



Original Signed

HNS # 07-2026

MEMORANDUM

To: School Food Authorities Operating the National School Lunch Program

From: Melissa Conner, Senior Deputy Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services Division

Date: June 23, 2026

Subject: School Year 2026-2027 Updates and Reminders for School Food Authorities

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the availability of School Year 2026-2027 (SY 2026-27) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) applications in CNPWeb; as well as to provide reminders and new information for School Food Authorities (SFAs) applying to operate the NSLP, School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and/or Afterschool Care Snack Program (ASCSP) and At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during SY 2026-27. This guidance also pertains to SFAs participating in the USDA Foods in Schools Program and the USDA Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (USDA DoD Fresh).

Annual Application Requirements

SFAs are encouraged to use the [School Meals Application Checklist](#) to ensure all application requirements are completed. SFAs will communicate with their assigned Arizona Department of Education (ADE) - Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) Specialist to complete the annual application requirements for SY 2026-27. The contact information for the assigned specialist can be found at the top of the sponsor application in CNPWeb. SFAs are encouraged to prepare and submit all components of the application as early as possible and should allow three weeks for the application approval process to be completed. SFAs must ensure that all applications and all required components are submitted with adequate time for approval and meet claiming deadlines.

The *Step-by-Step Instruction: How to Submit Site and Sponsor Applications in CNPWeb* is available to guide users through navigating CNPWeb and completing the fields required in the sponsor and site applications. The training is available in the [NSLP Online Training Library](#).

EOS Edits to Ensure Consistency

As a reminder, all users are responsible for ensuring that the information provided to ADE's School Finance unit is accurate and up to date. During the onboarding of a new Local Education Agency (LEA),

Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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a profile is created in ADE's Education Organization System (EOS), which serves as the source of information and designation of the LEA. School Finance maintains this data, and it is used to validate CNPWeb applications. To avoid discrepancies or delays, CNPWeb information must match EOS records.

Food Program Permanent Service Agreement

The Food Program Permanent Service Agreement (FPPSA) is undergoing revisions to encompass new and/or modified laws, regulations, and statutes. Execution of the updated FPPSA is required to maintain program participation, and SFAs must comply with all terms and conditions. SFAs must complete and submit the updated FPPSA by the required due date and whenever there are changes to the SFA's Designated Official or Authorized Signers. Failure to submit a completed and signed FPPSA may result in the inability to begin or continue program operations and receipt of reimbursement. More detailed instructions, including a due date for submission, will be communicated during SY 2026-27.

CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications

Each school year, SFAs are required to submit a sponsor application and an application for each site via CNPWeb. The sponsor application collects entity level information including contact information, program beginning and end dates, as well as indication of approved participation in one of the Special Provision Options (if applicable). The site application collects site level operational information including site contact information, meal service types, and identifies the site's intended participation in one or more of the Child Nutrition Programs.

The annual submission and approval of the site and sponsor applications is a required step for SFAs to submit reimbursement requests for meals served under the Child Nutrition Programs listed below.

- NSLP
- SBP
- SMP
- ASCSP
- At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of CACFP

SFAs electing to operate NSLP and/or SBP under a Special Provision Option must have completed the provision application process prior to CNPWeb application approval. As with prior years, applications for Provision 2, Provision 3, and the Community Eligibility Provision are due June 30.

Sites that are legally separate from the SFA require the submission of an [Inter-Agency Partnership Agreement](#).

SFAs adding sites to CNPWeb must complete and submit the [Add/Change/Delete](#) Form. Authorized signers can complete an Add/Change/Delete form through a HelpDesk ticket. User/Requestor submitting Add/Change/Delete form must be a Designated Official or an Authorized Signer listed on the Food Program Permanent Service Agreement.

