



Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) News from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE)

December 8, 2025

Updates to Special Diet Accommodations

Check out the newly updated [Understanding Special Diet Accommodations for Child Nutrition Programs](#) guide. No significant content changes were made. The guide and [Special Diet Statement Request Form](#) was reformatted for easier understanding. Sponsors are not required to use the new MDE form. All documents are found on the Special Dietary Needs [Forms and Instructions](#) webpage. Translations into Spanish, Arabic and Bengali will be available soon. Email MDE-SchoolNutrition@Michigan.gov to request the file.

Meal Component Tool

The [Certification Meal Pattern Worksheets](#) (also called Meal Component Tool and 6-cent menu tool) is required for an Administrative Review. It is also the best practice to use for all National School Lunch Programs (NSLP)/ School Breakfast Programs (SBP) sponsors. Day One of the School Meals Overview Workshop provides in-depth training on how to complete the tool.

The meal component tools have not been updated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) since School Year (SY) 2023-24. The SY 2023-24 are the correct versions to use, however, there have been meal pattern updates since then. If you serve meat/meat alternate at breakfast without a grain, it will have a red box. This is ok. The current meal pattern allows for no grain serving at breakfast. You may also get a red box if you are over the maximum servings at breakfast and

lunch. This is also ok, if you are within the calories, saturated fat, and sodium requirements.

Online Training Module Certificates

All Certificates of Completion for the MDE [Online Training Modules](#) are currently unavailable. The team is working to get them fixed. You may take a screenshot of the completion screen to keep for your documentation. If you need a certificate, email MDE-ONS-Training@Michigan.gov. All modules will be fixed within the next few weeks. Thank you for your patience.

Tuesday at 2pm Webinars

Zoom updates required the rescheduling of all meetings. If you had registered previously for Tuesday at 2, you should have received an updated meeting link. You may still register using the links below.

- December 2 – Professional Standards - [register](#)
 - December 9 – Production Records - [register](#)
 - December 16 – Special Dietary Needs - [register](#)
 - January 6 – Program Monitoring - [register](#)
 - January 13 – SFA Verification Collection Report (VCR) - [register](#)
 - January 20 – Food Service Contracts: Bid Procedures, Timelines - [register](#)
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10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms Updates and Reminders

Lake Michigan School Food System Spark and Innovation Collaborative Awards Reminder

The [Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub grants](#) are open and accepting applications through January 23, 2026! Funded by the USDA and convened by the Illinois Public Health Institute, this grant-making initiative supports innovative ideas that contribute to a more local and nourishing food system in Michigan and across Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana.

[Spark Awards](#) fund projects that need a short-term infusion of funds for school food system and product improvements, such as capacity-building, planning, and product-testing projects (\$30,000-\$100,000 per year).

[Innovation Collaborative Awards](#) fund projects that promote systems-level changes of the school food system, such as scaling up of programs, forming

regional partnerships, or developing or integrating new programs or products (\$250,000-\$500,000 over 2.5 years).

Those interested in applying — including farmers, food producers, School Food Authorities and others working to improve school meals — should reach out via the [Michigan Interest Form](#). MSU's Center for Regional Food Systems is a leading partner for Michigan and their staff offers [weekly drop-in office hours](#) to answer questions. You can also reach out directly to [Julie Lehman](#), who is available to answer questions and help guide you through the application process, as well as connect you with partners and resources to bring your ideas to life. Grantees will receive ongoing support tailored to their needs and goals.

This initiative is a bold, collaborative effort that will strengthen the Michigan food system while offering students meals that reflect the best of the region's communities. You can find more information about the [Innovation Hub HERE](#).

Additional Informational Links:

Request for Applications and Frequently Asked Questions

- [Innovation Hub RFAs](#)
- [Innovation Hub grants FAQ](#)

Office Hours

Have questions about applying or just want to talk through ideas? The state lead team from Michigan is available 3 times a week to answer questions and offer support with applications. Weekly drop-in office hours:

- Tuesday, 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST - with Julie Lehman
- Wednesday, 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. EST - with May Tsupros
- Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. EST - with Julie Lehman

The Zoom link for drop-in office hours is [posted online here](#).

