# Back to School Toolkit

# School Year 2022–2023



*Last updated on 05/03/2022*

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## Introduction

**Objective:** The purpose of this toolkit is to provide information and resources to assist Virginia schools and education sites in transitioning from the COVID-19 pandemic to a new normal. Topics include federal and state regulation updates, transitional nutrition standards, National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program refreshers, reinvesting in school meals, eligibility, marketing strategies, and more.

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic required flexibility, resiliency, and changes to the way schools served students. The USDA was able to provide waivers through temporary authority provided by Congress to facilitate safe meal service during the pandemic. As we move out of the pandemic, the waivers and flexibilities are set to expire on June 30, 2022. Schools and education centers must transition to a new normal, which includes a return to pre-pandemic operations.

**Target Audience:** School/site nutrition directors and staff, administrators, and community partners.

## Regulation Updates

### Federal Updates

In March 2022, Congress failed to include language in its omnibus spending bill giving the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) ongoing nationwide waiver authority, as it had since March 2020. Twelve waivers expire at the conclusion of the 2021–2022 school year, including non-congregate feeding, parent/guardian pick-up, meal service times, and more. School food authorities (SFAs) and community sponsors will transition to pre-pandemic operations beginning in Summer 2022. On April 18, 2022, the USDA announced it would encourage states to pursue individual state waivers through the 12(l) waiver process.

The VDOE-SNP applied for the following waivers to be used only if COVID-19 impacts congregate feeding options:

#### **National School Lunch Program (**NSLP) **and School Breakfast Program (SBP) Waivers**

* Non-Congregate Meal Service
* Parent/Guardian Pick-up
* Meal Service Times
* Offer vs. Serve

#### Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Waivers

* Parent/Guardian FFVP Pick-up
* Alternate Sites

#### Unanticipated School Closures (as they apply to the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP or to Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) operations)

* Non-Congregate Meal Service during Unanticipated School Closures in SY 2022–2023
* Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up during Unanticipated School Closures in SY 2022–2023
* Meal Service Times during Unanticipated School Closures in SY 2022–2023
* Meals at School Sites for Unanticipated School Closures in SY 2022–2023

#### CACFP Waivers

* Non-Congregate Meal Service
* Parent/Guardian Pick-up
* Meal Service Times

*Please note these waivers are pending approval by the USDA.*

#### [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/consolidated-appropriations-act-2022)

On March 15, 2022, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, was enacted; Sections 740, 751, and 752 of Division A impact child nutrition program operators. Specifically, in Section 740 of the Act, Congress allows SFAs participating in the SBP to credit any vegetable offered, including potatoes and other starchy vegetables, in place of fruit without including vegetables from other subgroups in the weekly menus.

Section 751 of the Appropriations Act extends the prohibition on using federal funds to procure raw or processed poultry products imported into the United States from the People’s Republic of China through September 30, 2022.

Under Section 752 of the Act, only a SFA that had a negative balance in the nonprofit food service account as of December 31, 2021, is required to establish a price for paid lunches served through the NSLP.

Previous iterations of the Consolidated Appropriations Act included a prohibition on using federal funds to restrict the offering of lowfat flavored milk in the NSLP or SBP; the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, did not include this language. Lowfat flavored milk may continue to be served as outlined in the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021–2022. Beginning July 1, 2022, the Transitional Meal Pattern Standards go into effect, allowing low-fat flavored milk to be offered in both the NSLP and SBP, as well as in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Special Milk Program (SMP) for children six and older.

### State Policy Updates

#### [House Bill 1426](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-79.7%3A1/)

This bill updated the Code of Virginia to require each school board to require each public elementary and secondary school in the local school division to participate in the federal NSLP and the federal SBP administered by the USDA and to make meals available pursuant to such programs to any student who requests such a meal, regardless of whether such student has the money to pay for the meal or owes money for meals previously provided, unless the student's parent has provided written permission to the school board to withhold such a meal from the student. Practically speaking, this requirement applies to any instance in which a student is required to attend school for instruction, such as a regular instruction day or during academic summer school.

#### [House Bill 2135](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-207.4%3A2/)

This bill updated the Code of Virginia to require eligible schools to operate the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of the CACFP, effective for school year 2022–2023, or July 1 of this year. Any school that has a free and reduced-price rate of 50 percent or higher that also offers afterschool academic or enrichment activities will be required to participate in the program. It’s important to note that if a school has a free and reduced-price rate of 50 percent or higher but does not offer academic or enrichment activities, the school is not required to operate the program. While the legislation did include waiver authority for the Superintendent for Public Instruction, school divisions may partner with community sponsors to operate the At-Risk program in schools rather than the SFA and still satisfy the requirement. However, if partnership is not a viable opportunity, and school divisions determine program operation would not be financially viable, they may submit a waiver to request to our office for school year 2022–2023.

#### State Reduced-Price Funding

Funding was included in the biennium state budget to expand access to the SBP and NSLP. Specifically, $4.1 million in general revenue funds were allocated to reduce or eliminate the cost of school breakfast and school lunch for students eligible for reduced-price meals across two school years. As divisions prepare to return to “normal” operations for school year 2022–2023, please be aware that this funding is available until it has been fully exhausted.

