

Date: August 20, 2018

To: Authorized Representatives and Food Service Directors of School Food Authorities (SFAs) Participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs)

From: Jessica Sharkus, RDN, CD
Director-School Nutrition Team (SNT)

Subject: Back to School Memorandum for School Year (SY) 2018-19

Please forward this important information to all persons with USDA Child Nutrition Program responsibilities.

Welcome Back! I know this probably looks overwhelming (I'm sorry!), but please take the time to read through this important information. This memo is written at the start of each new school year to provide you with important clarifications, reminders, and updates pertaining to the CNPs. In addition, we ask that you share this with others that may need to know this information as well.

Email Distribution List

Since January 2017, the SNT has been providing program information via an email distribution list called "schoolmealsnews". This is a reminder to make sure you are up-to-date with valuable USDA and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) SNT information by reading the bulletins and announcements that show up in your "Inbox". We also post our bulletins, memos, and announcements on our website on the [School Nutrition homepage](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition>) and on our [School Nutrition Team Communications webpage](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/communications) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/communications>). We strongly encourage you to get others at your SFA signed up to receive this important information by sending an email to join-schoolmealsnews@lists.dpi.wi.gov.

Administrative Reviews (AR)

Those SFAs receiving an AR during the SY 2018-19 have been notified. If you are unsure if you are receiving an AR, please visit our [Preparing for your Administrative Review webpage](http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/administrative-review) to see a list of SFAs scheduled for an AR (<http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/administrative-review>).

This comprehensive webpage, detailing the specific areas of the AR, and the School Nutrition Skills Development Courses (SNSDC) Administrative Review and You classes, are replacing the Pre-Review Workshops we provided in the past.

Starting this year, SNT will be working with a new contractor TCB Consulting. They will be working with us to complete some ARs for the SY 2018-19.



Eligibility Manual

Per USDA, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) **will not release** an updated Eligibility Manual for School Meals for SY 2018-19. State agencies and program operators may continue to use the [2017 Edition of the Eligibility Manual](https://www.fns.usda.gov/eligibility-manual-school-meals) for the upcoming school year (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/eligibility-manual-school-meals>). This is also posted on the [Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications and Eligibility](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/free-reduced-applications) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/free-reduced-applications>).

Determining Eligibility of SY 2018-19 Household Applications for Free and Reduced Price School Meals

-  New requirement for the SY 2018-19: If the household indicates participation in an assistance program in Step Two on the application, the assistance program name and a case number **must** be listed. If the assistance program name is not listed, the SFA is required to follow-up with the household to complete this information on the application before approving the application.
- A Medicaid case number on an application does not qualify students for free or reduced price meals.
- The total household members box on the application in Step Three (G) must be filled out and have the correct number of household members listed to match the names listed on application. If the number of names does not match the “total household members” box then the SFA is required to follow-up with the household to confirm household size and list of members.
- A signature is required on all applications in Step Four.
- A new resource titled “[Determining Free and Reduced Price Eligibility and Verification Processes ‘In a Nutshell’](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/determining-meal-eligibility-in-a-nutshell.pdf)” can be found on the [Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications and Eligibility webpage](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/free-reduced-applications) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/determining-meal-eligibility-in-a-nutshell.pdf>, <https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/free-reduced-applications>).
- If the SFA contacts a household for clarifications on the application, the SFA’s determining official should make notes, initial or sign, and include the date of contact on the application.
- SFAs must distribute and accept only current school year free and reduced meal applications, except in the case of [USDA translations](#) that are not available on the DPI website. In those cases, the posted versions are acceptable

(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/translated-applications>). This is for paper or web based online versions.

- It is required that web based versions of online applications receive prior approval from DPI before SFAs can utilize them. A list of approved web based applications is posted on the [Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications and Eligibility](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/free-reduced-applications) webpage (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/free-reduced-applications>). Contact Tanya Kirtz (tanya.kirtz@dpi.wi.gov) for more information about approval of web based applications.
- If your SFA uses a software program for eligibility status, check the benefit issuance list in the program after the carryover period to be sure there are no students listed without eligibility documentation. Manual benefit issuance lists must also be reviewed and updated for accuracy.

