

Child Nutrition Thursday Update

In this week's Thursday Update

You can scroll through or click on a title below and you will be taken to that page.

CEP - 8 Days to Go

Procurement Planning for Next School Year

Local Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

CACFP At Risk Afterschool Program

CNPweb Contact Information

Better Breakfast Tool Prototype

Grain Based Desserts & High Protein Yogurt Crediting Comment Period

2025 Farm to School Cook-off

Child Nutrition Webinars

ServSafe Managers Class/Exam

Summer Food Service Program Training

Local Foods Training - The Good Crust Dinner Rolls

Aroostook County Local Foods Training

MSNA Training

Child Nutrition Website - <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition>

Child Nutrition List Serve Email - child.nutrition@maillist.informe.org

CEP - 8 Days to Go

April 1st is coming soon, and it is important for all schools to pull their enrollment data and direct certification lists to be prepared to apply for the Community Eligibility Provision this year. Current regulation allows schools with 25% of their student enrollment on the direct certification list to qualify to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision. This is approximately 80% of our schools in Maine.

The Community Eligibility Program benefits all....

It benefits students, who have longer to eat in the cafeteria, due to streamline point of service options, and no longer deal with stigma in the cafeteria when all students have access to the National School Lunch Program

It benefits families, who no longer need to fill out Free and Reduced Benefit Applications, no longer need to send meals to school, and stretches household budgets

It benefits schools, decreased administrative burden, streamlined meal service, and the use of 1.6% multiplier to qualify for programs beyond the National School Lunch Program

It benefits Maine, by leveraging Federal Funds

Please have a plan (and a backup plan, too) in place to download these lists on the **First of April**. Please include your IT folks if they assist in either of the processes.

You then have until June 30th to submit a notice of intent from your Superintendent and submit your eligibility list to david.hartley@maine.gov, but please don't wait. With the anticipated 80% of school submitting, we will have a lot of lists to verify.

Check out the [Special Provisions and CEP webpage](#) for more information, or catch David's webinar on Friday March 7th at 10:00am or Wednesday March 26th at 1:30pm. Register in the training section below

Procurement Planning for Next School Year

sarah.d.platt@maine.gov

Believe it or not, it's time to start planning your procurement methods for next year. Remember, you cannot make purchases from a vendor "just because". Each purchase must follow either micro-purchase procedures, small purchase procedures or formal procurement procedures.

Steps to planning for next year include:

1. Use a vendor paid list from your financial software
 - What vendors did you buy from?
 - How much (total) was spent with each vendor?
 - What was the method of procurement that was used?
2. Review the vendor paid list
 - Estimate the cost of goods and services
 - Will you be purchasing the same/similar goods and services?
 - Are there additional goods and services that will be needed?
 - Do you need to source new vendors?
 - Is participation going up? Am I changing my menus? Are there any changes I can anticipate?
3. Determine which procurement methods you will be using (local thresholds may be more restrictive)

Micro-Purchasing – great for farm to school, unplanned purchases, trial runs, & one-time purchases.

Federal threshold is \$10k or \$50K if self-certified

Small Purchasing – great when price is the only criteria, looking for competitive pricing, cost is less than the formal procurement threshold, & you want to avoid a formal bid process

Federal threshold is \$250k

Formal Procurement – great when evaluating criteria other than price alone

Required when the value of the purchase is over the federal small purchase threshold

Procurement resources, including training, is available on our [webpage](#).

Local Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment

sarah.d.platt@maine.gov

Due every three years, if the last triennial assessment was completed in SY 2022, it's time for the Wellness Team to complete the assessment again!

The required components of the assessment include:

1. Assessing if the current policy is compliant;
2. Comparing the current policy to model local school wellness policies;
and
3. Comparing progress made in attaining the goals of the local school wellness policy.

Resources including a [template](#) for the assessment are available on our website.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

SY 2026 FFVP Applications are Open!