#### [House Bill 583](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-79.7/)

House Bill 583 updates the language in the Code of Virginia around school meal debt policies. Specifically, the legislation prohibits public school board employees from denying access to or participation in extracurricular activities based on existing meal debt or the inability to pay for meals.

As a reminder, school meal debt policies must include the following provisions:

* a prohibition of requiring students who owe meal debt to throw meals away, do chores in exchange for a meal, or wear a wristband or handstamp;
* a prohibition from school boards communicating directly with a student who owes meal debt;
* a prohibition to prevent school boards from filing lawsuits against the families of students who owe meal debt or do not have the ability to pay for a meal; and
* the ability for school boards to solicit and receive donations or other funds for the purpose of offsetting or eliminating school meal debt.

#### [House Bill 587](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-207.2%3A2/)

This bill reduces the amount of time schools have to process free and reduced-price meal applications from the 10 days allowed by federal regulation to six working days after the date of receipt of the completed application. Given the transition back to pre-pandemic operations, this bill has a delayed implementation date of August 2023.

##

## Transitional Nutrition Standards

School nutrition professionals across Virginia have worked tirelessly through the COVID-19 pandemic to provide healthy school meals to all children. To continue to provide food access to students while mitigating factors of COVID-19, the USDA provided program waivers to allow school nutrition professionals the operational and logistical flexibilities needed to overcome pandemic-related challenges. To continue to assist schools with transitioning back to “normal” program operations, the USDA established the Transitional Nutrition Standards. The final rule is effective July 1, 2022. The new rule establishes standards for milk, whole grains, and sodium for school years 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 while the USDA works to develop long-term nutrition standards based on the newest Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

### Milk

Schools and child care providers may offer flavored, low-fat (1%) milk in addition to unflavored, low-fat milk and flavored or unflavored nonfat milk.

### Sodium

The weekly sodium limit for school lunch and breakfast will remain at the current level, known as Target 1, for school year 2022–2023. For school lunch only, the limit will decrease marginally (by 10 percent) in school year 2023–2024 to put schools on an achievable path toward long-term sodium reduction, which will be forthcoming.

### Whole Grains

At least 80 percent of the grains served in school lunch and breakfast **per week** must be whole grain-rich (containing at least 50 percent whole grains).

### Resources

* USDA website [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium - Final Rule](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-020722)
* USDA handout [10 Reasons to Build Back Better with School Meals](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/bbbsm-ten-reasons.pdf)
* USDA fact sheet [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/bbbsm-fact-sheet.pdf)
* USDA webinar for state agencies and SFAs: [Transitional Standards for Milk, Sodium, and Whole Grains](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/transitional-standards-milk-sodium-whole-grains-webinar-state-agencies-sfas)

## National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs Refresher

As school nutrition professionals continue to provide good, healthy food to their students, the Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP) is here to support and assist the transition back to the NSLP and SBP. The NSLP and SBP requirements state that schools must offer nutritious, well-balanced, and age-appropriate meals to all the children they serve to improve their diets and safeguard their heath [(7 CFR 210.10(a) (1))](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/7/220.8). The food-based menu planning approach includes three required grade groups: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 [(7 CFR 220.8(c)(1)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/7/220.8) and 7 CFR 210.10(c) (1)). For grades K-12, dietary specifications for calories, sodium, and saturated fat are also in place. These standards are essential to help ensure that all schools nationwide follow uniform, science-based standards to deliver wholesome meals in the most efficient and effective way. These [nutrition standards](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals) ensure that children are offered wholesome foods that optimize health and academic achievement and minimize the risk of long-term chronic diseases and illness.

The USDA released [Memo SP05-2022 Meal Requirements under the NSLP and SBP](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SP05-2022os.pdf) that contains updated guidance as well as questions and answers for program operators. This memo highlights the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements and reflects the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium that take effect in school year 2022–2023.

### National School Lunch Program

Per 7 CFR 210.10 (c), the [NSLP Meal Pattern](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/nslp-meal-pattern-chart-2022.pdf) requires five food components, each with daily and weekly minimums, including:

1. Fruits
2. Vegetables (including grades K-12 weekly requirement for vegetable variety with minimum requirements for each of the five vegetable subgroups, including: dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), starchy, and “other” vegetables)
3. Grains
4. Meats/Meat Alternates
5. Fluid Milk

### School Breakfast Program

Per 7 CFR 220.8(c), the [SBP Meal Pattern](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/school-breakfast-meal-pattern-charts-2022.pdf) requires three food components, each with daily and weekly minimums, including:

1. Fruits (Vegetables may be offered in place of fruit)
2. Grains (Meats/Meat Alternates may be offered in place of Grains)
3. Fluid Milk

### Offer vs Serve (OVS)

[Offer versus Serve (OVS)](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP41-2015av2.pdf) is a provision in the NSLP and SBP that allows students to decline some of the food offered. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste in the school meal programs while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat. OVS is optional for all grade levels at breakfast (7 CFR 220.8(e)) and required at the senior high level only for lunch (7 CFR 210.10(e)).

At lunch, schools must offer students all five required food components in at least the minimum required amounts. The components at lunch are: meats/meat alternates; grains; fruit; vegetables; and fluid milk. Under OVS, a student must take at least three components in the required serving sizes. One selection must be at least ½ cup from either the fruit or vegetable component.