Determining Eligibility through *Direct Certification (DC)*

- The SNT will continue to participate in the USDA demonstration project for directly certifying students for free and reduced price meals with **Medicaid** data.
- New for SY 2018-19, some Wisconsin Tribes have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the DPI SNT to directly certify students in households receiving benefits through the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). This DC match would automatically qualify those students to receive free meal benefits.

The eligibility match codes are:

S	Eligible. The child matched with FoodShare (SNAP) information and is automatically eligible for FREE meals.
T	Eligible. The child matched with W-2 cash benefits information and is automatically eligible for FREE meals.
O	Eligible. The child matched with both FoodShare and W-2 cash benefits information and is automatically eligible for FREE meals.
E	Eligible. The foster child matched with the state foster care system database and is automatically eligible for FREE meals.
G NEW!	Eligible. The child matched with Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), a program administered locally by Indian Tribal Organizations, and is automatically eligibility for FREE meals.
M	Eligible. The child is identified by the state's Medicaid database at the income level for FREE meals and is automatically eligible.
Z	Eligible. The child is identified by the state's Medicaid database at the income level for REDUCED price meals and is automatically eligible.
N	Not eligible. The student is not a match in the database or is in a closed or ineligible case.

- Except for the “E” code (Foster child), all of the above eligibility codes (S, T, O, G, M, or Z) may extend benefits to other students in the household.
- If a household submits an income application determined to qualify for free meals and a household student shows up on a DC run with a code “Z” (Medicaid-Reduced), the application takes precedence over the DC match and the student qualifies for the free benefit. The student always receives the best eligibility benefit. If the student qualifies with a “Z” code and no application is on file, then the household could apply by application for a potential free meal benefit.

Carryover Status

- Some students may be in an eligibility carryover status for the first 30 operating days of school; however, a new determination by DC or application ends the carryover period. An “N” code (no match) from DC is not considered a new determination. Other qualifying eligibility match codes of S, T, O, E, G, M, or Z are considered a new determination.
- If a student was in a carryover status with free meal benefits from last school year and is recently matched with a “Z” code through Direct Certification, this is considered a NEW eligibility determination and would change their status to reduced, thus ending the 30-day carryover period.
- A household’s carryover status of free or reduced-price meal benefits applies to new household students entering school, such as a child entering pre-K or kindergarten.

Carryover for Students Transitioning from Provision Schools (Community Eligibility Provision and Provision 2) to non-Provision Schools

Since the start of SY 2016-17 it has been allowable for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to provide free meal eligibility carryover for students transitioning from a Provision School to a non-Provision school. The carryover period is for 30 operating days (or until a new meal eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first) and during that time, meals may be claimed at the free rate. This rule ensures children moving from Provision to non-Provision schools do not experience a gap in meal access and provides the household and school officials time to establish an individual meal eligibility via application, direct certification, or other source.

Transfer Eligibility for Provision Schools (Community Eligibility Provision and Provision 2)

Since SY 2016-17 SNT *requires* LEAs to provide 30 operating days (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first) of free, reimbursable meals to students who transfer from a Provision school to a non-Provision school *within the same* LEA. This covers both during and between school years. By July 1, 2019, LEAs will be required to provide free meals to students who transfer from a Provision school to a non-Provision school *between LEAs*. The SNT encourages LEAs to implement this earlier if possible.

There are resources on special provision carryover and transfer eligibility on the CEP, P2, and Free and Reduced-Price websites:

- [Provision to non-Provision Transfer Student Flow Chart](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/cep-visiting-students-flow-chart.pdf)
(<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/cep-visiting-students-flow-chart.pdf>)
- [Provision to non-Provision Transfer and Carryover Template Letter](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/doc/provision-to-non-provision-transfer-letter-18-19.docx)
(<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/doc/provision-to-non-provision-transfer-letter-18-19.docx>)



Procurement Purchasing Threshold Increased

The Micro Purchase Threshold has increased from \$3,500 to \$10,000 and the Simplified Acquisitions Threshold commonly referred to as the *Small Purchase Threshold* has increased from \$150,000 to \$250,000. The USDA FNS and DPI SNT are currently working on updating its instructions, guidance, and tools to reflect these changes.