The applications are submitted electronically in CNP web. To access the applications, log into CNP web, click “SNP” then Program Year 2026. The apps are found under the “Forms” tab and an application will show up for each eligible school. Here are some important notes:

- Schools with a combination of grades Pre-K through 8 are eligible to apply; however, priority is given to schools with the highest free/reduced percentage.
- This program is different than the DoD Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Program that is part of the USDA foods program, and is a separate funding source.
- Complete, FFVP applications are due Friday, April 25th. Mark your calendars! A complete application means the signature page is uploaded and the application is in “pending approval” status.

New Process for Reallocating Funds for FFVP Schools

As a result of a recent state audit, our funds reallocation process has changed. Each school's allocation must be within \$50-75/student multiplied by enrollment per federal regulations, even with reallocations (fund transfer from one school to another).

What does this mean?

- If a school needs more funds, we cannot reallocate an amount that exceeds the \$75/student allocation. For example, School A has 150 students x \$75/student = \$11,250. This school cannot receive more than \$11,250 in FFVP funding.
- If a school has an abundance of funds, they must still have a minimum of \$50/student allocation. For example, School B has 100 students x \$50/student = \$5,000. This school's allocation cannot be less than \$5,000 in FFVP funding.

This new process also means that reallocations might take longer to complete than in the past- thank you for your patience! It will also be discussed in the April 1st FFVP webinar, among other changes.

For questions, please contact Stephanie Stambach at: stephanie.stambach@maine.gov.

CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Program

christina.derocher@maine.gov

The 2025 At-Risk report has been updated as of 3.18.2025, please see attached. The following information is ready to be updated on the webpage <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/cacfp/atrisk> and it will also need to be included on the Thursday Update once the webpage has been updated.

CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Program

The “Act To Increase Access to Nutritious Foods in Schools by Implementing an After-school Food Program for At-risk Students” is a law that requires any district with a school with 50% or more Free/Reduced Eligible students to participate in CACFP At Risk Afterschool Snack/Supper Program. The program requires an education/enrichment activity that is available to all students after school. An example could be a homework help group. If the school does not want to participate or does not have qualifying enrichment, the district must opt out after public hearing and school board vote.

The opt out form can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/g/iyM5ATBzbd>

More information regarding the CACFP At Risk Program can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/cacfp/atrisk>

The LD577 Report by District: The following districts Child Nutrition- CACFP At Risk After School ED534- 3.18.2025.pdf to participate in CACFP At Risk or opt out using the guidance from the law: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/LD%20577.pdf>

CNPweb Contact Information

Please make sure that the contact information that is listed on your NSLP Application is current, including the Executive Contact and Food Service Contact. If someone is new and needs permissions or permissions have changed, a new User Access agreement must be submitted to our office.

Better Breakfast Tool Prototype

USDA is doing a soft launch of an optional menu planning tool, called the “Better Breakfast Tool”. This menu planning tool (in MS Excel format) was created to assist school districts with meeting the breakfast nutrition standards for SY 2026. USDA is gathering feedback for improvement and suggestions for future enhancements. We are looking for some nutrition directors to test this prototype and provide feedback. If you are interested, please email Stephanie at stephanie.stambach@maine.gov and she will email the tool.

Comment Period Approaching for Grain Based Desserts and High Protein Yogurt Crediting

The comment period is closing for Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs. The request for information was published December 26, 2024, at [Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#) to obtain input to help inform future policymaking, guidance, and technical assistance related to grain-based desserts and high-protein yogurt crediting in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP).

FNS hosted an informational Webinar for State Agencies, Local Operators, and the Public on January 28 on the Zoom platform. We invite you to view the [webinar recording](#) and [PDF of slides](#).

The public is invited to submit comments to www.regulations.gov through March 26, 2025.

Additional Resources:

- More information about the request for information can be found on the FNS website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-122624>
- Comments can be submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to [Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#) and follow the online instructions for submitting comments. For more information on submitting comments, please see Tips for Submitting Effective Comments here: [Tips-For-Submitting-Effective-Comments.pdf](#). (Please note this is a Federal Register resource and not an FNS resource.)