HelpDesk to Connect with HNS

ADE continues to use the ticketing system, [HelpDesk](#), to receive, track, and respond to requests for various types of assistance including but not limited to the Add/Change/Delete Form, one-time exception requests, and reimbursement claim/attendance factor issues. SFAs are encouraged to use HelpDesk when in need of any assistance from HNS; requests can be routed to the assigned HNS

Specialist for the SFA. Unlike individual email-based requests, the HelpDesk provides the requester, responder, and management visibility to the request status, ongoing communications, and notifications related to the request. Access the HelpDesk by using the link: <https://helpdeskexternal.azed.gov/>. Follow the steps listed below to complete the form fields.

- Click the icon for 'New Request'
- Locate Health and Nutrition Services
- Choose from the drop-down options
- Complete all required fields and applicable optional fields
 - Providing more detail in the request will help it to be routed to the appropriate staff member
 - Some fields cannot be edited
- Drag and drop any related items into the Attachment box
- At the bottom of the form, click the blue button: 'Add Request'

The HelpDesk is part of the ADEConnect. Those who do not have an ADEConnect account will be prompted to create one.

CNPWeb Checklist Items and Additional Documentation

Checklist items are generated based on the entity's operation and must be submitted for approval along with the CNPWeb application. Checklist items can be referenced within CNPWeb once the site and sponsor applications have been submitted. Applications will not be approved until all checklist items required for operation have been received and approved by the SFA's assigned ADE-HNS specialist. There are additional items that may not generate a checklist item within CNPWeb that must be reviewed; the ADE-HNS Specialist may request any of the following documents to be submitted by the SFA to support the application when applicable:

- Custom, scannable, or electronic household meal application, parent letter, and/or notification of meal benefits
- Contractual agreements for vended meal service (Food Service Management Company, Caterers, SFAs serving as caterers)
- At-Risk Meals Component Principal Addendum
- Department of Economic Security (DES)/ Department of Health Services (DHS) License
- 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status
- Area eligibility documentation for sites operating At-Risk/ASCSP that are using school-level data other than the site's data
- Free and Reduced-Price Policy Statement/Addendums: The SFA must review their free and reduced-price policy for substantive changes. The policy statement must be updated and resubmitted to their assigned HNS Specialist if there are any changes to the process or staff/position responsible for eligibility determinations. In all cases, the SFA must have an approved policy statement on file with ADE that accurately describes its current free and reduced-price policies. Amendments must be submitted for approval to their assigned HNS Specialist no later than October 15th each year. The [Free and Reduced Price Policy Statement template](#) can be accessed on ADE's [NSLP/SBP website](#) under the Resources for Operators - Program Forms and Resources area or by utilizing the link provided. The following resource is also available: [How to Complete the Free and Reduced-Price Policy Statement](#).

- Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool or Exemption Request: Under Section 743, of Division B of the 2026 Appropriations Act, for SY 2026-27, only SFAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2025, shall be required to establish a price for paid lunches according to the PLE provisions in Section 12(p) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) [42 U.S.C. 1760\(p\)](#) and implemented in the National School Lunch Program regulations at [7 CFR 210.14\(e\)](#). This means that any SFA with a positive or zero balance in its nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2025, is exempt from PLE pricing requirements found at [7 CFR 210.14\(e\)](#) for SY 2026-27. USDA will provide additional guidance for SFAs that are required to comply with the paid lunch equity provision during SY 2026-27. SFAs with a negative balance in their nonprofit food service account as of June 30th, 2026, will need to complete the [PLE Tool](#). Additional USDA guidance regarding PLE can be found here:
 - [SP 39-2011- Revised: Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Guidance on Paid Lunch Equity and Revenue from Nonprogram Foods](#)
 - [SP 06-2026 Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2026-2027](#)

Access to CNP Applications via ADEConnect

ADEConnect provides a single sign-on for multiple applications used by ADE, for example, the CNPWeb. Access to CNPWeb is granted by the Entity Administrator (EA) established by and for the entity. Whether the EA is listed as an Authorized Signer on the FPPSA or not, EAs, shall not grant Child Nutrition Programs' technology systems access to consultants, consulting firms or Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs) contracting with SFA. The Child Nutrition Programs' technology systems include:

- CNP MyFoods;
- FFAVORS (which is outside of the ADEConnect);
- CNPWeb;
- CNP Direct Certification/Direct Verification;
- CNP Verification;
- CNP Supplemental Payments; and
- CNP Summer EBT SUN Bucks – SFA.

