Food Finder](#) has many resources to use for procuring local foods when menu planning.

TASTE CHALLENGE:

- The copper tier is awarded to sites that can procure **three** "easy to reach" local items (milk, fruit or vegetable). Fruits and vegetables can be counted more than once if more than one variety is served.
- The silver tier is awarded to those who accomplished the copper tier and **one** additional "hard to reach" local item (whole grain or meat/meat alternate).
- The gold tier is awarded to those who accomplished the copper tier and **two** additional "hard to reach" local items



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Farm Fresh Challenge

PROGRAM YEAR 2025

TEACH

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Implementing nutrition education through fun activities centered around agriculture is a great way to keep children engaged and improve attendance at your sites. Simple, fun activities such as teaching children basic cooking skills, visiting a local farm or farmers market, helping out in a garden, or learning how food is grown are great ways to incorporate local foods into age-appropriate nutrition education activities.

WHERE TO START:

- Determine what kinds of activities would work best for the population you serve (age group, group size, etc.) and your site (volunteers, space availability, availability of on-site gardens or nearby farms, etc.). There are many free resources that can be used for educational activities.
- Consider doing some of the following agricultural enrichment activities:
 - Offer [taste test](#) with locally produced foods.
 - Provide [nutrition education](#) or [curriculum](#) on local crops.
 - Host cooking demonstrations using local foods or share recipe cards.
 - Take a field trip to a farmers market or a farm.
 - Invite a farmer to visit your summer meals site.
 - Conduct on-site garden activities.
 - Create and send newsletters home with recipes, farmers market tips, etc.
 - [Hold a Harvest of the Month educational event](#)

TEACH CHALLENGE:

Host a minimum of **two educational activities** themed around Arizona local food and agriculture.



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Farm Fresh Challenge

PROGRAM YEAR 2025

CONNECT

PROMOTING LOCAL FOODS:

Promoting local food use in schools highlights your efforts and connects the community to local growers. There are many benefits to promoting local foods, such as supporting local farmers and businesses and incorporating fresh and seasonal produce on your school menus. By sharing delicious recipes, farmer's market finds, and stories behind local food producers, you can create a stronger sense of connection and appreciation for the food served to your students and the people who grow it.

WHERE TO START:

- Determine how you would like to promote your items on social media.
- Highlight local ingredients on the menu - you can use the name of the farm or farmer if you know it on the service line!
- Send newsletters to families or secure a feature in a local media outlet about local foods served.
- Use the following post topics as inspiration:
 - [Using local ingredients](#)
 - Incorporating agriculture-based education activities
 - Participating in gardening activities.
- Participate in [Harvest of the Month](#) and highlight a local fruit or vegetable for the month of April.

CONNECT CHALLENGE:

Promote your challenge activities via a social media post, magazine feature, newspaper article, etc.



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National School Breakfast Week



the quest for SCHOOL BREAKFAST

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK

MARCH 2-6, 2026

National School Breakfast Week

MARCH 2-6

The School Nutrition Association website offers an extensive array of resources designed to assist you in decorating your kitchens and bringing "The Quest for School Breakfast" to fruition. Among the available materials are official quest logos and design elements, a comprehensive quest celebration toolkit, a press release template, activity guides, a souvenir shop, and essential public relations resources tailored for the quest. This site serves as one destination for all necessary materials to celebrate and enhance your decorations.

[SNA Website](#) 



National School Breakfast Week

MARCH 2-6

Share photographs of beautifully decorated kitchens along with favorite recipes for School Breakfast Week with the specialist via the HelpDesk.



SECTION 3
**Training
Opportunities**



February's Training Opportunities

To access webinar slides, recordings, and online trainings, visit HNS' webpage or refer to the HNS Communications Event Follow-up emails.