Michigan Applicant Interest Form & Directory

Want to stay up to date on Innovation Hub resources and connect with other interested Michigan applicants? Fill out the [Michigan Interest Form](#) linked on the [Center for Regional Food Systems](#) website. Michigan grant applicants are provided with free grant writing support. Interested in connecting with others looking at this grant? Check out the [Michigan Interested Applicants Directory](#).

School Meals Overview Workshop Available

Registration for the first School Meals Overview Workshop for the new school year is open. This hands-on, activity-based workshop covers menu development, recipes and labels, production records, meal component tool, application processing, counting and claiming, direct certification and verification. The workshop will provide active sessions where food service personnel can interact with MDE staff to resolve any issues that would result in findings during an Administrative Review.

The workshop consists of two days – Day One will cover nutrition related information and Day Two will cover administrative information. There is no cost for the workshop and participants are welcome to come one or both days.

Dates: Tuesday, January 20 and Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Location: Oakland Schools, 2111 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford Township 48328

Registration: [Day 1 – Oakland Schools – January 20, 2026](#) and [Day 2 – January 21, 2026](#)

2025 Nomination Requests for Turnip the Beet!

The Meet Up and Eat Up Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Turnip the Beet Award, recognizes outstanding SFSP sponsors across Michigan who work hard to offer high quality meals that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious during the summer months. Three award levels are available: Bronze, Silver, and Gold and are open to all sponsors.

Sponsors may submit a self-nomination or be nominated by another party. The sponsor or other party must fill out the [2025 TUB Nomination Packet](#) and submit a one-month menu to Michigan Department of Education (MDE) SFSP.

Menus should be detailed enough to demonstrate that the meals meet the evaluation criteria. For example, menus should describe:

- Vegetables: fresh, frozen, canned, or dried
- Fruit: fresh, frozen, canned, or dried
- Milk: fat content and if it's flavored
- Whole grain-rich items
- Local food items

Sponsors are encouraged to submit supporting documents to help demonstrate the quality of their meals using photos, testimonials, news clips about the program, and/or invoices of local food purchases. Please do not submit more than ten supporting documents. [Tips for sponsors completing the nomination packet.](#)

The Turnip the Beet nominations (form, menu, and supporting documents) are due by Friday, January 9, 2026, via email to mde-sfsp@michigan.gov.

Winners will be notified by MDE in the spring of 2026.

Meals During Unanticipated Building Closures

MDE has been granted a series of 12 (I) waivers to serve non-congregate meals during Unanticipated School Closures (USC) for all federal Child Nutrition Programs. USC may only be used during unanticipated events such as natural disasters, unscheduled building repairs, court orders related to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes or similar unanticipated events. Both School Food Authorities (SFAs) and non-school sponsors may claim meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) when a school building or day care center is closed due to USC. These waivers are not to be applied for in advance of USC.

Which program should sponsors serve and claim meals through? Claim meals through NSLP when a building is closed and virtual learning is offered, and SFSP when a building is closed and **no** virtual learning is offered. In order to claim in SFSP, sponsors must have participated in SFSP in the last two years, and the site must be eligible to participate. New this year, all programs that claim meals through CACFP may apply for this waiver as well, not just at-risk afterschool programs.

These waivers may be used for:

- Non-congregate (take home) meals service
- Flexibility of meal service times
- Parent and guardian meal pick-up
- Waived for Offer Versus Serve (OVS) for senior high school
- Waived enrichment activities for At-Risk Afterschool in CACFP

USC waivers may be used for up to 10 consecutive days. However, if the USC lasts longer than 10 consecutive days, additional days may be requested.