2025 Farm to School Cook-off

This year marks the 10th anniversary of our annual Farm to School Cook-off! We are also excited to share this is the first year that teams from Aroostook County will be competing. The cook-off aims to showcase the culinary skills of school nutrition professionals, while promoting locally grown products in school meals. Local, challenge ingredients are used in the competition, and this year local eggs will be used in the breakfast meal and local fish will be used in the lunch meal.

Our regional Farm to School Cook-off's are well under way! We have three regional competitions happening this month:

- March 18th: York Regional Cook-off at Kennebunk High School
 - Teams competing are from RSU 21 and RSU 60
- March 20th: Aroostook Regional Cook-off at Madawaska Middle/High School
 - Teams competing are from Madawaska Public Schools, RSU 33 and MSAD 27
- March 25th : Western Regional Cook-off at Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School
 - Teams competing are RSU 17 and RSU 52

Next week, we will announce the winners from each competition, as well as highlights. The top teams from each regional competition will advance to the finals on April 17th at the Culinary Classroom in Augusta. We wish all teams the best of luck!

Below are pictures from our York regional Farm to School Cook-off in Kennebunk.



Webinars

One more opportunity for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) training

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.

Click the [date](#) for the link to register

March 26, 2025

1:30pm

Child Nutrition Updates

March 31, 2025

1:30pm

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Updates

April 1, 2025

1:30pm

This training will cover updates and changes to the program for SY 2025 and beyond, as well as a refresher of FFVP requirements. All school districts that are currently participating in FFVP are strongly encouraged to attend.

ServSafe-Managers

Class and Exam

Lake Region Vocation Center
1877 Roosevelt Trail
Naples

Tuesday, April 22, 2025 - 9:00am-3:00pm

Wednesday, April 23, 2025 - 8:00am-approx. noon for the test

The class is for school food service and CACFP only

Books are ordered and mail once registration has ended

Please note start times for each day

Bring photo id, pen or pencils with erasers

You must provide an email address as certificates are sent via email.

Testing will begin around noon on the second day

Lunch is provided on the first day.

Charge for the class is \$102

Payable by credit card, at the time of registration.

Registration deadline - March 27, 2025

Summer Food Service Program

New Sponsor and Make-up Sponsor Training

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.

May 15, 2025

9:00am-1:00pm

Child Nutrition Office

Deering Building

Room 101

90 Blossom Lane

Augusta

All other Summer training sessions have reached capacity.

Local Foods Training

The Good Crust Dinner Rolls!

Join Katie, our Farm & Sea to School Coordinator for a local foods training with The Good Crust! This training will highlight The Good Crust's BRAND-NEW dinner rolls made with 100% Maine grown grain! During this training, we will demonstrate different ways to prepare and utilize the rolls, including as classic dinner rolls, slider buns, and pull-apart bread. This training is eligible for districts operating NSLP to receive an extra \$500 in state Local Foods Fund reimbursements (which can be used to purchase The Good Crust dough!)

Please reach out to Katie with any questions at
katie.knowles@maine.gov

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

10:00am - 1:00pm

Child Nutrition Culinary Classroom

Deering Building

90 Blossom Lane

Augusta

Space is limited- Use this [link](#) to register

Register



Presenters:

Roxanne Bruce - Regional Local Foods Project Coordinator for Aroostook County

Martha Poliquin - Regional Local Foods Project Manager

Sponsors/Vendors:

Presque Isle Elks, FarmDrop; Future Farmers of America; Maine 4-H; Bootstrap Farmer; SNAP-Ed, ACAP, The Local Food Switchboard, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, Full Plates Full Potential, Maine Ag In The Classroom



Goals:

Morning Session

(Open to Nutrition Directors and their staff 9am - 12:30pm)

Present Strategies to Increase Fruit & Vegetable Consumption: Implement practical strategies to encourage students to eat more local fruits and vegetables.

Increase Food Preparation Skills: Learn new ways to utilize value-added local products and create appealing dishes.

