

Staying on Track

May 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: May Staying on Track

Key Areas: 1000 - Nutrition, 2000 - Operations, 3000 - Administration, 4000 - Communications and Marketing

Learning Codes: 1130, 1170, 1230, 2300, 2440, 3100, 3500, 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are encouraged to access professional development materials directly from the training library to prevent the use of outdated content.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

April HNS Communications Round-Up



Memorandums



SP 06-2026: PAID LUNCH EQUITY: GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

This USDA Food and Nutrition Administration memorandum provides guidance to State agencies and school food authorities (SFAs) on the paid lunch equity (PLE) requirements for school year (SY) 2026-2027. This memorandum explains the PLE exemption provided in section 743 of the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (Public Law 119-37, the 2026 Appropriations Act), enacted on November 12, 2025. This memorandum also provides guidance for SFAs that do not qualify for the exemption.

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



SP 07-2026: SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS: REVIEWING PRODUCT-BASED ADDED SUGARS LIMITS FOR BREAKFAST CEREALS, FLAVORED MILK, AND YOGURT

This memorandum is intended to assist State agencies in assessing compliance with product-based added sugars limits for breakfast cereals, flavored milk, and yogurt, which took effect on July 1, 2025.

In addition to this memorandum, USDA has released an oversight tool that is intended to assist school food authorities and State agencies in implementing the product-based added sugars limits. This tool is available at the link below:

- [USDA Product-Based Added Sugars Limits Tool](#)

Announcements and Resources



PROGRAM YEAR (PY) 2026 SUMMER FEEDING PLAN SURVEY

Please take a moment to complete the PY 2026 Summer Feeding Plan Survey. This survey will help HNS connect operators that have sponsored summer feeding sites in the past with sites seeking sponsorship this year. This survey will also help in gauging how many operators are planning to serve meals this summer under the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO), as well as those interested in expanding their program by sponsoring new sites.

[ACCESS THE SURVEY HERE](#)



SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027 OPTIONAL PAID LUNCH EQUITY (PLE) TOOL IS NOW AVAILABLE!

The USDA has released the School Year 2026-2027 (SY27) Optional Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool to assist School Food Authorities (SFAs) with meeting the PLE requirement. As a reminder, the memorandum, [SP 06-2026: Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2026-2027](#), provides an exemption for school year 2026-2027 to SFAs with a positive or zero balance in their nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2025.

The PLE tools are the same as the ones released last school year with the exception of the reimbursement differences that are updated each year. As always, SFAs should reference the instructions as they complete their calculations in the PLE tools and may reference previous technical assistance materials, such as the [SY 2024-25 PLE Walk-through webinar](#).

Program Alerts



REQUIREMENT TO EXPAND AWARENESS AND ACCESS TO THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)

The Arizona Department of Education Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) would like to remind all School Food Authorities (SFAs), including those that do not participate in summer feeding, of the requirement to expand awareness and access to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to families by informing them of organizations within the community that serve free meals to children while school is not in session. SFAs participating as a sponsoring organization must submit a public/media release to a local media source serving the area from which the sites draw attendance.

Outreach Resources:

- [Summer Meals Flyer for Parents and Guardians:](#)
HNS has provided a flyer to assist SFAs that do not participate in summer feeding in informing parents of summer meal options.
- Information on site locations can be found using [Summer Meals - Arizona Food Bank Network.](#)
- Media Release ([for Open Sites](#)) ([for Closed Enrolled and Camp Sites](#))

SFAs interested in or planning to serve summer meals are encouraged to review the following eligibility resources and consider expanding their reach by adding more sites:

- [Summer Feeding Options for Schools Factsheet](#)
- [How to Determine & Document Site Eligibility for Summer Meal Service](#)
- [Summer Meal Service Site Eligibility](#)
- [Site Definitions and Eligibility](#)

Announcements and Resources



POSTED ANNUAL NOTIFICATION AND PUBLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP)

The CEP Annual Statutory Notification and Publication for School Year (SY) 2026-2027 is now available online at <https://www.azed.gov/hns/nslp> under the Required State Reporting accordion. The notification contains all Arizona Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) SY 2025-2026 identified student percentages (ISPs). Any LEA with an ISP of 25% or greater is eligible to elect CEP, an administrative relief provision of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs designed to improve student access to school meals in eligible, high-poverty schools. ISP data reflective of April 1, 2026, must be used to determine SY 2026-2027 CEP Eligibility.

Districts that are interested in applying for the CEP in the upcoming school year must apply to the Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services no later than June 30, 2026.

Have questions on all of this? We've got you covered.

- Go to www.azed.gov/hns/nslp/forms/ to access all CEP forms under the Special Provision Options accordion.
- Contact us through [HelpDesk](#) for application questions.

Announcements and Resources



INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES JULY 1, 2026 - JUNE 30, 2027

USDA has released the annual adjustments to the Income Eligibility Guidelines to be used by schools, institutions, and facilities participating in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program in determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals and free milk for the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

Child Nutrition Programs

Income Eligibility Guidelines

Effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

The following are the income guidelines to be used by child nutrition program operators when processing meal benefit income eligibility forms using reported income.

Effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
For Determining Official's Use Only

	How often was income received?									
	Weekly		Bi-Weekly		2x Month		Monthly		Annually	
Household Size*	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced	Free	Reduced
1	399	568	798	1,136	865	1,231	1,729	2,461	20,748	29,526
2	541	770	1,082	1,540	1,173	1,669	2,345	3,337	28,132	40,034
3	683	972	1,366	1,944	1,480	2,106	2,960	4,212	35,516	50,542
4	825	1,175	1,650	2,349	1,788	2,544	3,575	5,088	42,900	61,050
5	967	1,377	1,934	2,753	2,096	2,982	4,191	5,964	50,284	71,558
6	1,109	1,579	2,218	3,157	2,403	3,420	4,806	6,839	57,668	82,066
7	1,251	1,781	2,502	3,561	2,711	3,858	5,421	7,715	65,052	92,574
8	1,393	1,983	2,786	3,965	3,019	4,296	6,037	8,591	72,436	103,082
Additional members add:	142	203	284	405	308	438	616	876	7,384	10,508

*Household size must be supported by the number of names listed on the meal benefit income eligibility form.