At breakfast, schools must offer students all three required food components in at least the minimum required amounts. The components at breakfast are: grains (with optional meats/meat alternates allowed); juice/fruit/vegetable; and milk. Under OVS, a student must be offered at least four food items and must select at least three food items, one of which must be ½ cup of fruit or vegetables for OVS.

### Preschool Children

Schools are encouraged to offer students age-appropriate meals. Schools serving meals to infants and preschool-aged children must comply with the meal patterns for infants and preschool-aged children established in 7 CFR 210.10(p) for lunch and in 7 CFR 220.8(o) for breakfast. However, when schools serve preschoolers and K-5 students together, in the same area and at the same time, schools have flexibility to offer a single menu using the K-5 meal pattern in 7 CFR 210.10(c) for lunch and in 7 CFR 22.8(c) for breakfast.

Should you have additional questions, please contact your [assigned SNP Regional Specialist](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/resources/region_specialists.shtml).

### Resources

* USDA Memo [SP 05-2022 Meal Requirements under NSLP and SBP: Q&A](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SP05-2022os.pdf#page=3)
* USDA Website [National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/nslp-meal-pattern-chart-2022.pdf)
* USDA Website [School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern Chart](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/meal-pattern-chart)
* USDA Website [School Meals Sodium Timeline](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/school-lunch-and-breakfast-sodium-limits-and-timeline)
* USDA Website [Product Formulation Tip Sheet](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf)
* USDA Website [Certification of Compliance](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/certification-compliance)
* USDA Website [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs)
* USDA Website [Menu Certification Short and Long Week Calculations](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/short-and-long-week-calculations)
* USDA Website [Offer Versus Serve Guidance](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP41-2015av2.pdf)
* USDA Website [OVS Tip Sheet for SBP](https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/90967/file/OVS-Breakfast-Tip-Sheet.pdf)
* USDA Website [OVS Tip Sheet for NSLP](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-lunch-program-tip-sheet)
* USDA Website [Flexibility for Co-Mingled Preschool Meals](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/flexibility-co-mingled-preschool-meals-questions-and-answers)
* USDA Website [Serving School Meals to Preschoolers](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/ServingSchoolMealstoPreschoolers.pdf)
* USDA Website [Team Nutrition Resource Order Form](https://pueblo.gpo.gov/TN/TNPubs.php)

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##

## Eligibility

A return to traditional NSLP and SBP operation in SY 2022–2023 also means, for schools that do not participate in CEP or are establishing a base year for Provisions 1, 2, or 3, a return to meal application distribution, web-based meal applications, application review and approval or denial, household eligibility notification, and verification. Direct certification is another important tool in the eligibility toolkit for all schools - CEP, non-CEP, and Provision. The requirements, reminders, and resources below serve as a guide to help school divisions, private schools, and other NSLP sponsors maximize eligibility during this transition.

### Direct Certification

Direct certification (DC) is a process to qualify students for free or reduced-price meals without a meal application. LEAs upload a formatted enrollment file to the SNPWeb DC module for matching to the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) data file. The VDSS file includes school-age children (4–21 years old) who are part of a household that receives SNAP or TANF; are in foster care placement; or **receive Medicaid and have household income** that meets the free or reduced-price income eligibility guidelines. Students who are directly certified for free or reduced-price meals through this process are eligible without further application and must be uploaded to the local LEA eligibility software to receive meal benefits.

* **All schools** in Virginia, CEP, non-CEP, and Provision are **required to conduct DC once each month** from July-June.
* The monthly **VDSS source file is updated around the 15th** of each month.
	+ Check the **last DSS Source File** date to confirm a new monthly file is available. If the month in the file date is the same as the current month, it’s the newest file.
* **Monthly DC matching and household notification**:
	+ **reduces** the number of **meal applications** submitted;
	+ **provides seamless access** to free and reduced-price meals to students who already qualify through other means-tested programs;
	+ **reduces administrative burden** for the LEA;
	+ **monthly matching and adjudication** of possible and extended eligibility **streamlines the DC process and reduces the workload** compared to periodic matching three times per year; and
	+ increased DC matching **increases CEP eligibility and claiming percentages**.
* The **DC module is being enhanced** to increase automatic matches, eliminate duplicates in possible and extended matching, and align the VDSS source file with the LEA enrollment file. **More information will be provided this summer**, including training on the refreshed DC module.

### Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications

One important advantage of CEP is to eliminate the burden of household meal applications for schools and families. CEP schools must notify households annually of the availability of meals at no cost to all students. CEP schools are prohibited from distributing and approving meal applications for the NSLP/SBP or for any other purpose in the LEA, such as fee waivers or identification of economically disadvantaged status. Refer to the [USDA CEP Planning and Implementation Guidance](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP61-2016-CEP_Guidance.pdf) for more information, including page 33, *Alternate Income Forms*.

Non-CEP schools are required to provide all households either a notification of their student’s DC approval, or, if the student is not directly certified, a letter to households and meal application to inform them of the availability of free or reduced-price meals at school [7 CFR 245.6(c)(6) and 7 CFR 256.6(c)(6)(ii)]. Refer to the VDOE Superintendent’s Memo on the annual application packet (to be published in May) and the USDA [*Eligibility Manual for School Meals*](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP36_CACFP15_SFSP11-2017a1.pdf) for detailed information about the application process.