Expand Knowledge of Local Food Systems: Understand aquaculture, micro greens, and school gardens as potential sources of food for schools.

Enhance Recipe Development and Resources: Explore diverse recipe sources for school nutrition programs; Learn how to substitute ingredients for allergies.

Afternoon Session

(Open to Farmers, Teachers and Directors from 1pm - 4pm)

Improve Food Procurement Practices: The basics of food grading systems, order sizing, and various procurement methods.

Strengthen Local Food Education: Develop collaborative relationships with teachers, ME Ag in the Classroom, SNAP-Ed, and FFA to integrate local food education into the curriculum.

Build Relationships with Local Farmers: Connect with farmers to initiate conversations about sourcing local products.

Gather Data on Student Preferences: Collect information on students' favorite fruits and vegetables to inform menu planning.



April 21, 2025

Aroostook County Local Foods Training

Point of Contact: Roxanne Bruce Regional Local Food Coordinator for Aroostook County

Location: Elks Lodge 508 Main Street Presque Isle ME 04769

Doors Open: 9:00am for Nutrition Directors and Kitchen Staff

Doors Open: 1:00pm for Teachers and Farmers

Skills Covered

Culinary Skills for School Kitchens

Recipe Variations

Conducting Taste Tests with Students

Local Procurement Strategies

How to Connect with Local Farmers and Producers

Your DOE Regional Local Food Project Team

Project Manager - **Martha Poliquin** (martha.poliquin@maine.gov)

York County - **Ali Mediate** (ali.mediate@maine.gov)

Downeast (Hancock & Washington Counties) - **Sandy Fortin** (sandy.fortin@maine.gov)

Aroostook County - **Roxanne Bruce** (roxanne.bruce@maine.gov)

Western Maine (Oxford, Androscoggin, Franklin Counties) -

Catherine Brown (catherine.brown@maine.gov)

State Wide Participation in 2025/26 School year!

Schedule of Events

Morning geared towards School Nutrition Directors and their Staff

- Registration, Visit Vendors (5 vendors anticipated), Open Discussion,
- Discussions on sourcing recipes and varying their appearance.
- Hands on culinary skills and food preparation
- Increasing participation in Fruit and Vegetable Consumption through the presentation.

Noon - 12:30 pm for Directors and Staff Sampling and Taste Testing

- Setting up and running a taste testing using fruits, vegetables, and value added products from the morning training.
- Sampling fruits, vegetables and value added products from Maine Producers
- Quick introductions from Sponsors and Vendors.
- Lunch break 12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

Afternoon workshops - Directors, staff, teachers, and farmers.

- Visit Vendors, Vendor Demos, participate in charting the most used fruits and vegetables in our Aroostook County Schools, and the student's favorite ones.
- Local food procurement opportunities through forward purchasing agreements, micro purchases, bids and more.
- The basics of grading Produce, Meat, and Eggs to make ordering easier. Showing some examples of produce quality and discussing translating portions to farm orders.
- Farm to School Networking, get to know the farm near your school and begin the sourcing conversation. School Nutrition Directors will receive a list of question prompts to help with starting the conversation.



Farmers, YOU ARE INVITED!

Join us from **1pm - 4pm** as the school nutrition directors, kitchen staff and teachers learn about purchasing local foods. Be a part of the Farm to School Networking portion, and work with the Regional Local Foods Project Staff to add your farm to the growing list of farmers who are selling to schools.

Learn what to consider when selling to schools. It's easy!

Farmers who would like some of their products used in the taste testing or who wish to donate products for the schools to sample, please reach out to Roxanne at least 1 week prior to the event. roxanne.bruce@maine.gov

save
the
date

3/28/25

8:30-2:00

What: Lead to Succeed Training on
'Navigating Difficult Conversation,'
followed by peer to peer networking
Lite Breakfast & Lunch included

Location: Fireside Lounge at UMaine Augusta
46 University Drive, Augusta

Cost: FREE to MSNA Members
(thanks to vendor sponsorship)