Annual Income Conversion for Multiple Reported Incomes:

If a household reports only one income or multiple incomes with the same frequency, do not convert to annual income. If a household reports multiple income sources with different frequencies (e.g., 1 income is received weekly, another income is received monthly), convert all reported incomes to annual using the conversion factors below. Then, add the income together and compare it to the annual income guidelines to make a determination.

Weekly Income x 52	Bi-Weekly Income x 26	2x Month Income x 24	Monthly Income x 12
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Example: A household has returned their meal benefit income eligibility form. The enrolled individuals are not categorically eligible so they must be categorized based on income. On their application, they reported two incomes: \$200 weekly and \$3,000 monthly. To determine their eligibility status, their incomes must be converted to annual income.

\$200 weekly x Weekly Income Conversion + \$200 x 52 = \$10,400 Total Annual Income
\$3,000 monthly x Monthly Income Conversion + \$3,000 x 12 = \$36,000 Total Annual Income

The incomes are then together to determine total annual income. Total Income: \$10,400 + \$36,000 = \$46,400

There are four listed names on their income eligibility form – demonstrating a household size of four. The annual income cap for a household of four to be free is \$42,900 and reduced is \$61,050. This household's annual income is \$46,400 – greater than \$42,900, less than \$61,050. Therefore, this household qualifies for reduced-price meals.

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SECTION 2

Hot Topics



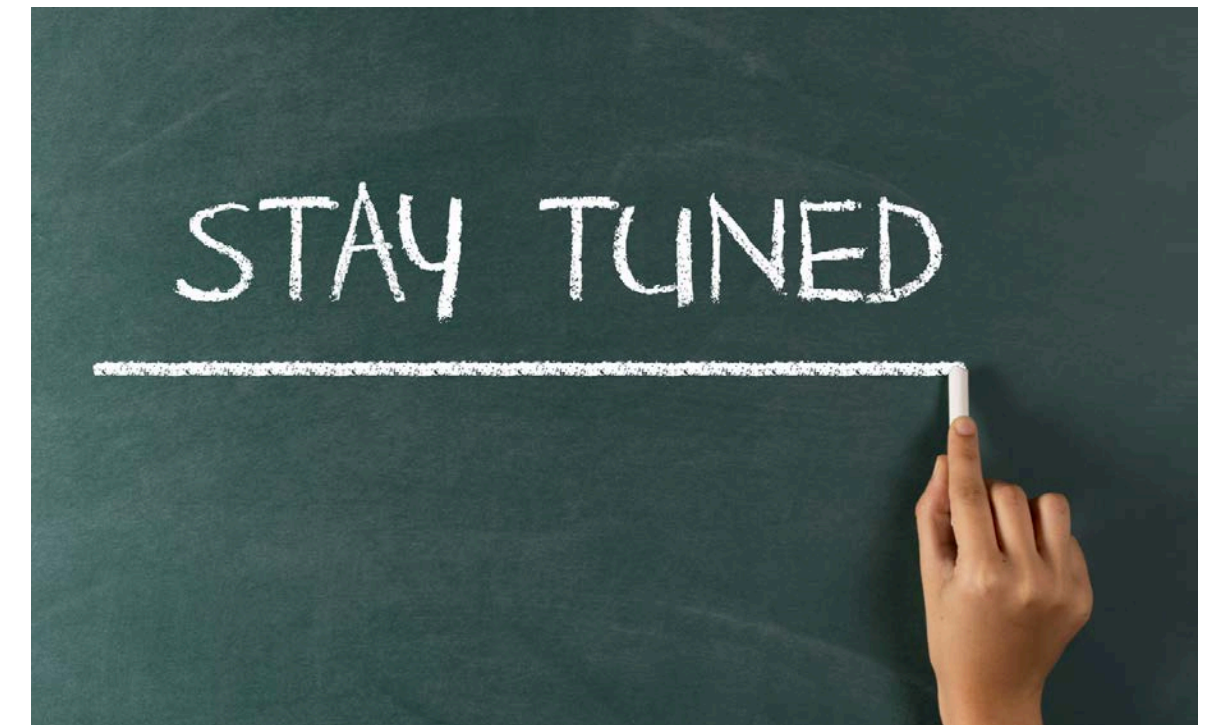
Equipment Grant Update

FUNDING FORMAT CHANGES

State agencies must now apply for a funding amount determined by a formula that considers NSLP participation in each State, and awards will be made to states on a competitive basis.

The NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant Request for Applications (RFA) is due from Arizona Department of Education (ADE) by May 28, 2026.

- Pending approval, details on Equipment Grant funding for SFAs SY 2027 will be forthcoming.



Arizona Healthy Schools Act

COMPLIANCE REQUIRED BY JULY 1

A.R.S. 15-242.01, the Arizona Healthy Schools Act, prohibits public schools participating in federally funded or assisted meal programs from serving, selling, or allowing a third party to sell ultraprocessed food on the school campus during the regular school day. The new law takes effect at the start of the 2026-2027 school year. Schools must review products sold and served on campus and remove items that contain one or more ingredients prohibited by law.



Arizona Healthy Schools Act

COMPLIANCE REQUIRED BY JULY 1

HNS 05-2026: GUIDANCE ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE ARIZONA HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT FOR CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM PARTICIPATING PUBLIC DISTRICTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS.