The required letter to households and application may be provided by US mail, as part of a student information packet, by email, or as part of an online application packet. Effective July 2019, the General Assembly required Virginia schools to provide a [web-based meal application](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2019/index.shtml#may) as an option for all households.

Households with students who attend non-CEP schools have not been required to submit a meal application to receive a meal at no cost since 2019. Some eligible households may never have submitted an application for free or reduced-price meals. It is crucial for LEAs with non-CEP schools to conduct outreach and let households know a meal application will be required to qualify for free or reduced-price meals in the new school year.

* **Remember:** meal applications for the new school year must use the new school year prototype or approved alternate and the new income eligibility guidelines. New school year applications cannot be approved prior to **July 1, annually**.
* **Carryover eligibility** for applications approved in the **2021–2022 school year** will be in effect for the usual **30 operating days into the new school year** or until a new application is approved or denied, whichever is earlier.
	+ **The USDA has not provided guidance on carryover for applications that were approved prior to the 2021–2022 school year** and have been carried over due to pandemic operation for P-EBT and economically disadvantaged status.
	+ LEAS are encouraged to plan as if the **2019–2020 and 2020–2021 applications will not carry over**.
	+ Target early outreach to households with a most recent application date in 2019–2020 or 2020–2021.
* **Reach out to households after July 1**, with information about your online application platform.
	+ **Web-based applications** have been proven to **reduce household errors**, **improve validity** of information, and **eliminate missing information**. Approval time decreases and **access to meals increases.**
	+ Work with school partners to **provide parents/guardians access to computers** during school orientation and back-to-school nights to complete an online application. **Remember: protect privacy** and eliminate overt identification of eligible households and students.
	+ Use **different methods** to remind households about completing an application. Parents of school-age children may respond to **school related information on social media, by text or email** rather than a letter or phone call.
* The [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](https://www.cbpp.org/research/key-steps-to-improve-access-to-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals) offers these key steps to encourage eligible families to apply:
	+ Provide materials in a **language and at a level that parents can understand**.
	+ **Ask only for information necessary** to determine eligibility.
	+ **Reduce the potential for** applicants to make calculation **errors**.
	+ **Include school meals information in routine contacts with families and communities throughout the school year** to encourage newly eligible families to apply.
* The [USDA web-based prototype application](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/web-based-prototype-application) was designed with these key steps in mind. The prototype code is open source for any software vendor or LEA to use in creating their online application as part of their integrated data management system.
* The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) developed a toolkit of ideas and resources to help schools increase applications for school meals during the pandemic. Resources include outreach strategies, sample website language, sample emails to families, sample social media posts and more.

### Verification

Verification of a sample of error-prone applications is required annually for all non-CEP schools and base year Provision schools that are required to collect and approve meal applications. CEP schools are not required to conduct verification. All schools (CEP, non-CEP, and Provision schools in a base year or in a non-base year) are required to complete certain information in the SNPWeb Verification Report annually.

Refer to the USDA [*Eligibility Manual for School Meals*](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP36_CACFP15_SFSP11-2017a1.pdf) and *Verification*, beginning on page 96, for more information. A VDOE-SNP e-learning module on verification is available in the [Rise.com platform](https://vdoe-school-nutrition.rise.com/). To view the module and receive a certificate of completion, you must be an enrolled elearner in RISE. [Visit the SNP webpage for instructions on how to enroll](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/training/index.shtml).

#### Important Verification Timelines

* October 1 - the number of approved applications on file as of October 1 is used to determine the verification sample size and reported in the SNPWeb verification report.
	+ Immediately after October 1, enter the verification sample size calculated by your local eligibility software into the SNPWeb verification report to confirm the sample size is correct.
	+ If there is a discrepancy, contact the assigned VDOE SNP specialist for assistance.
* October 1–November 15 - the verification process is conducted.
	+ Pull the sample of applications to be verified from error-prone applications.
	+ Notify households in writing of their selection for verification using the prototype form letter.
	+ Allow two weeks for an initial response from the household.
	+ If the household does not respond within two weeks of the initial contact, send the combined required second notice and notice of adverse action using he prototype form.
* November 15 - complete all verification activity no later than the November 15 deadline.
* December 15 - complete all required information in the SNPWeb verification report, whether or not the LEA was required to conduct verification.

### Resources

* USDA Manual [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP36_CACFP15_SFSP11-2017a1.pdf), July 18, 2017
* USDA Guidance [CEP Planning and Implementation Guidance](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP61-2016-CEP_Guidance.pdf), September 2016
* CBPP Research [*Key Steps to Improve Access to Free and Reduced-price School Meals*](https://www.cbpp.org/research/key-steps-to-improve-access-to-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals)
* FRAC Toolkit [Strategies to Increase Applications for School Meals Toolkit](https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/FRAC_SchoolMealsToolkit_Jan2021.pdf)
* Maryland Hunger Solutions [Best Practices in School Meal Application Collection](https://www.mdhungersolutions.org/pdf/best_practices_school_meal_application.pdf)

##

## Emphasis on Staffing

The following information was adapted from the No Kid Hungry resource, *Reinvesting in School Meals*, and highlights ideas for using recent additional funds made available by the USDA.