Market Basket Memorandum

The USDA recently published a [guidance memorandum](https://www.fns.usda.gov/market-basket-analysis-when-procuring-program-goods-and-modifying-contracted-product-lists) providing information on how to use a Market Basket (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/market-basket-analysis-when-procuring-program-goods-and-modifying-contracted-product-lists>). In summary, when SFAs procure using a Market Basket, the following components are part of the procurement. First of all, if a Market Basket is used to evaluate pricing/cost, it must represent at least 75 percent of the value of products intended to be purchased from the winning vendor. The SFA must also provide a list of all products (also known as the “Product List”) intended to purchase from the winning vendor. Finally, if products are added to or deleted from the Product List, the school will need to document these changes when renewing the awarded contract with the winning vendor. This renewal, also called an Amendment to Renew, will list any fixed fee changes and/or changes to the Product List. The school can change up to 10 percent of the value in products on the Product List each year of the contract.

Procurement Reviews

Are you up for a Procurement Review (PR)? What is a PR? The PR is different from AR. While the AR looks at a range of SFAs operations, the PR primarily focuses on procurement related activities. In addition, SFAs receive an AR every three years; the cycle for PRs varies between three and five years depending on the types of contracts used by the SFA. Click on the [Procurement Review](#) link located on the [Procurement webpage](#) for a list of SFAs receiving PRs in SY 2018-19 and a copy of the Procurement Review Form (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/procurement/contract-procedures/review-process>, <https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/procurement>). Additionally, if you are selected for a PR during SY 2018-19, and you did NOT complete the PR during the SNSDC 2018 training, please complete the Procurement Review Form and submit it to a Procurement Reviewer by **October 15, 2018**. It is highly recommended to submit prior to the deadline.



Buy American

Noncompliant Product List templates are available for download on the [Buy American webpage](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/procurement/buy-american) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/procurement/buy-american>). Other resources are also available that cover:

- how to comply with the Buy American Provision;
- where exceptions apply; and
- how to monitor compliance going forward.

USDA Interim Final Rule: Child Nutrition Program Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements

This is a friendly reminder that [Interim Final Rule: Child Nutrition Program Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements](#) went into effect July 1, 2018, for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Smart Snacks, Special Milk Program (SMP), and all Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) settings for participants six years of age and older (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/fr-113017>). As you know, this is a change because in SY 2017-18, this flexibility only applied to NSLP, SBP, and Smart Snacks, and not CACFP or SMP. This change will provide consistency among the USDA Child Nutrition Programs.



Milk Regulations: Exemptions will not be needed in SY 2018-19 to offer flavored, low-fat (1 percent fat) milk as part of a reimbursable meal for students in grades K through 12 in the NSLP and SBP. Furthermore, flavored, low-fat milk may be provided to SMP and CACFP participants six years of age and older. Infants through pre-K students following the CACFP meal pattern may not be offered flavored milk regardless of fat content. (In co-mingling situations, pre-K students may have flavored 1 percent milk.) Schools will also be able to offer flavored, low-fat milk as a competitive beverage for sale.



Whole Grain-rich Regulations: The USDA has once again given State agencies the discretion to grant whole grain-rich exemptions to SFAs that can demonstrate hardship(s) in procuring, preparing, or serving specific products that are acceptable to students and compliant with the whole grain-rich criteria. Watch for an announcement soon regarding how schools in Wisconsin will be able to ask for an exemption this school year.



Sodium Regulations: Sodium Target 1 will continue as the regulatory limit in the NSLP and SBP for SY 2018-19.

The USDA FNS will issue a final rule in the coming year that will address 1 percent flavored milk, whole grain-rich exemptions, and sodium target levels that will be effective permanently starting with the SY 2019-20.