HNS has released the certification of compliance for all public districts and charter schools participating in National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program. HNS provided this guidance in the recently released memo HNS 05-2026.

For details on the new law, please review:

- [What Schools Need to Know About the Arizona Healthy Schools Act](#)
- [The Basics of the Arizona Healthy Schools Act: Resource for School Administrators.](#)



Community Eligibility Provision

APPLYING FOR CEP

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is available for schools in Arizona participating in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. CEP allows schools to provide free meals to all students, ensuring access to healthy food.

Check the CEP Annual Notification and Publication for School Year (SY) 2026- 2027 to see if you qualify.

If you would like to apply for CEP, and/or would like assistance with the application process, determining site groupings or your ISP, please submit a HelpDesk ticket.

The deadline to apply is June 30, 2026.

INDIVIDUAL SITES

Individual schools with ISPs of at least 25% can participate in CEP.

GROUPED SITES

LEAs may choose to group school sites any way they wish and calculate the ISP for the group using the combined enrollment and total number of identified students.

- The ISP for the group must be at least 25%
- Schools that would not be eligible to participate in CEP individually may participate as part of a group
- There is no limit to the number of groups

DISTRICT-WIDE

All schools in the district participate as a single group with the same ISP, as long as the district-wide ISP is at least 25%.

CEP Annual 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

Applications for Summer Programs

SUMMER FEEDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Children need good nutrition, all year long. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (NSLP and SBP), and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) make it possible for schools to provide nutritious meals after the regular school year ends.

- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**
 - Ideal for sites offering enrichment, recreational, or activity programs. SFSP offers higher reimbursement rates with additional application and monitoring requirements, and a simplified meal pattern. However, SFSP operators cannot be reimbursed for foods purchased through *Try it Local*.
- **Extending the NSLP and SBP:**
 - Option for any school(s) hosting an academic summer school and intend on only serving enrolled students, with the ability to continue reimbursement through Try it Local.
- **Seamless Summer Option (SSO)**
 - Reduced paperwork, and slightly lower reimbursement rates in comparison to SFSP, with the ability to continue reimbursement through Try it Local.

Applying for SFSP for SFAs and COs

APPLYING TO BE A SPONSOR IN SUMMER 2026

[HNS 02-2026: Application for Summer Programs](#)

School Food Authorities and new or returning Community Organizations applying to be a sponsor of SFSP must have all application requirements submitted **to HNS by May 29, 2026**. The following must be submitted by the May 29, 2026 deadline to be a complete application:

- Management Plan*
- Budget*
- CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications
- Any applications received after May 29, 2026, will not be considered for SFSP sponsorship but may be considered as an SFSP site



*SFAs in good standing may have a modified requirement in demonstrating compliance with performance standards. SFAs can meet this requirement by submitting their Annual Financial Report

Applying for SSO and Extending NSLP/SBP

APPLYING TO BE A SPONSOR IN SUMMER 2026

[HNS 02-2026: Application for Summer Programs](#)

School Food Authorities applying to be a sponsor of Seamless Summer Option must have all application requirements submitted to HNS by **May 29, 2026**. To apply for the Seamless Summer Option, SFAs must submit:

- CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications.

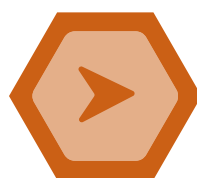
SFAs intending to extend participation in the NSLP/SBP must contact their assigned HNS specialist to confirm eligibility and discuss extending operational dates in the CNP Web applications.



All applications must be submitted and approved by HNS before meal service begins.

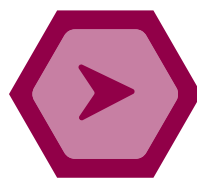
Key Resources

FOR SUMMER PROGRAMS



Guidance

- [HNS 03-2026: Application for Summer Meals](#)
- [HNS 03-2024: Eligibility for Rural Designation and Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service – Summer 2024](#)
- [SFSP 07-2024: Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas Questions and Answers](#)
- [SFSP 08-2024: Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas Questions and Answers #2](#)



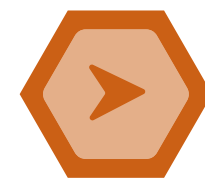
Forms:

- [Non-Associated Site Agreement](#)
- [Pre-Operational Site Visit](#)
- [Initial Site Visit](#)
- [Site Review](#)
- [SFSP Prospective Entity Form](#)



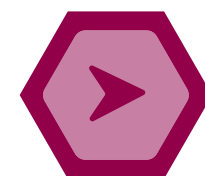
Training:

- [Orientation for Sponsoring Organizations: Summer Food Service Program Online Course What to Expect: Summer Food Service Program Administrative Review](#)
- [Civil Rights Compliance for Child Nutrition Program Operators](#)
- [Staying on Track: Summer Edition](#) ([Slides](#)). ([Recording](#)).