In addition to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#), SFAs can review information about access to technology systems in the FPPSA, which is agreed upon by the Designated Official when the FPPSA is signed. The Designated Official has the responsibility to ensure unauthorized individuals, including consultants and employees of FSMCs, are not granted access to the Child Nutrition Programs' technology systems.

School Nutrition Standards Reminders

Updates were made to [school nutrition standards](#) effective July 1, 2025. The standards listed below were noted as frequent findings during SY 2025-26 administrative reviews. Please review these requirements prior to menu planning for the upcoming school year.

- [Added Sugars](#) – Schools must meet added sugar limits for:
 - Breakfast cereals (no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce)
 - Yogurt (no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces)
 - Flavored milk (no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces)

- **NSLP Afterschool Snacks** – Schools operating the Afterschool Snack Program must ensure that:
 - Grain-based desserts (including granola bars and toaster pastries) are not served as the grain component
 - At least 80 percent of the grains offered during the week are whole grain-rich
 - No more than half of the weekly fruit or vegetable offerings are in the form of juice
- **Buy American** – Non-domestic food purchases must not exceed 10 percent of total annual food costs.

To assist schools in meeting the updated nutrition standards, the following resources are available:

- [Crediting Tip Sheets in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#)
- [The Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#)
- [Nutrition Standards for Added Sugars Fact Sheets](#)
- [Buy American Exceptions Summary Tool](#)

The Arizona Healthy Schools Act takes effect in the beginning of School Year 2026-2027 for any public school participating in a federally funded Child Nutrition Program. More details can be found in the ADE-HNS released memo [HNS 05-2026](#).

Access to USDA Foods, Local Food Purchasing, and Updates to the School Nutrition Standards

USDA Foods In Schools - CNP MyFoods Activation

SFAs must have an active status in CNP MyFoods to utilize their Planned Assistance Level (PAL) dollars provided through the USDA Foods in Schools program for SY 2026-27. CNP MyFoods is the online portal that collects entity-level information, including contact and billing information, as well as site-level delivery information required by the ADE contracted warehouse responsible for receiving and distributing Direct Delivery products. Returning operators should use the [School Meals Application Checklist](#) to ensure all activation activities are completed. The CNP MyFoods activation must be completed prior to ordering materials from USDA Foods Direct Delivery or DoD Fresh. For SY 2026-27, an approved CNPWeb application is *not* required prior to ordering.

SFAs that have not previously accessed their PAL for USDA Foods in Schools may do so at any time. SFAs will contact HNS to discuss the food assistance program and begin the process of establishing a CNP MyFoods account and delivery site(s).

Additional Updates

Training for School Nutrition Programs

Annual Requirements: Effective July 1, 2015, SFAs must ensure that all new and current school nutrition program staff meet the minimum annual training requirements per USDA’s Professional Standards regulations. These requirements were set forth to help employees enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities specific to their position in NSLP. Because the trainings offered are vast in quantity and diverse in content, HNS has drafted specialized [Training Curriculum for School Nutrition Programs](#)

based on job duties to help directors get started creating training plans for the year. For more information on Professional Standards, visit the [NSLP Training webpage](#), under the "Build Your Employee Training Plans" accordion.

Civil Rights Training is required annually to ensure all staff are aware of and understand the civil rights requirements. HNS provides a Civil Rights Compliance for Child Nutrition Operators Online Course ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#)). This training can count towards Professional Standards requirements.

School nutrition program directors, management, and staff tasked with NSLP procurement responsibilities must complete training on Federal procurement standards annually. HNS provides a [Procurement Basics](#) online course. This training can count towards Professional Standards requirements.