### Staffing

* Hire additional food service staff to expand menu offerings and do more scratch cooking.
* Hire a menu planner/student input coordinator to lead menu planning and offer nutrition education.
* Increase staff wages.
* Hire IT and/or communications staff for food service support. In addition to ensuring that hardware and software are functioning properly, they can manage social media and website communications.
* Hire a consultant to assist with yearly planning and to help prepare for an administrative review.
* Hire a maintenance technician for foodservice/custodial duties. This staff member can conduct routine maintenance on equipment and can offer an extra support cleaning as needed.
* Provide staff with uniforms. Consider purchasing branded chef coats featuring the school, division, or department logo. This can help boost staff pride and improve student perception of the program.
* Contract with a cleaning service to launder staff uniforms.
* Market available job positions. Utilize the [*Help Wanted Marketing Toolkit*](https://nutristudentsk-12.com/cafeteria-help-wanted/recruitment-tool-kit/) from Nutristudents K-12 featuring pre-designed social media content, flyers, job posting templates, and boilerplate ads that you can customize with your school or division information.
* Work with your culinary arts program. Utilize students in the cafeteria to help with prepping foods, stocking, and other tasks as part of continuing education and hands-on experience.

### Dealing with Staffing Shortages

Staffing is an integral part of school nutrition programs. Below are some ideas that can be utilized to help SFAs deal with staffing shortages.

* Use a kitchen after school hours to create a central kitchen. Train 4–5 cooks to prepare batch recipes during afternoon hours when the kitchens are not normally in use. These foods can be diverted to other schools that are short staffed. Additionally, you can use USDA Foods and recipes to reduce food costs. With batch cooking at a centralized location, the taste and consistency of menu items will be uniform across all schools.
* Use tick sheets and clickers. Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools can continue to use tick sheets and clickers for meal counting as long as they ensure only one meal is served per student. Use tick sheets for kiosks and alternative breakfast models to assist with staff shortages instead of using the point-of-sale.
* Purchase a sealing machine. Sealing items like sandwiches, salads, fruits, and vegetables helps to keep the food fresher longer and makes it more portable. Additionally, students can serve themselves by quickly picking up these items.
* Revamp packaging. Packaging plays a critical role in the appeal of school meals. Consider how packaging could make your menu offerings stand out and be more attractive to students. Model the packaging that students see regularly at fast-casual restaurants. Purchase bento style boxes (segmented boxes with individual compartments for different items), Chinese restaurant-style takeout boxes, kraft paper bowls and boxes, etc. For a finishing touch, add branded stickers/labels. Make these packages easily accessible for students to pick up.
* Purchase pre-cut and packaged fruits and vegetables. Items such as apple slices and baby carrot snack packs are a quick go to. These items are typically more expensive than whole fruits and vegetables but are a convenient option for students and food service staff (they require less preparation).

## High Priority Checklist

All school year 2021–2022 waivers will expire June 30, 2022, and schools will revert to pre-pandemic operations. Applications will now be required except at CEP schools.

### March/April

* Food service management company (FSMC) bid proposals have been approved by the VDOE-SNP before they are sent out for bid.
* FSMC renewals have been approved by the VDOE-SNP.
* Vendor Contracts have been distributed, returned, approved, and in place for food and supply orders until June.
* Plan a 2–3 week cycle menu for lunch, 1–2 week cycle menu for breakfast for the 2022–2023 school year. Gather CN labels, manufacturer data sheets, and recipes. Complete production records for each menu grade group (K–5, 6–8, and 9–12).
* Provide administrators with a list of schools that meet the SFSP requirement of 50 percent or more free/reduced-price eligibility.
* Work with administration to develop summer school plans including selecting school sites and programs based on eligibility requirements. Develop meal time schedules.
* Determine if sites will continue feeding after summer school ends (June-August).
* Complete the SFSP/SSO applications when they open on April 18. The deadline is June 15, 2022. Utilize the SFSP Sponsor Instructions found in SNPWeb *Download Forms* to assist with completing the application packet. Update NSLP applications for academic summer school if needed. Sites operating NSLP academic summer school will need meal applications approved before meals can be claimed.
* Determine staffing needs for summer feeding at each school and start recruiting.
* Enter the required identified student and enrollment numbers as of April 1 in the CEP Report in SNPWeb by April 15. Have a sortable Excel file with names by school and the division report used for the enrollment numbers.