Map Tools

- [Area Eligibility Mapper](#)
- [Arizona Summer Food Service Site Planner Rural Designation Map](#)



Resources

- [Summer Feeding Options for Schools](#)
- [Site Meal Service Site Eligibility](#)
- [Summer Food Service 2026 Campaign Materials](#)

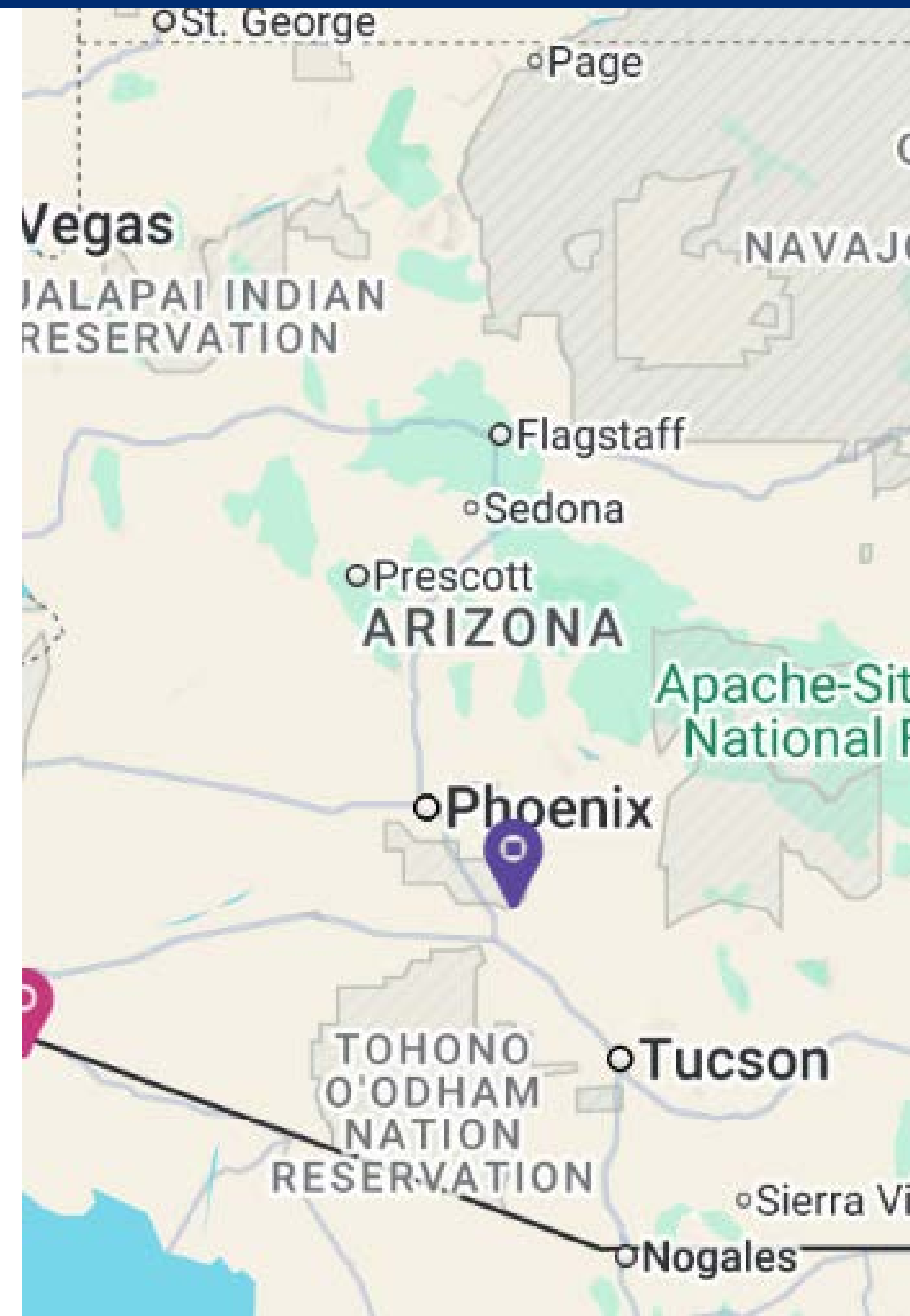
Finding Summer Meals Sites

AZSUMMERMEALS.ORG

Spread the word - Summer Meal Service sites in Arizona can be found at:

www.azsummermeals.org

- Families can find summer meal sites locations and details using the map tool available on the Arizona Food Bank Network website.
- The information populated on this map comes from ADE based on the CNPWeb Site application information.
- Remember to provide any changes to site details promptly to ADE via revised applications in CNPWeb.



Proper Procurement

STEPS FOR PROCUREMENT

- 1 Determine** needs by forecasting and creating specifications.
- 2 Estimate** the totals of a single purchase, yearly purchases, amount of a contract, and the estimate for multi-year contracts for all years.
- 3 Choose** the ideal procurement method. (micro, simplified acquisition, or formal)
- 4 Follow** requirements for the method of purchase and complete documentation.

BEST PRACTICES

Communicate and plan for important due dates.

Have back-up items in case of issues.

Develop menus well in advance.

Familiarize yourself with the different procurement methods.



For more information be sure to review the Procurement [Basics training](#).

Procurement Methods

INFORMAL

Purchases **at or below** the Simplified Acquisition Threshold.

Micro Purchase

Transactions are below \$15,000 and reasonable Purchases distributed equitably among qualified suppliers

Simplified Acquisition

Total of all purchases is below Simplified Acquisition Threshold Used when purchasing multiple times from the same vendors for the same products/services
Process documentation required

FORMAL

Purchases **above** the Simplified Acquisition Threshold.

Invitation for Bids

Primary consideration is price. Award made to the most responsive respondent at the lowest price. No difference among products or services.

Request for Proposals

Requires the vendor to explain how the objectives would be met and the cost to accomplish the proposal. Allows for negotiations.

Simplified Acquisition Threshold

Simplified Acquisition Threshold = The amount at which the SFA must use the Formal procurement method.

SFA Type	Simplified Acquisition Threshold Amount
Public Districts	\$100,000
Charter Schools	-with Procurement Exception \$350,000 -without Procurement Exception \$100,000
Private Schools	\$350,000
BIE - tribally controlled or Bureau-Operated	-Bureau-operated BIE SFAs up to \$350,000 -Tribally controlled SFAs varies \$5,000 up to \$100,000
RCCIs	\$350,000

USDA Foods

Dates and Reminders

HNS encourages operators to utilize the remaining USDA Foods in Schools Program for Child Nutrition Program summer meals in SY26.

