

Child Nutrition Thursday Update

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Foundational Fish Skills Training in OOB

Shout outs!!



Training Opportunities

March 26, 2026

9:00-12:00

Child Nutrition Office

90 Blossom Lane, Augusta

OR

April 9, 2026

9:00-12:00

Dennis Paper

101 Mecaw Road, Hampden

This training is for Summer Food Service Program Sponsors who have recently operated the program. It is mandatory that Summer Food Service Program Sponsors receive training in order to qualify to operate the program. The training will include an overview of program regulations and highlight areas where additional training is needed and tips for program promotion.

April 30, 2026

9:00-12:00

Child Nutrition Office

90 Blossom Lane, Augusta

This training is for new Summer Food Service Program Sponsors who would like to operate the program. It is mandatory that all Summer Food Service Program Sponsors receive training in order to qualify to operate the program. The training will include a detailed overview of program regulations, tips for successful operations, and ample opportunity for questions. Experienced sponsors are also welcome to register for this training if they would like to have a more detailed training.

State Match Payment to Public Schools Only

The State Match is a onetime payout to NSLP public schools based on the number of lunches served from July thru December of the current year. The number of lunches served gets applied to a specific pot of money and prorated.

To view your state match amount, go to the Payment tab in CNPWeb. The State Match payment is deposited the same way your claim reimbursements are deposited. Deposits will show as “Education School Nutrition State Funds Lun/Brk”. The MEFS revenue code for the fund is #3250.

If you have any questions, please contact Jodi Truman at jodi.truman@maine.gov

Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025

The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 was signed into law on Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

Schools are now allowed, but not required, to offer whole milk, 2% reduced fat milk, 1% low fat milk, fat-free milk, lactose-free milk, and nondairy beverages that are nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk and meet the USDA nutritional standards for fluid milk substitutes. It is important to note that this law only applies to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is not included in this law.

For further information and guidance, review policy memo SP 01-2026.

CEP Message from MSSA

The following message is/has going/gone out to Superintendents this week from the Superintendent Association:

As a result of the H.R. 1 changes to SNAP and Medicaid eligibility, direct certification numbers are expected to decline for School Year 2026-2027. School districts are strongly encouraged to conduct robust and comprehensive direct certification this school year to fully capture eligible children. Districts that participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) are able to restart their cycles each year. Districts should consider renewing their cycle this spring to "lock in" the direct certification data from this year. The deadline for direct certification data for CEP purposes is April 1. Learn more about strategies that school districts can use to improve direct certification. Key CEP dates to be aware of:

- April 1, 2026: Data Cut-off. The Identified Student Percentage (ISP) is calculated based on enrollment and direct certification data as of this date.
- May 1, 2026 (or annually): State agencies must publish the list of eligible and near-eligible schools.
- May 1 - June 30, 2026: Annual Application Window. CEP applications and intent forms are generally accepted during this period for the upcoming school year.
- June 30, 2026: Final Deadline. Schools must notify their state agency of their intent to operate CEP for the upcoming school year.
- September 30, 2026 (or annually): Deadline for state agencies to review and approve all submitted CEP applications.

If anyone has questions about this process, they should reach out to David Hartley at 624-6878, or catch one of the three CEP Webinars on 3/5, or 3/27.



LET'S GO!

The Culinary Skills for School Meals training is a 5-day hands-on intensive culinary training for school nutrition professionals focusing on foundations for food service, including knife skills, cooking techniques, and kitchen efficiencies, to improve the culinary skills of school nutrition professionals.

2026 Training Details

- August 3-7 | Noble High School, North Berwick
- August 10-14 | Edward Little High School, Auburn
- August 17-21 | Hampden Academy, Hampden
- September 21-25 | Presque Isle High School, Presque Isle



[Click here to apply to attend!](#)

Learn more about the Culinary Skills for Schools Meals training, see the list of past participating school nutrition programs, and photos at LetsGo.org/CulinarySkills or scan the QR code with a smartphone.



This training is made possible with funding from Full Plates Full Potential in collaboration with MaineHealth.

Important Update for At-Risk Sites – Meal Production Counts Required

Beginning March 1, 2026, all At-Risk sites will be required to record the number of meals produced each day.

To support this change, we have updated the Meal Count Form on our website to include a section for documenting meals produced. We encourage sites to begin using the updated form to ensure compliance with the new requirement or update your in-house form. If you have any questions about this change, please don't hesitate to reach out to Kobi Chase kobi.l.chase@maine.gov

Net Off Invoice

Several LEA's have not used any NOI lbs. or very few, less than 40% of their allotment.

After Friday, March 13, unused lbs. will begin to be moved to LEAs that have used their lbs. and could use more.