### May

* Residential child care institutions (RCCIs) will complete NSLP/SBP applications.
* Determine student prices for paid students using the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool.
* Complete the NSLP/SBP applications for the SFA and each school site.
* Work with point of sale vendors to identify when the 2022-2023 Eligibility Income Guidelines information will be updated in your system for application approval. These will be posted in SNPWeb *Download Forms*.
* Update the Food Safety/HACCP plan and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the division and for each site. Food Safety Plans must be site specific and include SOPs for alternative breakfast models (i.e., breakfast in the classroom, breakfast on the go, breakfast after the bell), FFVP, NSLP After School Snack, SFSP feeding sites, and snack and supper served under the At-Risk portion of the CACFP. Contact your assigned SNP Regional Specialist for additional information/resources.
* See Superintendent’s Memo [#054-22 Child and Adult Care Food Program School Year 2022–2023](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2022/054-22.pdf). If a school has 50 percent or more free and reduced eligibility and the school offers an enrichment program after school, the school must serve snacks and/or supper under the At-Risk portion of CACFP. Work with administration to obtain a list of schools that will offer an afterschool program during the 2022–2023 school year and recruit staff.
* Collaborate with principals on meal schedules for the 2022–2023 school year.
* Update the Unpaid Meal Charge Policy. This should be included in the student handbook and posted on the division website. Unpaid Meal Charge Policy templates will be located in SNPWeb *Download Forms*.
* Plan SFSP site procedures and menus. Include copies of daily meal count forms and procedures for deliveries to other sites. Train staff accordingly. Daily meal count forms can be found in SNPWeb *Download Forms* under the SFSP module.
* Use the [SFSP Administrative Guides](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/handbooks) as a resource for planning. Reach out to your regional specialist for guidance if needed.
* REMEMBER, if the school or site has 50 percent or more free/reduced-price eligibility, the site must operate as an open site and offer different meal times for the community to eat meals at your site. The only exception pertains to NSLP academic summer school.
* Prepare food and supply orders and place them accordingly.
* Plan for staffing needs for the 2022–2023 school year.
* Attend the Spring Regional Directors Meeting.
* Determine a la carte items and pricing from new bid prices.

### June

* RCCIs with a combination of day students and residential students must complete the Private Schools Addendum located in SNPWeb *Download Forms*.
* Continue completing applications for NSLP/SBP by June 30.
* Let your specialist know if there are school changes (a school closed, renamed, or a new school is opening).
* Review of the CEP Report begins. If requested, send the sortable Excel file containing identified student names and the enrollment report through the SSWS dropbox only. Do not send the file via email. The file contains sensitive information.
* Complete the SFSP/SSO application by June 15.
* Advertise SFSP/SSO programs on the division website, social media, the school website, etc.
* Prepare a media release for SY 2022–2023 including notification of CEP schools. Templates will be available in the *Download Forms* section of SNPWeb.
* Share cycle menus with managers so they may place initial orders for delivery in August or September.
* Begin training cashiers to use the POS system. This will be an important refresher and new cashiers may be needed.
* Distribute parent reminders regarding the SFA’s online payment system. Students should add money to their meal account for the new school year.
* Review updated meal application prototypes, letters to households, notification letters, and other templates available in the *Download Forms* section of SNPWeb.
* Connect with your POS vendor and webmaster to ensure the 2022–2023 online web-based meal application is available by July 1 as required. Application prototypes will be available in SNPWeb *Download Forms*.

### July

* The RCCI fiscal year starts July 1. Facilities with day students must have meal applications for students on file.
* Submit the Annual Financial Report by July 30.
* Attend the Summer Manager’s Workshop.
* Check the hiring status and plan accordingly.
* Train staff for cashiering, civil rights, and meal pattern requirements.
* Train staff on receiving shipments and the [Buy American Provision](https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/compliance-enforcement-buy-american). A procedure should be established for receiving non-domestic items.
* Contact your local health department to obtain any additional guidelines and requirements for schools.
* Share policies related to contracting COVID-19 or a COVID-19 variant with your staff.
* Confirm where students will be eating their meals (i.e cafeteria or classroom) with the principal.
* Plan and continue multiple points for breakfast pickup. Children are now accustomed to grab and go service. This will help stabilize breakfast participation.
* Determine when food and supply orders will begin.

### August and/or September

* Plan for Back to School Night at each school. Make computers available for completing online meal applications in addition to paper applications. Gather information regarding your online payment system and determine whether the cafeteria will accept cash and checks.
* Post the policy for unpaid meal charges online and in student handbooks.
* School opens.

This list is not all inclusive. You can add items to this list to suit your division's needs. Contact your SNP regional specialist for guidance or for questions. They are here to assist you.

##

## 2022–2023 Calendar at a Glance

[January 2022](#bookmark=kix.qighugn1p9y8)

[February 2022](#bookmark=kix.gn25sdoy6xld)

[March 2022](#bookmark=kix.bl19h0rpueok)

[April 2022](#bookmark=kix.99cdx1cvwze2)

[May 2022](#bookmark=kix.snykxfl0enee)

[June 2022](#bookmark=kix.4a63fodplgk8)

[July 2022](#bookmark=kix.7m3v8p7t40wv)

[August 2022](#bookmark=id.4z3n09lsdq8)

[September 2022](#bookmark=kix.lwauxc6lybsq)

[October 2022](#bookmark=kix.8yauz5qogkf0)

[November 2022](#bookmark=kix.7d52xiciqjx8)

[December 2022](#bookmark=kix.nsrxbboacq0d)

[January 2023](#bookmark=kix.804za6tc9jue)

[February 2023](#bookmark=kix.4yrcruz6xvr2)

[March 2023](#bookmark=kix.981pvjbsahp4)

[April 2023](#bookmark=kix.ift9v52yry2e)

[May 2023](#bookmark=kix.q5mnbigawb3j)

[June 2023](#bookmark=kix.tfy4lacpm689)