Check out the Surplus Catalog within CNP MyFoods for Direct Delivery offerings, as well as the FFAVORS system for opportunities related to the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable (DoD Fresh) program.

- **April 27, 2026:** DoD Fresh showcased all remaining SY26 funds, allowing for a State Agency spending spree. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis until June 30, 2026.
- **May 8, 2026:** Last day to schedule a shipment for Direct Delivery. Use the Surplus Catalog to request materials to meet the min. delivery requirements.
- **May 22, 2026:** Final day for shipments from Shamrock Foods. Please ensure all USDA Foods shipments are scheduled for the week prior. If scheduling is not possible, decline the materials so those items can be added to the Surplus Catalog.



DoD Fresh for SY26

Beginning **May 1st**, the state agency account for DoD Fresh became accessible to all SFA's. Funds can be used until **June 30, 2026**, on a first-come, first-served basis for use in NSLP and Summer meals. Happy spending!

USDA Foods for SY27

Get Ready for the 2027 School Year!

Your CNP MyFoods catalogs for **Processing** and **Direct Delivery** have been processed! Check your CNP MyFoods account. If you have any remaining entitlement, add them to the DoD Fresh catalog that is still open until May 30th.



Arizona Try it Local Program

UPDATE ON LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS FUNDING COMING TO A CLOSE

As the timing for Try it Local: Arizona's Local Food for Schools Program (LFS) funding comes to a close, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) would like to provide information on invoice and claims dates. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis up to **June 30, 2026**, or until all funds are obligated, whichever is first. Take advantage in the short time that's left!

Next steps:

- Participating operators may submit receipts/invoices for eligible food purchases to HNS in the ADEConnect application: CNP Supplemental Payments up to **July 15, 2026**.
- Invoices cannot be dated past **June 30, 2026**.



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 May, the spotlight is on **Strawberries!**

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 May Highlight:

STRAWBERRIES




Strawberries

TEACH

FIND LOCAL STRAWBERRIES IN ARIZONA:
Harvest Months: March - June

Farms to get LOCAL strawberries:

- Blue Sky Organic Farms:
Litchfield Park, AZ

2026 Producer List 

 To ensure food safety with **fresh strawberries** always thoroughly wash under running water immediately before cutting and eating.

TEASTE

LOCAL STRAWBERRY RECIPE: Strawberry Salsa
Taste the sweet heat of fresh strawberries and spicy jalapenos in this homemade salsa! Serve with baked cinnamon & sugar tortilla crisps.

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ cups fresh strawberries, hulled and diced
- ½ cup red onion finely diced
- 1 whole jalapeno seeded and minced
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 tbsp lime juice freshly squeezed
- 1 tsp honey (optional for sweetness)

Instructions:

- Dice strawberries, red onion, jalapeno, and chop cilantro, combine.
- Drizzle fresh lime juice and honey over mixture, toss gently to mix ingredients.
- Let the salsa rest for 10 minutes before serving.

TEASTE

STRAWBERRY HARVEST FACTS!

- National Strawberry Month is celebrated every May to honor the sweetness, versatility, and health benefits of strawberries. Strawberries are packed with vitamin C, folate, and fiber. Strawberries belong to the rose family, which also includes roses, apples, cherries, and raspberries.
- Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside, with an average of 200 seeds per berry.
- Strawberries do not ripen after picking, so avoid picking berries with white tops or tips.
- The size and shape of a berry doesn't determine its flavor. Even small berries can be sweet and juicy.
- Strawberry plants are perennials, meaning they will grow back year after year. They can last up to 5 years.
- Don't rinse cut strawberries under water until you're ready to eat them—it speeds up spoiling.

QUICK MATH: STRAWBERRIES



One Pound Fresh, Whole Strawberries as purchased (AP) provides 10, ¼ cup servings

One Pound Fresh, Whole Strawberries as purchased (AP) provides 5, ½ cup servings

 **Connect with us!**
SCHOOL INTEREST FORM

upLIFT  

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[TASTE AZ May Highlight: Strawberries](#)

Quiz Time

True or False. Final Try it Local invoices cannot be dated after July 15, 2026.

A True

B False

Quiz Time

True or False. Final Try it Local invoices cannot be dated after July 15, 2026.

A True

B False

All Try it Local invoices must be dated June 30, 2026 or prior.

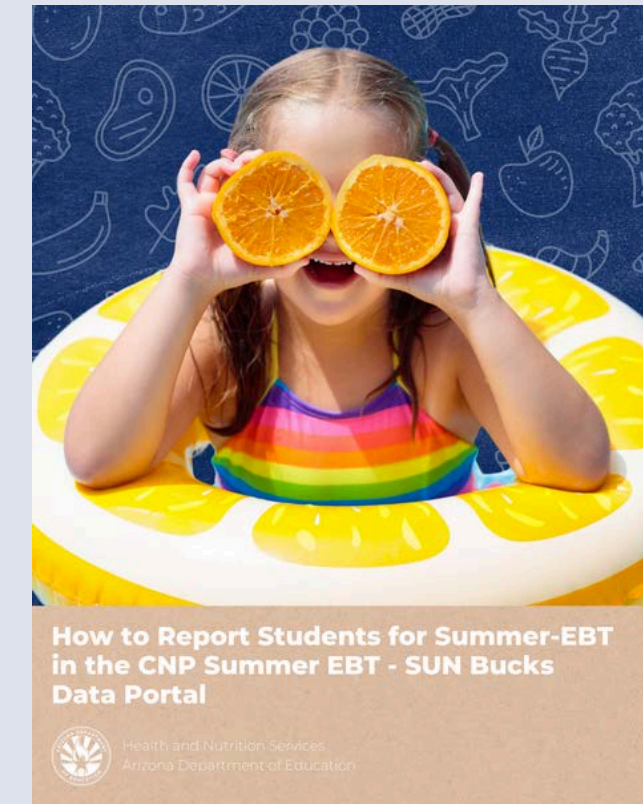
Reporting Students for SUN Bucks Benefits

CNP SUMMER EBT - SUN BUCKS PORTAL

SFAs are responsible for:

- Ensuring all eligible student data elements are accurate annually in the online ADEConnect Application - CNP Summer EBT- SUN Bucks Data Portal.
- Reporting any NSLP/SBP enrolled students not reported in AzEDS for SUN Bucks/Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (SEBT).