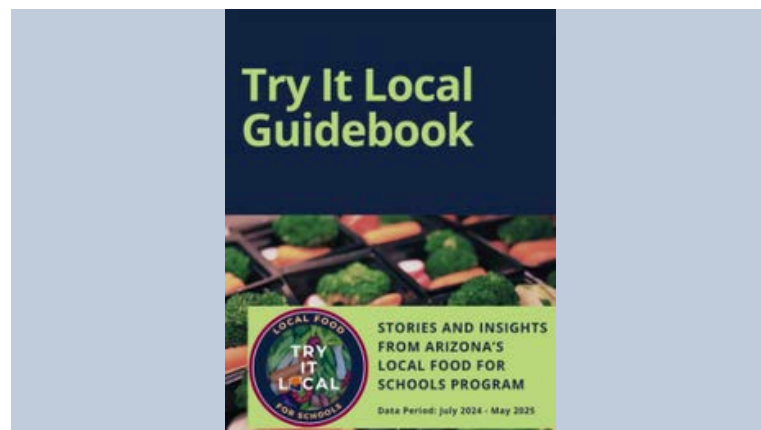


[Staying on Track: February](#)



[Procurement Basics](#)

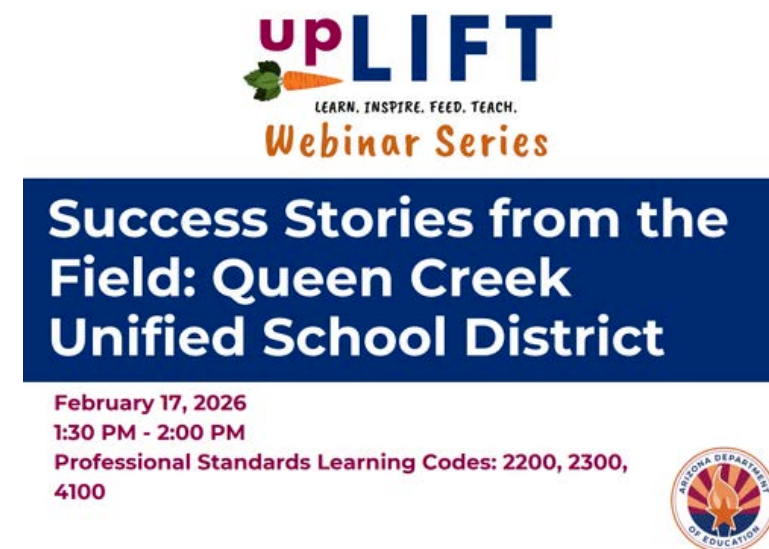
Provides an overview of procurement with recent updates.



[Try It Local Guidebook Webinar](#)

[\[Passcode: 9N6#+*Q9\]](#)

Provides an overview of key program details, guidance on getting started, and helpful insights shared during the live discussion.



[February upLIFT](#)

Queen Creek Unified School District shared their successes with using food trucks to transform their school meal program!

SY 25-26 upLIFT

UPLIFT WEBINAR - AMERICA'S HEALTHIEST SCHOOLS W/ EMILY THEGE

Join us on **March 17, 2026** at 1:30pm in this engaging 30-minute session, Emily Thege will share insights into the innovative practices that schools across the nation are implementing to foster healthier environments for students. Attendees will learn about the criteria that define America's Healthiest Schools and explore practical strategies to promote wellness in educational settings. Don't miss the opportunity to be part of a movement dedicated to nurturing the well-being of the next generation!

[Click here to register!](#)