[July 2023](#bookmark=kix.f7hgldnm4227)

| **Date** | **Event/Activity** | **Category** | **Resources** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **January 2022** | **Breakfast Incentive Funding**Each year the General Assembly allocates a set amount of funds to be distributed to schools who demonstrate an increase in breakfast participation. | Operations | SNP Director's Memo |
| **January 2022** | **January 2022 Claims**Last day for submission in SNPWeb is April 1, 2022 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **February 2022** | **February 2022 Claims**Last day for submission in SNPWeb is April 29, 2022 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **March 6-8, 2022** | **SNA Legislative Action Conference** | Conferences | [School Nutrition Association website](https://schoolnutrition.org/meetings/lac/2022/) |
| **March 7-11, 2022** | **National School Breakfast Week** | Promotions | [NSBW 2022 Resource Page](https://schoolnutrition.org/meetings/events/nsbw/2022/#:~:text=Mark%20your%20calendar%20for%20National,to%20students%2C%20parents%20and%20stakeholders!) |
| **March 10, 2022** | **Supply Chain Funding Webinars** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **March 11-13, 2022** | **Virginia School Nutrition Association Conference** | Conferences | [SNA-VA Website](https://sna-va.org/) |
| **March 24, 2022** | **SFSP Programmatic and Meal Pattern Training** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **March 26, 2022** | **CEP ISP Data Collection and Annual Notification of LEA CEP Eligibility** | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **March 31, 2022** | **SFSP Programmatic and Meal Pattern Training** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **March 2022** | **National Nutrition Month** | Promotions | [NNM 2022 Resource Page](https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month) |
| **March 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP and Medicaid participation data from the Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb. LEAs will use this data to match students in their database for automatic benefits in the Child Nutrition Programs. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **March 2022** | **March 2022 Claims**Last day for submission in SNPWeb is May 30, 2022 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 1, 2022** | **January 2022 Claims Due**Last day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do)[The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 7, 2022** | **SFSP Application and SNPWeb Enhancements Training** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **April 8, 2022** | **CEP ISP Data Collection and Annual Notification of LEA CEP Eligibility** | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **April 14, 2022** | **SFSP Application and SNPWeb Enhancements Training** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **April 18-22, 2022** | **National Child Nutrition Conference**CACFP, Afterschool Meals, and Summer Food | Conferences | [National CACFP Sponsors Association website](https://www.cacfp.org/conference/2022-conference-registration/) |
| **April 21, 2022** | **Farm to School Strategic Plan Webinar** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **April 24-27, 2022** | **American Commodity Distribution Association Conference** | Conferences | [ACDA website](https://www.commodityfoods.org/Annual-Conference) |
| **April 28, 2022** | **CACFP At-Risk Mandate Webinar** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **April 28, 2022** | **Transitional Nutrition Standards Webinar** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director’s memo |
| **April 29, 2022** | **February 2022 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 2022** | **April 2022 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is June 29, 2022 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 2022** | **National Nutrition Month** | Promotions | [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website](https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month) |
| **May 1-June 30, 2022** | **Application for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**LEAs apply for a school or group of schools with an identified student percentage (ISP) of 40% or more to participate in CEP and agree to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all students. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted for validation and approval by June 30 annually.  | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **May 5, 2022** | **Spring Regional Directors Meeting** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director's memo  |
| **May 6, 2022** | **School Lunch Hero Day** | Promotions | [SLHD Resource Page](https://schoolnutrition.org/SLHD/)  |
| **May 30, 2022** | **March 2022 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **May 2022** | **School Nutrition Professionals Week** | Promotions | [SLHD Resource Page](https://schoolnutrition.org/SLHD/) |
| **May 2022** | **May 2022 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is July 30, 2022 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **May 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **June-August 2022**  | **Summer Manager’s Workshops** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director's memo |
| **June 27-July 1, 2022** | **New Director’s Academy**Hosted by the VDOE-SNP in Richmond, VA and facilitated by the Institute of Child Nutrition | Professional Development | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **June 29, 2022** | **April 2022 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **June 30, 2022** | **NSLP/SBP Program Year Ends** | Operations |  |
| **June 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **June 2022** | **Annual Application Packet Update** LEAs have the opportunity to make any updates or additions to their permanent agreement for the new school year. All updates must be made in the SNPWeb system. | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **June 2022** | **Application for the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program** SFAs are invited to apply for eligible elementary schools in SNPWeb. FFVP applications are approved and funding allocations determined in SNPWeb. Participation is based on available federal funding. Virginia’s average FRP eligibility for FFVP funded elementary schools is 70% or above. | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **July 1, 2022** | **NSLP/SBP Program Year Begins** | Operations |  |
| **July 10, 2022** | **Application for State Funding for Alternative Breakfast Service Models** Breakfast After the Bell is an annual application to approve alternative service models for breakfast. | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **July 2022 (third week)** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb. LEAs will upload their enrollment file to directly certify students for free or reduced-price meals in the School Nutrition Programs. The VDSS data file will be updated monthly. LEAs are required to perform a DC match each month around the 15th of the month.  | Operations | [The information can be found in the SNPWeb DC module and in SNP memos.](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **July 30, 2022** | **May 2022 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **July 2022** | **Meal Reimbursement Rates Released** Annual federal meal reimbursement rates are released each year in July and will be disseminated as soon as possible. | Operations | SNP Director's EmailRates will be disseminated through an email from the SNP Director. |
| **July 2022** | **Annual Financial Report**Submit your annual financial report to the VDOE-SNP through SNPWeb. | Operations | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **August 11, 2022** | **At-Risk CACFP Training**  | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **August 25, 2022** | **At-Risk CACFP Training (Repeat)** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **August 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June.  | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **August 2022** | **CACFP Applications**CACFP Applications open for renewal. | Operations | Information is distributed through a Superintendent’s Memo  |