HNS has created a quick guide resource and a training that will take the SFA step-by-step through the process of reporting all students in this portal for maximum access to SUN Bucks benefits.



[How to Report Students for Summer-EBT in the CNP Summer EBT - SUN Bucks Data Portal](#)



[What You Need to Know About Data & Access to SUN Bucks Benefits](#)

Sun Bucks and SPO Operators

Students who are enrolled in schools that operate Special Provision Option (SPO) like the Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2 or 3 non-base year do not have the opportunity to submit school meal applications. If a student does NOT meet the following, they should be provided the SUN Bucks application.

- Match from the CNP Direct Certification system
- Extended Direct Certification Match results
 - SPO operators with students who are extended DC matches must track and upload these extended eligibles manually in the portal.

How will the other students who are eligible receive SUN Bucks benefits?

- **These families will need to fill out a SUN Bucks Application**

**The '[No Meal Application, No Problem](#)' resource for SPO operators contains a QR code linked to the SUN Bucks application.*

No Meal Application, No Problem...

How to receive SUN Bucks for students who attend schools that do not collect Household Applications for Meal Benefits



The information collected on meal applications for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) can qualify students for SUN Bucks. However, if your school doesn't collect meal applications, you may fill out a SUN Bucks application to see if your child is eligible for this grocery buying benefit.

COMPLETE THE SUN BUCKS SCREENER TO
Apply for SUN Bucks Today!

SUN Bucks Eligibility Screener

Scan the QR code to be directed to the screening tool that will ensure households that are pre-qualified do not complete a SUN Bucks Household Application when it is not required. For those deemed necessary to complete a SUN Bucks Household Application, the link to the application will be made available within the screener.

For Spanish visit: <https://www.azed.gov/SUNBucks>



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SUN Bucks Household Application

The SUN Bucks application is available annually at azed.gov/SUNBucks - How do I apply for SUN Bucks?

School Food Authorities (SFAs) are required to:

- Ensure the application is available to households that believe they qualify for the SUN Bucks benefit but were not identified as eligible by the SFA.
- Ensure students attending schools that operate Special Provision Options have access to the SUN Bucks Household application if they do not match in CNP Direct Certification.

Eligible households may:

- Complete and submit the 2026 SUN Bucks Application to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) by August 3, 2026.
- Expect ADE to process the application and subsequently notify the household of approval/denial of benefits.

SUN Bucks (Summer EBT/S-EBT): Information for Parents



The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (Summer-EBT/SUN Bucks) provides grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children who lose access to free or reduced-price school meals when schools are closed for the summer.

▶ Will my child automatically receive SUN Bucks in 2026?

▶ If my child's school serves free meals to all students, are they automatically eligible for SUN Bucks?

▶ How do I know if my child is automatically eligible for SUN Bucks based on participation in AHCCCS/Medicaid?

▶ How do I apply for SUN Bucks?

▶ How will I be receiving my benefits?

▶ How do I use my SUN Bucks benefits?

▶ What if I don't want my benefits or if I'd like to opt out?

▶ What to do if my benefits were stolen?

▶ Who do I contact if I have further questions?

▶ Where can I submit an appeal of my benefits decision?

SECTION 3

Training Opportunities



SY 25-26 upLIFT

UPLIFT WEBINAR SERIES: TASTE TESTING AND FEEDBACK: INVOLVING STUDENTS TO IMPROVE MEAL PROGRAMS

Join us on **May 19, 2026** for an engaging webinar session where we'll delve into innovative approaches to enhance student meal programs through direct feedback and taste testing. In this session, you'll learn effective strategies to engage students in the meal planning process, how taste testing can provide valuable insights into student preferences, and ways to implement student feedback to create more enjoyable and nutritious meals.

[Click here to register!](#)



Los Conceptos Básicos de las Comidas Reembolsables

WEBINAR

Join us for an engaging session, offered in Spanish, where we will discuss meal pattern basics, the components of a reimbursable meal, and the parameters of offer vs serve. Attendees should be able to gain the confidence to correctly prepare, serve, and identify reimbursable meals in the lunchroom! (Acompáñenos en una sesión dinámica, impartida en español, en la que abordaremos los fundamentos del patron de comidas, los componentes de una comida reembolsable y los parámetros del sistema de «ofrecer vs servir» (offer vs. serve). Los asistentes adquirirán la confianza necesaria para preparar, servir e identificar correctamente las comidas reembolsables en el comedor.)