2018 Equipment Grant

The SNT is pleased to announce that funding is available to award another round of NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants. The USDA has provided Wisconsin with \$405,439 in funding for these grants. The requested equipment must have a useful life of greater than one year and a cost that exceeds \$5,000 or the applicant SFA definition of capitalization threshold, whichever is less. **New this year, the threshold for the purchase of equipment cannot be lower than \$1,000.**

More information and applications (available this fall) for this grant opportunity can be found on the [Grant Opportunities webpage](http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/grants-opportunities) (<http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/grants-opportunities>).



SNACS

New for SY 2018-19, the SNT is using the School Nutrition Accountability Software (SNACS) to automate the AR process and all schools and districts scheduled for an AR, conducted by the SNT, will be required to use the software during the review. Much of the process of the AR will remain the same. Forms SFAs fill out prior to the review will be completed electronically through SNACS. Communication with SNT staff conducting reviews, corrective action responses, and any required documentation will be submitted via SNACS.

The SNACS team is creating a variety of resources to help schools feel comfortable using SNACS, and we will offer training sessions throughout SY 2018-19. For an introduction to SNACS, please visit the [SNACS webpage](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/snacs) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/snacs>). Stay tuned for more details about working with SNACS in the new school year.



7 Reports Reminder

The SNT has created a variety of annual calendars to help SFAs with report deadlines and reminders. Various Calendars of School Nutrition Program Requirements can be found on our [Calendar of School Nutrition Requirements webpage](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/calendar-of-requirements) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/calendar-of-requirements>).



Professional Standards

The Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs rule requires ongoing training hours for school nutrition professionals, whether the SFA operates the school nutrition

program or contracts with a food service management company. SFA-level compliance with the professional standards will now be included as part of the AR. Each SFA must have someone designated as the School Nutrition Director.

- During the AR, the DPI Nutrition Program Consultant will review training topics for each staff member and the process of tracking the completed hours annually.
- Please note, there are minimum hiring standards of the School Nutrition Director according to the SFA's enrollment in the areas of education and food safety, and then followed up with continuing education. If the SFA has a new director, since July 2015, please contact a DPI School Nutrition consultant to determine if the proper hiring standards have been met.
- If your SFA contracts with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC), and the Food Service Director is an FSMC staff member, the SFA needs to designate an SFA staff person as the Food Service Director for purposes of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. This SFA staff person is required to comply with the requirements to have a minimum of twelve hours of professional development training, related to the School Meals Programs. More information to come out on this requirement soon.



Wisconsin Team Nutrition Printed Resources

Wisconsin Team Nutrition is pleased to announce the release of two new print resources. The [Wisconsin School Meals Rock! School Nutrition Outreach Toolkit](https://dpi.wi.gov/wisconsin-school-meals-rock/school-nutrition-professionals/school-nutrition-outreach-toolkit) provides resources and tools for school nutrition professionals to effectively promote their school nutrition programs and showcase why Wisconsin school meals rock (<https://dpi.wi.gov/wisconsin-school-meals-rock/school-nutrition-professionals/school-nutrition-outreach-toolkit>). Also, the second edition of [Wisconsin Wellness: Putting Policy into Practice](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/wisconsin-wellness-putting-policy-into-practice.pdf) was released to assist schools with developing comprehensive wellness policies that meet all requirements (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/wisconsin-wellness-putting-policy-into-practice.pdf>). Print copies of *Wisconsin Wellness: Putting Policy into Practice* and other resources are available for schools at no cost and can be ordered through the [Wisconsin Team Nutrition Resource Order Form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ycoUI-XOuM6qcp09-4h00g34StQb9UYEdCxKM_9LxPM/viewform?ts=5b3b773c&edit_requested=true) (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ycoUI-XOuM6qcp09-4h00g34StQb9UYEdCxKM_9LxPM/viewform?ts=5b3b773c&edit_requested=true).



#WISchoolMealsRock

We encourage you to use the hashtag #WISchoolMealsRock when posting to your Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. We also hope that you will tag us on your

posts as well. This can be done by tagging us at WI DPI School Nutrition Programs on Facebook and using the handle @WisDPI_SNP on Twitter. This is a great way to share new recipes, photos of your menu items for the day, best practices, etc. If you are interested in starting an account or some tips on creating a powerful profile or crafting the perfect message for your audience, please contact Rebekkah Plano and Dana Colla (SNPsocialmedia@dpi.wi.gov).