USDA Foods

March (1st-15th) is the **last month** that you will be able to use your PAL entitlement dollars to purchase extra items.

- PAL entitlement does not carry over from year to year so **if you don't use it, you lose it.**
- Bonus items ordered in April for May delivery do not come off your PAL entitlement.
- Whatever is left in inventory after the March order **WILL** be delivered to you in May. **No exceptions! These cannot be refused or returned to PFG.**
- You have from **March 1st-13th** to place your monthly order for delivery in April.

March Monthly Order

The Monthly Order runs from the 1st-15th.

- If the 15th of the month is a Saturday or Sunday, the monthly order will close on Friday at 4:00pm.
- If it is not, the closing date is simply the 15th at 4:00pm.

Orders cannot be refused or sent back to PFG once shipped.

USDA Foods - Extras/Surplus

If you have any remaining Planned Assistant Level (PAL) dollars left to spend, you can order Extra/Surplus. To see what you have left for PAL, check “Entitlement” on the Sponsor Summary page under FDP in CNPweb.

To order Extras/Surplus USDA Food Items in CNPweb

Select “Allocation” tab

Ordering Extras/Surplus **IMPORTANT - This is a 2-step process**

If you want these items to arrive with your monthly order, you must go back to the “Orders” tab and follow the same steps as if you were placing your monthly order.

If you do not do the second step, you will NOT receive the items.

Directions on how to order Extras/Surplus can be found on the

USDA Foods page of our website under the

“How to Order Extras/Surplus” dropdown.

Join the Celebration!

National School Breakfast Week 2026 (March 2–6)

National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) celebrates the importance of school breakfast in fueling student success. This year's theme, The Quest for School Breakfast, encourages students to power up each morning and embark on a daily adventure toward learning, focus, and achievement.

Schools can celebrate by:

- Hosting themed dress-up days (Knights & Royalty!)
- Featuring special “quest-inspired” breakfast menu items
- Sharing breakfast trivia during morning announcements
- Inviting guest servers (principals, teachers, community leaders)
 - Recognizing school nutrition heroes



Child Nutrition Training

- All of any kind will be removed from the virtual training.
- The links to register are in the training titles - unless otherwise noted.
- We are unable to hold virtual and in person training simultaneously.
- All of our webinars are recorded and put on our website within a week of the training.
- Pay attention to registration deadline dates. Deadlines must be adhered to.
- Be sure to register to ensure that we have enough space for everyone.
- If there is a registration fee - Per Maine DOE policy, payment is due by credit card at the time of registration.
- Mark your calendars once you have registered.
- If State offices are closed webinars/trainings will be rescheduled. Anyone who has already registered will be notified of the new date and time.

If you have any questions about any of the Child Nutrition Training, please contact Paula at paula.nadeau@maine.gov

Webinars

paula.nadeau@maine.gov

Three Opportunities to Learn about Community Eligibility Provisions (CEP)

Registration link is in the date and time.

March 5, 2026

10:00am

March 27, 2026

10:00am

This program allows districts/schools/group of schools to claim free meals based on the number of enrolled students that qualify based on the Direct Certification List (DC). This webinar will help explain the process and time line for applying for CEP.

Meal Counting in Alternative Serving Locations: Requirements & Best Practices

March 30, 2026

1:30pm

This must-watch webinar is designed for schools that operate alternative serving locations- where meals are served outside of the traditional cafeteria. These locations may include classrooms, hallways, and other areas. We will review how to accurately count meals at the point of service, or when a student receives a reimbursable meal. We will also discuss common review findings related to Breakfast in the Classroom and Pre-K meals served in the classroom, along with best practices to support compliance.

Did you miss a webinar?

You can view it by going to the Webinars and Training page of our website.

ServSafe Exam

Registration Deadline - March 9, 2026

This is the last exam we will be offering this school year!

2:00pm

March 26, 2026

Child Nutrition Office

Deering Building

Room 101

Augusta

Arrive early, testing begins promptly at 2:00. Bring photo ID (you will not be able to take the exam if you do not have your ID), pens or pencils, erasers. Once test has begun no late arrivals will be allowed to take the exam.

Per Maine DOE policy, payment is due by credit card at the time of registration.

Registration ends on March 6, 2026.



Local Foods Training Cooking with Early Maine Harvests

March 11, 2026

10:00am-1:00pm

Child Nutrition Culinary Classroom

90 Blossom Lane

Augusta

How do we keep local foods on the menu when Maine's growing season slows down? This training supports cooking and sourcing local foods across all seasons, focusing on Maine's early spring bounty! Participants will learn strategies for sourcing Maine products year-round, and how Maine's Harvest of the Month can help support these efforts. Through recipe demonstrations and hands-on cooking methods, we will explore different ways to prepare and cook with local ingredients every season!