HNS continues to offer our monthly Staying on Track webinar series that reviews key HNS communications sent over the past month to ensure SFAs are aware of all program updates and required tasks. Additionally, HNS offers multiple in-person workshops for SFAs throughout the year. When available, these opportunities are highlighted in the HNS Events Forecast and in the monthly Staying on Track webinar. Webinars and workshops may be registered for in the [ADE Professional Learning and Development \(APLD\)](#) system.

Lastly, program operators must internally train: Staff each year, new employees before participating in program activities, and volunteers as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

Farm Fresh Challenge

Each year, HNS invites operators to join the [Farm Fresh Challenge](#). This initiative aims to empower program operators by cultivating excitement for fresh, locally sourced foods. Participants are required to complete a series of challenges that encourage tasting, teaching, and connecting individuals to Arizona's local foods. HNS will hold the Farm Fresh Challenge in the month of April. This will allow operators time to strategically plan their farm fresh challenge success!

upLIFT

[upLIFT](#) was created for the child nutrition professional, providing materials to help LEARN about nutrition, INSPIRE healthy and creative recipes, FEED students healthy meals, and TEACH others in the community about child nutrition programs! upLIFT provides monthly webinars, research articles, and fact sheets to help expand nutrition knowledge and gain confidence in teaching staff, supervisors, and community members. HNS collects photographs and success stories from Arizona school nutrition programs to share and inspire other school nutrition professionals. The TASTE AZ promotion showcases Arizona's very own local produce and available food options. Each month, HNS highlights a food that is grown in Arizona, or local products easily available to operators. Additionally, operators can find resources to help teach colleagues about programs and initiatives related to school nutrition. Monthly upLIFT webinars may be registered for in the [ADE Professional Learning and Development \(APLD\)](#).

Arizona Educational Data Standards (AzEDS)

As of SY 2024-25, public school districts and charter districts that participate in the NSLP/SBP and that report to the ADE Arizona Educational Data Standards (AzEDs) reporting system via their student information system are required to populate Student School Food Service Program data fields for each student via the AzEDS enrollment record.

SFAs must confer with Student Information System (SIS) coordinators to ensure the accurate reporting of student eligibility status and source in the Student School Food Service Program Association (SSFSPA) section of AzEDS. SFAs shall establish, or review, policy and procedures to ensure the secure transmission of NSLP/SBP information, and that confidentiality measures are in place.

Reminders:

- Enrolled students with paid eligibility status are not required to be reported in the SSFSPA section
- CACFP students should not be reported in the SSFSPA
- The Alternative Form for Income Based Eligibility does not convey eligibility for the NSLP/SBP
- The carryover period in the school meal programs may not be used to confer eligibility [[7 CFR 292.7\(c\)](#)]
- Where applicable, SSFSPA data may be used to determine individual, student level eligibility for 2027 SUN Bucks (Summer EBT) benefits.

State-funded Reimbursement for Reduced-Price Meals in School Year 2026-2027

The FY 2027 state budget, enacted by the Arizona Legislature, appropriated one-time funding to reduce or eliminate copayments that would otherwise be charged to children eligible for reduced-price meals.

The state appropriation will be provided to the NSLP and SBP operators by ADE as a per-meal reimbursement. If the appropriated amount is insufficient to cover all meals served to students certified as eligible for reduced-price meal benefits, ADE will reduce the funding proportionately and notify the impacted SFAs.

To obtain the per meal reimbursement, all SFAs, except those operating CEP or Provision 2 or 3 in a non-base year, shall continue to follow their Free and Reduced-Price Policy which includes the distribution of the Household Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, use of the CNP Direct Certification system to certify students for free or reduced-price meal benefits, and track the eligibility on the benefit issuance document. Meals served to children certified as eligible for reduced-price meal benefits are then claimed in the reduced category of the CNPWeb monthly claim. SFAs must also notify families and offer meals free of charge to the students who are certified as eligible for reduced-price meal benefits.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and 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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