New Resources

There are two new resources that you may find helpful in your School Meals Program.

[Salad Bar Signage Template](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/doc/salad-bar-signage-template.docx): This template features common salad/garden bar items (cucumber slices, broccoli florets, grape tomatoes, orange wedges, croutons, etc.). It can be modified to include items featured on your salad bar. Instructions for completion are provided to customize signage to your SFA (https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/doc/salad-bar-signage-template.docx).

[Half-Cup Fruits and Vegetables Handout](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/half-cup-fruit-veg.pdf): This is a list of common fruits and vegetables that can be credited toward the meal pattern. Information is taken from the USDA Food Buying Guide and condensed onto one page. Please note that on an AR incorrectly credited fruits or vegetables could have big implications for meal pattern compliance (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/half-cup-fruit-veg.pdf>)!

Updated Production Records

Based on feedback from school nutrition professionals across the state, DPI's production record "must haves" list has been revised for SY 2018-19 to reduce recordkeeping burdens and cut down on repetition. [DPI production record templates](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/menu-planning/production-records) have also been updated to reflect changes (https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/national-school-lunch-program/menu-planning/production-records).



Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch

Celebrate National Farm to School Month this October by crunching into locally and regionally grown apples at NOON on Thursday, October 11! All schools, hospitals, and other organizations in the Great Lakes region are invited to participate. Last October, 1,543,781 students, children, teachers, and good food supporters across the region crunched into local apples. Let's join forces and meet the ONE MILLION CRUNCH goal again this year! For more information and registration, please visit the [UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems webpage](http://www.cias.wisc.edu/applecrunch/) (www.cias.wisc.edu/applecrunch/). Visit the [Apple Crunch Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/GreatLakesGreatAppleCrunch) to get updates and see photos from last year's Crunch (https://www.facebook.com/GreatLakesGreatAppleCrunch).



Wisconsin Chili Lunch

The Wisconsin Chili Lunch is a new event this school year to celebrate Farm to School! Support local farmers by serving the Wisconsin Chili Lunch recipe in your cafeteria on Thursday, November 15. Make the Wisconsin Chili Lunch recipe special by using locally-grown ingredients and customizing it to meet your needs. This event is a great way to highlight your farm to school efforts, incorporate more local foods, and support Wisconsin farmers across the state! For more information and registration, please visit the [Wisconsin Chili Lunch webpage](https://go.wisc.edu/635g7i) (<https://go.wisc.edu/635g7i>).



USDA Foods

For SFAs receiving USDA Foods through participation in the NSLP, the DPI's USDA Foods section of the SNT posts detailed information regarding Wisconsin's USDA Foods Program at the beginning of each school year on the [USDA Foods webpage](#). This information includes general program policies and procedures, delivery service and receiving procedures, and other USDA Foods Program updates. Please see a copy of the "Back to School Email" notification posted on the [Mailings and Notices webpage](#) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/usda/mailings-notice>).

DPI SNT Trainings

Great Beginnings Academy: This training is intended for managers or directors new to their position administering USDA School Meals Programs. Sessions for SY 2018-19 will be held at the DPI Offices in Madison on October 2, 3, and October 29. For more information, view the [Great Beginnings flyer](#) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/great-beginnings-academy-flyer.pdf>). Complete and return the [registration form](#) for this training (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/great-beginnings-academy-application.pdf>)!

SNSDC: The SNT sent out an email blast with a link to an electronic survey for those who registered and attended the SNSDC courses over the summer (July-August). If you participated in one class or many classes, we would greatly appreciate any and all feedback. Thank you!



Small Victories: Small Victories Team Up training on managing Special Dietary Requests will be held in several locations around the state in late October. Directors will work with one another to develop a plan for creating policies in their schools that address how to handle Special Dietary Needs. The training will include a session for food service staff on managing special requests in their daily meal service. Stay tuned for dates and locations for this not-to-be missed training opportunity!

Check the [School Nutrition Team Training webpage](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/training) for information on all trainings (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/training>).