In-Person Workshop

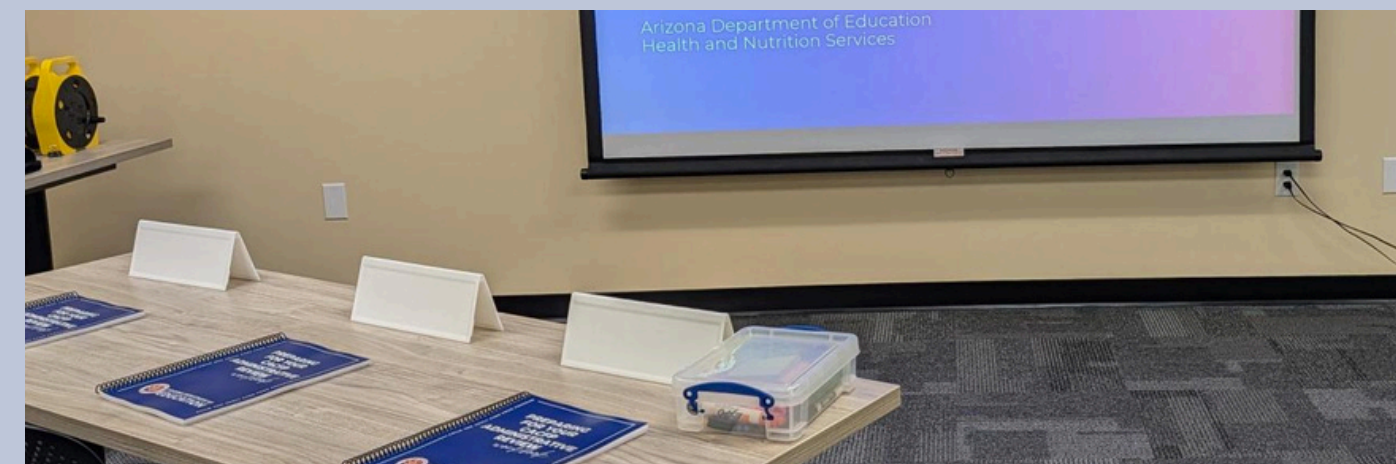
PROCURING LOCAL WORKSHOP

This workshop will cover various topics such as the benefits of sourcing ingredients locally and strategies for establishing successful partnerships with local producers. By the end of the workshop, attendees will have a solid understanding of how to support local producers while providing nutritious meals for students. Join us to learn how you can make a difference in your school's meal procurement process!

Registration is available in the [ADE Professional Learning and Development \(APLD\)](#).

PHOENIX

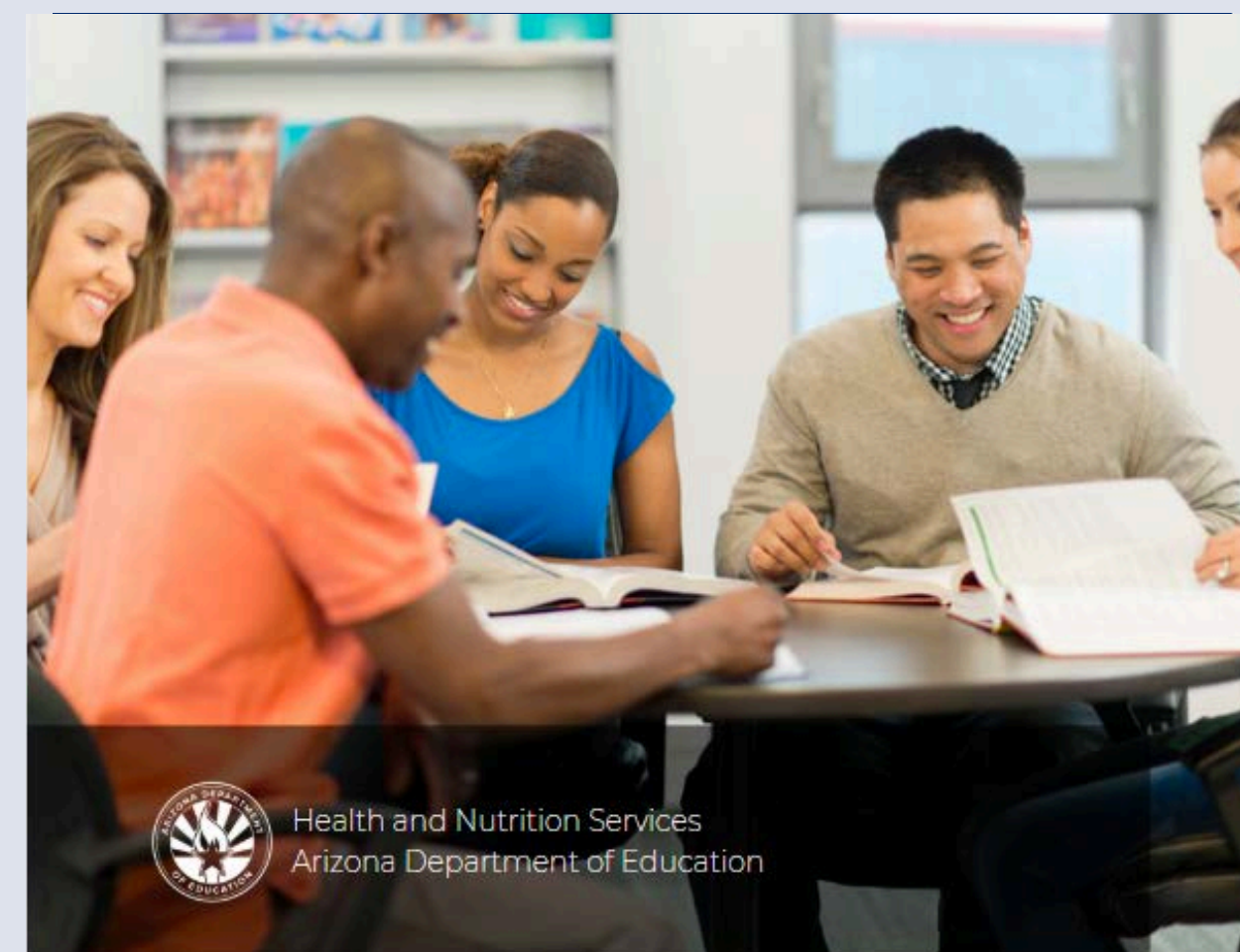
- 9:00 am -11:30 pm **03/05/2026**
- Location: 1535 W Jefferson St, Phoenix, AZ
85007 Cato Conference Room
- Registration Link:
<https://azed.geniussis.com/PublicStudentSignInUp.aspx?aid=11223>