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

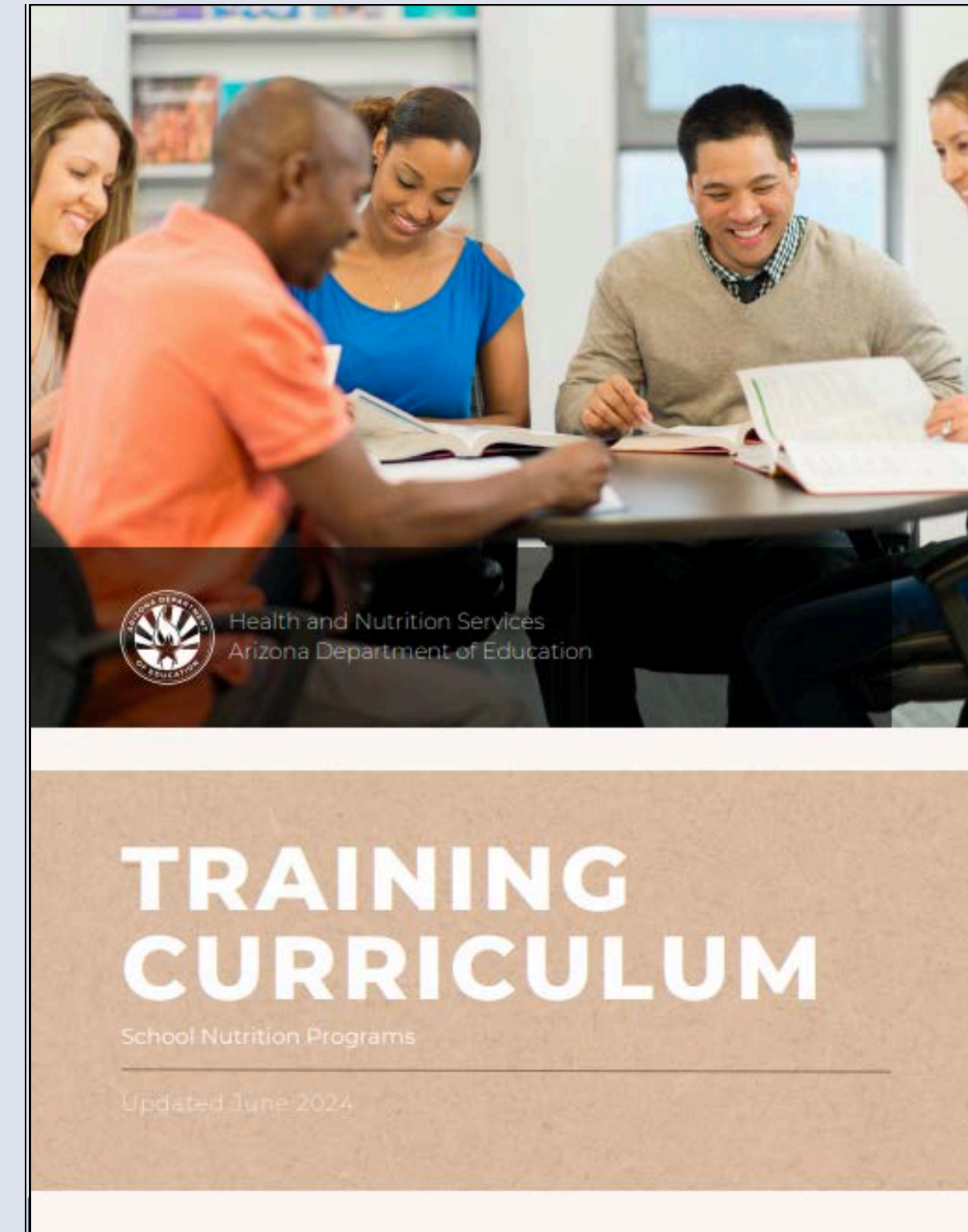
DATE

- 1:30-2:30 **05/7/2026**
- Registration Link:
<https://azed.geniussis.com/Registration.aspx?aid=11179>

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.



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



April's Training Opportunities

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

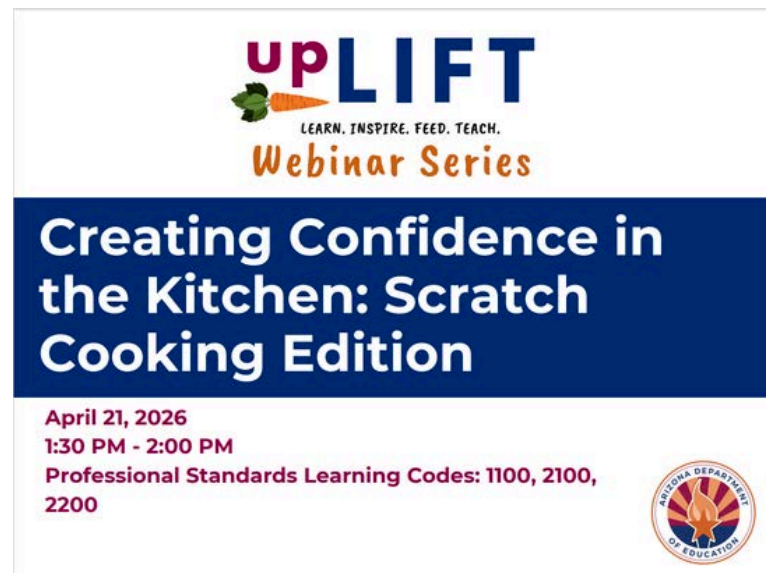


Staying on Track: April



Summer Feeding Options for Schools Webinar

Provides information on summer feeding options and eligibility for LEAs.



upLift: *Creating Confidence in the Kitchen: Scratch Cooking Edition*



What you need to know about SUN Bucks Benefits.

Provides information on SUN Bucks Benefits reporting eligibility for LEAs.

New Trainings

Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) has released a new resources to support LEAs.

What Schools Need to Know About the Arizona Healthy Schools Act

This resource explains the basics of the Act, outlines how to comply with ARS 15-242.01, and provides links to additional guidance, tools, and supports to help LEAs meet and maintain compliance.

Procurement of Food & the Geographic Preference Expansion

The resource explains key procurement requirements, goes over geographic preference, and provides an overview of how to procure local foods.