ServSafe Class & Exam

April 21 & 22, 2026

Gorham High School

41 Morrill Avenue, Gorham

The class is for School Food Service and CACFP only

Books are ordered and mailed once registration has ended

Please note start times for each day

April 21st 9:00am - 3:00pm

April 22nd 8:00am - Approximately Noon for Exam

Bring photo id, pen or pencils with erasers

You must provide an email address as notification of results
are sent via email

Lunch is NOT provided. Bring your lunch, snacks, drinks

Charge for the class is \$102

Payable by credit card, at the time of registration

Registration deadline – Thursday, April 2, 2026



Bringing Seafood to Schools: Foundational Fish Skills Training

Wednesday, March 11, from 1-4PM

Join the **Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, and Maine DOE Farm and Sea-to-School's Regional Local Foods Project** for a hands-on Foundational Fish Skills Training. Participants will build basic skills working with raw fish filets in the kitchen, learn about the wide diversity of local seafood available to K-12 schools, and strengthen sea-to-school knowledge and expertise. Participants will leave with resources and tools to implement sea-to-school programs at their schools. **This training provides 2.5 CEU hours.**

Loranger Memorial Middle School

148 Saco Ave, Old Orchard Beach

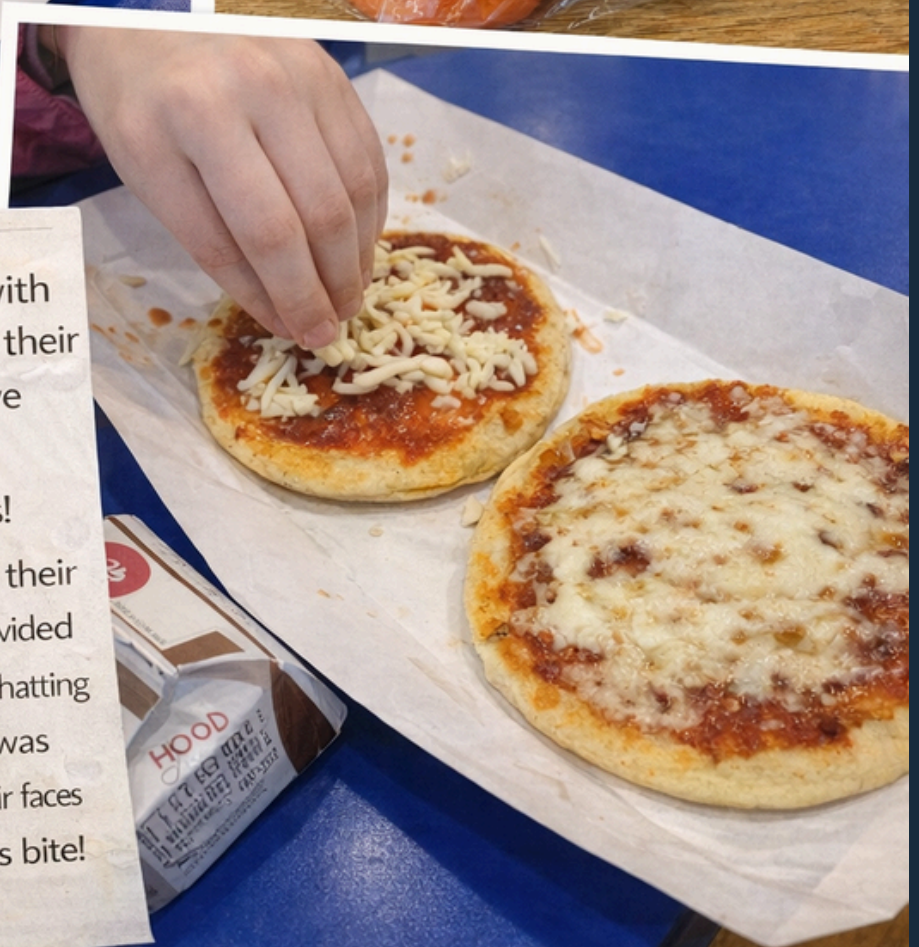
Registration: tinyurl.com/Sea2SchoolTraining





PIZZA Power Pack

RSU 24 does a wonderful job making meals creative and fun as part of the CACFP At-Risk Supper Program!



All the kids were bursting with excitement as they grabbed their "Pizza Power Pack" and dove into the fun of crafting their very own pizza masterpieces! They eagerly lined up to pop their creations in the microwave provided by the afterschool program, chatting and laughing all the while. It was amazing to see the joy on their faces as they savored every delicious bite!