To serve meals through USC using 12 (I) waivers, sponsors must:

- Watch the Unanticipated School Closure (USC) Webinar located on the Michigan Department of Education's SFSP website under [How to Apply](#) and email MDE-SFSP@michigan.gov stating that you have reviewed the training.
- Complete the [USC Meal Service During Unanticipated School Closure Request Form](#) located on the Michigan Department of Education's SFSP website under [How to Apply](#).
- **USC SFSP only:** Sponsors must amend their 2026 CNP: Coordinated Application in NexSys and update the calendar for days the site served

meals. The application must be amended by the end of the month for which the waiver was used.

For additional questions, please email MDE-SFSP@michigan.gov.

Ongoing Social Media Campaign: What's for Lunch?

MDE is running a social media campaign that highlights the great lunches being served throughout our state. It highlights lunches being served in the National School Lunch Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. Get involved by showing off the great lunches being served. Please share your pictures and story by filling out the form at the link below. Pictures will be shared on [MDE's Facebook Page](#). MDE appreciates all who have submitted photos. Please watch this video from the Georgia Department of Education on [How to Take GREAT School Meal Photos](#). We want to ensure the photos that you submit are appealing and representative of all the healthy and innovative lunches served across the state.

[What's For Lunch?](#)

New MIND 2.0 Dashboard and Features

If you have logged in to the Michigan Nutrition Data System (MIND 2.0) recently, you will notice a new look. The dashboard has been updated with relevant informational cards for the different programs or systems you participate in.

To access the claim sub-systems, simply click on "MIND Legacy" in the left menu bar. The user management and access request function has also been overhauled and is available from the left menu. Same functions, new location.

System Access Help

If you have any trouble accessing this or any other system, contact us at MDE-ONS-Access@Michigan.gov. In the meantime:

- If you are unsure of what system you need access to, you can find a summary of each of the systems and what they do [HERE](#).
- If you need step by step instructions for getting access to a system, you can find instructions [HERE](#).
- You can find ALL of the system help documents [HERE](#).

Training Corner

Guidance for Food Handlers and the Management of Halal Food

Michigan State University Extension is hosting the training, "Guidance for the Food Handler and Management of Halal Food," this fall. This training is for food handlers and educators with responsibilities related to nutrition and food. Participants will increase their knowledge and confidence in how to properly handle halal food for consumers requiring a halal diet and will be able to incorporate with relevant food safety knowledge.

Registration:

- Tuesday, December 9, 2025; 3 - 4:30 p.m. ET
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Online Training Modules Updates

Many [online training modules](#) have been updated for the new school year. They are a convenient way to train staff throughout the year. Some new topics have been added also and include the following:

- [Is it Whole Grain-Rich \(WGR\)?](#)
 - [How to Use Exhibit A Grains Chart and Tool](#)
 - [Procuring a Vended Meals Contract: The Bid Process for CACFP and SFSP Non-School Sponsors](#)
 - [Procuring a Vended Meals Contract: The Bid Process for School Sponsors](#)
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Contact Us

Email: MDE-SchoolNutrition@Michigan.gov

If you or someone you know is interested in receiving the Child Nutrition Programs News and Updates and Bulletins, visit [Child Nutrition Programs News and Updates Subscription](#).

Support

[School Nutrition Programs](#)
www.Michigan.gov/SchoolNutrition

Food Distribution

www.Michigan.gov/MDE-FDP
Email: MDE-FMFD@Michigan.gov

Fiscal and Administrative Services

www.Michigan.gov/MDE-FAST
Email: MDE-Fiscal@Michigan.gov

Email: MDE-SchoolNutrition@Michigan.gov

Summer Food Service Program
www.Michigan.gov/SFSP
Email: MDE-SFSP@Michigan.gov

Child and Adult Care Food Program
www.Michigan.gov/CACFP
Email: MDE-CACFP@Michigan.gov

Procurement and Contracts
www.Michigan.gov/MDE-FoodServiceContracts
Email: MDE-FSMC-Vended@Michigan.gov

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

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