[What Schools Need to Know About the Arizona Healthy Schools Act](#)



[Procurement of Food & the Geographic Preference Expansion](#)

SECTION 4
**Upcoming
Deadlines &
Communications**



Mark Your Calendars!

MAY 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!



17 training opportunities await School Nutrition Professionals this May.

Events Forecast

HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES

11,045
Current Attendees

463
Available Courses

55,089
Total Enrollments

Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) is dedicated to providing all Child Nutrition Program operators with training to support you and your teams' professional learning needs to fulfill annual training requirements, support program integrity, and elevate Child Nutrition Programs across Arizona.

The HNS Communications Events Forecast is a monthly email that announces the events being offered by HNS or external partners for Child Nutrition Program operators. For self-paced online courses or recorded webinars, visit the applicable Child Nutrition Program's webpage at [www.azdhs.gov](#).

For School Nutrition Professionals



Celebrate School Lunch Hero Day: May 1, 2025
[Check out SNA's webpage for more information!](#)



SNAAZ Professional Growth Conference 2025
May 2, 7:30 am-3:30 pm MST
Conference | [For more information visit SNAAZ webpage](#)
Key Areas: Varies on session completion



Staying on Track: May
May 5, 1:30-2:30 pm MST
Webinar | [Register in APLD](#)
Key Areas: 1000 Nutrition, 2000 Operations, 3000 Administration, 4000 Communications and Marketing



Local Food in Schools: Community of Practice SY 2025-2026
May 6, 2:00-3:00 pm MST
Webinar | [Register with AZ Farm to School Network](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable



Food Safety in Schools - Foundations of Food Safety
May 6, 2:00-4:00 pm EST
Virtual Instructor-Led Training | [Register with ICN](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: 2000 Operations



Culture & Champions Matter: How Adults Drive School Breakfast Success
May 6, 3:00-4:00 pm EST
Webinar | [Register with SNF](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable



Produce Webinar Series - Fresh, Safe, and Nutritious: Buying and Serving Fresh-Cut Produce
May 6, 3:00-4:15 pm EST
Webinar | [Register with ICN](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: 2000 Operations



Understanding the Meal Pattern and reimbursable meals (Compendio to the Meal De Comidas Y Las Comidas Reimbursables) Webinar
May 7, 1:30-2:30 pm MST
Webinar | [Register in APLD](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: 1000 Nutrition



State Nutrition Action Committee Summer Food Service Program Work Group
May 11, 1:00-2:00 pm MST
Work Group Meeting | [Register in Zoom](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable



School Garden & Education Community of Practice SY 2025-2026
May 12, 3:00-4:00 pm MST
Webinar | [Register with AZ Farm to School Network](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable



From Pickup to Pouch: Meal Practices for Universal Rural Non-Compensated Meal Distribution
May 13, 2:00-3:00 pm EST
Webinar Series | [Register with No Kid Hungry](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable



Food Safety in Schools - Your Food Safety Program
May 13, 2:00-4:00 pm EST
Virtual Instructor-Led Training | [Register with ICN](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: 2000 Operations



upLift: Taste Testing and Feedback: Involving Students to Improve Meal Programs
May 19, 2025 1:30-2:00 pm
Webinar | [Register in APLD](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Key Areas: 1000 Nutrition, 4000 Communications and Marketing



Beyond the Flyer: Next-Level Promotion for Summer Meals Success
May 20, 3:00-4:00 pm EST
Webinar | [Register with No Kid Hungry](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable



A Manager's Guide: Strategies for Leading Effective Teams
May 21, 2:00-4:00 pm EST
Virtual Instructor-Led Training | [Register with ICN](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: 3000 Administration



Summer Meals: Outreach That Works
May 21, 2:00-4:00 pm EST
Webinar | [Register with FRAC](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable



State Nutrition Action Committee Summer Food Service Program Work Group
May 25, 1:00-2:00 pm MST
Work Group Meeting | [Register in Zoom](#)
Professional Standards Key Areas: Not Applicable

For more information and links to register, check your inbox for the HNS Forecast of Events

In Our Drafts

KEEP A LOOK OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING EMAILS THIS MONTH:

- Summer Farm Fresh Challenge
- Farm Fresh Challenge Promotion Winners
- FFVP Bravocado, End of Year Survey, FFVP Awardees
- Equipment Grant
- Processing Memorandum



May Checklist

May 1 - May 10

Submit April reimbursement claims (best practice)

May 1

Due date for Provision extension applications

May 8

Last day to order SY26 Direct Delivery and Surplus

May 22

Final day for shipments from Shamrock Foods

May 30

March 60-day claiming deadline

May 30

SFSP Sponsor application deadline

May 30

SY27 USDA Foods DoD Fresh catalog deadline

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: Taste Testing and Feedback: Involving Students to Improve Meal Programs
 - May 19, 2026, 1:30-2:00pm
- Report Farm Fresh Challenge Results!
- Ensure student data is reported correctly in AzEDS and promote SUN Bucks applications for families that are not pre-qualified for benefits.
- Provide outreach to households for availability of Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) feeding sites.
- Submit required documentation if applying for a Special Provision Option.

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



Join Us Next Month!

Staying On Track

June 2, 2026

1:30-2:30 pm

We will be reviewing recently released HNS Communications and policy memorandums, and relevant key tasks, deadlines, and action items.

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: May 2026

Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title: May 2026 Staying on Track **Key**

Areas: 1000 - Nutrition, 3000 - Administration, 4000 - Communications and Marketing

Learning Codes: 1170, 3350, 3360, 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: May 2026- Staying on Track

Key Areas: 1000 - Nutrition, 2000 - Operations, 3000 - Administration, 4000 - Communications and Marketing

Learning Codes: 1170, 1320, 2430, 3312, 3150, 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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