Training for School Nutrition Programs

Because the training offered by HNS is vast in quantity, diverse in content, and consistently updated, ADE maintains specialized curricula based on job duties to help directors with their training plans.

Each curriculum includes a list of recommended trainings offered by HNS and the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) for specific roles, the format of each training, the Professional Standards hours each training provides, and where to access the training or registration.



Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education

TRAINING CURRICULUM

School Nutrition Programs

Program Year 2024

[Training Curriculum for Arizona Child Nutrition Professionals Operating the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program in Program Year 2024](#)



Suggested Resource

Quick Guides are an abbreviated resource developed by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) Division. Quick guides are intended to compliment ADE's Step-by-Step Instruction: How-to Guides.

- [How to Collect and Report Identified Student and Enrollment Counts](#)



How to Collect and Report Identified Student and Enrollment Counts



Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education

SECTION 4
**Upcoming
Deadlines &
Communications**



Mark Your Calendars!

MARCH EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

HNS is devoted to empowering all Child Nutrition Program operators with training tailored to nurture your and your teams' professional growth. We stand ready to assist you in elevating your skills, fulfilling those annual training requirements, ensuring seamless operations, and enhancing Child Nutrition Programs throughout the enchanting landscape of Arizona!

 **Thirteen live training opportunities await School Nutrition Professionals this March.**

For School Nutrition Professionals



National School Breakfast Week: March 2-6, 2026
[Check out the SNA webpage for more information!](#)



State Nutrition Action Committee Summer Food Service Program Work Group
 March 2, 1:00-2:00 pm MST
 Work Group Meeting | [Register in Zoom](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable



Staying on Track - March
 March 3, 1:30-2:30 pm MST
 Webinar | [Register in APLD](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Key Areas: 1000 Nutrition, 2000 Operations, 3000 Administration, 4000 Communications and Marketing



Local Food in Schools Community of Practice SY 2025-2026
 March 4, 2:00-3:00 pm MST
 Webinar | [Register with AZ Farm to School Network](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable



Reaching the Last Mile: Strategies for Serving Ultra-Rural Populations
 March 4, 3:00-4:00 pm EST
 Webinar | [Register with No Kid Hungry](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): 2000 Operations



Procuring Local Workshop
 March 5, 9:00-11:30 am MST
 In-Person Workshop | [Register in APLD](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Key Areas: 2000 Operations, 3000 Administration



