

SchoolMealsNews Bulletin 1920-06

Announcements from the WI DPI School Nutrition Team

October 22, 2019

- Updates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Updates from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) School Nutrition Team

Updates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reminder: USDA Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020 and Health Extenders Act of 2019 as relates to USDA Policy Memorandum SP 16-2019 *School Breakfast Program: Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit*

The *Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020 and Health Extenders Act of 2019*, enacted on September 27, 2019, funds Federal agencies through November 21, 2019. This short-term continuing resolution extends the flexibility described in SP 16-2019 through November 21, 2019.

Serving Up USDA Foods Photo Contest

USDA is announcing the 4th annual Photo Contest! The [“Show Us Your Tray” contest](#) might have a new name, but we still want to see how you are “Serving Up USDA Foods” in your school meals!

Inspire other child nutrition professionals and submit a picture of your most creative meal utilizing direct-delivered USDA Foods. It could be a breakfast or lunch meal. With over 200 USDA Foods items available, we want to highlight the innovative ways in which they can be used.

Show us how you use USDA Foods proteins, fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy to liven up your meals! Your submissions will provide child nutrition professionals with healthy, creative, student-approved meal ideas utilizing USDA Foods.

The Serving Up USDA Foods photo contest begins November 1, 2019 and ends January 15, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. EST.

For 2020 contest and submission details, [click here](#)! Be sure to read all of the details and review the sample submission before deciding which school meals to feature and before taking and submitting photos. Please send all entries to the USDA Foods mailbox (USDAFoods@usda.gov).

Farm to School Census (Census) Update

We are just over halfway through the Census outreach (in the middle of week 6 out of 10 weeks of official outreach). **Wisconsin is still in the lead** (but Michigan had a great week last week)! We think we can attribute this increase, in part, due to direct, targeted phone calls to non-respondents (you may be hearing from the DPI School Nutrition Team, if you haven't already).

Here is a more details and a "behind the scenes" Census timeline which can help:

1. ABT will conduct targeted outreach until November 13, 2019 (end of week 10).
2. After November 13, 2019, ABT will follow up and do phone interviews with a selected sub-sample of those who did not respond to the Census.
3. The Census will officially close on November 27, 2019, right before Thanksgiving, so there will still be some time to complete the Census if you have too much on your plate right now.

State/Territory	Percent Complete
Illinois	26.45%

Indiana	24.77%
Iowa	28.70%
Michigan	32.65%
Minnesota	25.72%
Ohio	19.70%
Wisconsin	34.63%
National TOTAL	28.17%

Updates from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) School Nutrition Team

Now Open: The FY2019 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant Application

It is time to evaluate your equipment needs! USDA has released [Memo SP 15-2019](#), regarding the *Fiscal Year 2019 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant for School Food Authorities*. USDA awarded Wisconsin \$405,946 to distribute to School Food Authorities (SFAs). The first part of the application period will be open from October 17-November 15, 2019.

Deadline: Applications and specification sheets are posted on the [DPI USDA Equipment Grant](#) website and must be submitted to DPI at DPIEquipGnt@dpi.wi.gov by November 15, 2019.

Priority for this grant will be given to schools that have 50 percent or higher free and reduced-price meal eligibility.

Webinar: ** A live webinar about the new NSLP Grant Application process will be held Thursday, October 24 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. To join the NSLP Equipment Grant webinar, a link will be posted on the [School Nutrition Team Training](#) webpage. **

Reminder: Verification and the Verification Collection Report (VCR)

The verification process must be completed by November 15, 2019. Once verification is complete, report the outcome and results of verification through the online [VCR reporting portal](#). The VCR portal opens on November 1. Best practice is to complete the report as soon as the verification process is completed, but no later than February 1, 2020.

There are many resources and training materials to assist you with verification:

1. The [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) reviews the verification process in detail on pages 96-117.
2. The [Verification webpage](#) on the School Nutrition Team (SNT) website includes:
 - Verification forms, tracking tool, and notification letters.
 - Verification training webcasts.
 - Instructions for completing the VCR.
 - Sample of the VCR to print and fill out manually prior to completing online.

It is important to review the verification resources each year, as there are often updates and clarifications.

VCR Update for SY 2019-20: The DPI SNT continues to participate in the USDA demonstration project for directly certifying (DC) students for free and reduced price meals with Medicaid data. As part of this project, USDA requests a significant amount of data to show the impact of including Medicaid data in DC. To meet this requirement, the VCR has been modified to break out the DC data in section 3 of the report to separately report the number of students that matched based on the DC code. The VCR instructions will be updated to reflect this. Please be sure to refer to the instructions when completing the report. This requirement will only be for SY 2019-20. The sample size determined for verification is based on the number of current applications on file as of **October 1, 2019**. Carryover applications from SY 2018-19 are excluded.

Important Dates:

- The verification process must be completed by **November 15, 2019**.

- SFAs may begin to report the outcome of verification in [Online Services](#) beginning **November 1, 2019**.
- When completing the VCR, the total number of enrolled students is as of **October 31, 2019**.

The VCR must be submitted online no later than **February 1, 2020**.