CICN: Bowl Concepts in School Nutrition
 March 5, 3:00-4:00 pm EST
 Webinar | [Register with ICN](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): 1000 Nutrition, 2000 Operations



The Quest for Student Success Starts with School Breakfast
 March 5, 3:00-4:00 pm EST
 Webinar | [Register with FRAC](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable



School Garden & Education Community of Practice SY 2025-2026
 March 11, 3:00-4:00 pm MST
 Webinar | [Register with AZ Farm to School Network](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable



Schools and Summer EBT
 March 12, 3:00-4:00 pm EST
 Webinar | [Register with FRAC](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable



State Nutrition Action Committee Summer Food Service Program Work Group
 March 16, 1:00-2:00 pm MST
 Work Group Meeting | [Register in Zoom](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable



upLIFT - America's Healthiest Schools with Emily Thege
 March 17, 2026
 Webinar | [Register in APLD](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Key Areas: 1000 Nutrition, 4000 Communications and Marketing



Operating Strong Summer Meals Programs
 March 19, 3:00-4:00 pm EST
 Webinar | [Register with FRAC](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable



State Nutrition Action Committee Summer Food Service Program Work Group
 March 30, 1:00-2:00 pm MST
 Work Group Meeting | [Register in Zoom](#)
 Professional Standards Key Area(s): Not Applicable

For more information and links to register, check your inbox for the [HNS Events Forecast: March 2026](#) from HNS Communications!

In Our Drafts

KEEP A LOOK OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING EMAILS THIS MONTH:

- Summer Meals Information
- TASTE AZ: Beans
- Collecting and reporting annual identified student data
- Processing Diversion Fee for Service Pricing for SY 27
- USDA Foods Catalog for SY 2026-2027



March Checklist

March

Prepare for collecting the required annual identified student and enrollment counts.

March 1 - March 10

Submit February reimbursement claims (best practice)

March 17

upLIFT Webinar

March 31

January 60-day claiming deadline

March 31

Prep for reporting annual identified student and enrollment data.

Daily

- Complete production records
- Count meals at the point of service
- Complete Daily Edit Checks

This month...

- Register for the upcoming upLIFT Webinar:
 - Webinar- upLIFT: America's Healthiest Schools w/ Emily Thege
 - March 17, 2024, 1:30-2:00 pm
- Verify that each operating site is on track to receive at least **two food safety inspections** during the program year
- FFVP (Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program)
 - **Applications OPEN: March 1, 2026**
 - **Applications CLOSE: March 31, 2026**

Reminder: Ensure the civil rights non-discrimination statement is on all SFSP outreach materials.

Poll Time

Are you planning to participate in Summer Feeding either as a site or sponsor?

A Yes

B No



Join Us Next Month!

Staying On Track - SUMMER EDITION

April 7, 2026
1:30-2:30 pm

This Staying on Track will be dedicated to all things Summer Feeding. Tune in for information that will set you up for summer success!

Thank you!

PLEASE PUT QUESTIONS IN THE Q&A

If you are attending the live webinar, you will receive an email once attendance has been completed. Once you have received this email, your training certificate will be available in Arizona Professional Learning Development (APLD).

If you are watching the recorded webinar, you can access the survey link and certificate of completion at the end of the webinar slides.





Congratulations

**You have completed the Online Course:
Staying on Track: March 2026**

Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title: March Staying on Track

Key Areas: 2000 - Operations, 3000 - Administration,
4000 - Communications and Marketing

Learning Codes: 2430, 2450, 3110, 4120

Length: 1 hour

Please note, attendees must document the amount of training hours indicated on the training despite the amount of time it takes to complete it.

Certificate

Requesting a training certificate

Please click the button to complete a brief survey about this online training. Once the survey is complete, you will be able to print your certificate of completion from Survey Monkey.



Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title: March 2026- Staying on Track

Key Areas: 2000 - Operations, 3000 - Administration,
4000 - Communications and Marketing

Learning Codes: 2430, 2450, 3110, 4120

Length: 1 hour

Please note, attendees must document the amount of training hours indicated on the training despite the amount of time it takes to complete it.





In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#), found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

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