| **August 2022** | **SFSP and CACFP Administrative Review Training** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **September 22, 2022** | **FPAR Webinar** | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director's memo. |
| **September 2022** | **Administrative Review Schedule Released**Every three years, SFAs are required to receive an administrative review. The VDOE releases the schedule of reviews for the upcoming year.  | Operations | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **September 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. Complete the match no later than September 30 to maximize DC before the Verification sample as of October 1. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **September 2022** | **Hunger Action Month**   | Promotions | Information is distributed on social media |
| **September/October 2022** | **Afterschool Snack Program**Monitor the afterschool snack service. Two reviews must be completed each year with one within the first month. | Operations | Code of Federal Regulations7CFR§210.9(c)(7)  |
| **September/October 2022** | **Carryover Free and Reduced-Price Eligibility Expiration**Student free and reduced-price eligibility carries over for the first 30 operating days of the school year or earlier if a new DC or application eligibility determination is made. If there is no new eligibility, the carryover expires at the end of the 30th operating day. Monitor the benefit issuance list.  | Operations | [USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals - 2017](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP36_CACFP15_SFSP11-2017a1.pdf)Definition page 14;Guidance pages 46-47 |
| **October 1, 2022** | **Verification - Calculation of Required Sample Size** The verification process begins with the required calculation of the verification sample size based on the number of approved applications on file as of October 1. The sample size must be confirmed in the SNPWeb Verification Report to be sure the SFA verifies the correct number before November 15. Applications selected for verification must be from the pool of error-prone applications (Standard Sample) unless the SFA requests approval for alternate options.  | Operations | Information is distributed through a Superintendent’s memo. [USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals - 2017](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP36_CACFP15_SFSP11-2017a1.pdf)  |
| **October 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June.  | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **October 2022** | **October 2022 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is December 30, 2022 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **October 2022** | **Payment of State Match Funds**The General Assembly is required to allocate funds to distribute to LEAs that participate in the National School Lunch Program. These funds are distributed to all LEAs when they become available. | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **October 2022** | **Accountability Review** Each year SFAs are required to conduct onsite accountability reviews for breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack programs. | Operations | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **October 2022** | **National School Lunch Week** | Promotions | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **October 2022** | **Virginia Farm to School Week** In October of each year, Virginia highlights agriculture products served in VA schools. | Promotions | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **October 2022** | **Farm to CACFP Week** | Promotions | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **October 2022** | **Crunch Heard ‘Round the Commonwealth** | Promotions |  |
| **October 2022** | **National Farm to School Month** | Promotions | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **October-November 15, 2022** | **Verification - Conduct Verification Activities**LEAs conduct verification, notify households, perform required second notification, review household documents and complete verification by the November 15 annual deadline. | Operations | Information is distributed through an SNP memo.[USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals - 2017](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/SP36_CACFP15_SFSP11-2017a1.pdf)  |
| **November 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June.  | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **December 15, 2022** | **Verification Report Due**The report summarizing verification activities must be submitted in SNPWeb on or before this date annually.  | Operations | Information is distributed through a Superintendent’s memo.  |
| **December 30, 2022** | **October 2022 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **December 2022** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June.  | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **Annually 2022** | **HACCP Plan**Review and update the HACCP Plan. | Operations | Code of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.13 (c)(1) |
| **Annually 2022** | **Local Wellness Policy** Review of the Local Wellness Plan and inform the public about the content and implementation of the local school wellness policy and make any updates to the policy available.  | Operations | Code of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.31 |
| **Annually 2022** | **Health Inspections**Before school ends in May or June, determine if each school received two local health inspections. If not, arrange for an inspection with the local health department. Complete food safety Inspection report in SNPWeb by June 30. | Operations | Code of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.13 (b) |
| **Annually 2022** | **Meal Charge Policy** | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **Annually 2022** | **Professional Standards**Review professional development for all staff to determine if they are compliant with the new professional standards requirements. | Professional Development | Code of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.30 |
| **January 31, 2023** | **Semi-Annual Financial Report**SFAs are required to submit the semi-annual financial report in SNPWeb for July-December.  | Operations | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **January 2023** | **January 2023 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is April 1, 2023 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **January 2023** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June.  | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **February 2023** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June.  | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **February 2023** | **February 2023 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is April 29, 2023 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **March 1, 2023** | **Submit Food Service Management Company Contracts to VDOE**The Department of Education is required to review the bid documentation and contract award prior to approval. | Operations | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **March 2023** | **March 2023 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is May 30, 2023 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **March 2023** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. Complete March match no later than March 31 to include DC students in the April 1 ISP report. |  |  |
| **March 2023** | **Paid Equity Lunch Tool Memo**Each year USDA provides a tool that helps LEAs set prices for the upcoming school year. | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **March 2023** | **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Applications**Available in SNPWeb. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **March 2023** | **Income Eligibility Guidelines Released**USDA releases the Income guidelines for the Child Nutrition Programs. | Operations | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **March 2023** | **National School Breakfast** **Week** Each year in March, a week is highlighted to celebrate School Breakfast. | Promotions | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **March 2023** | **National Nutrition Month**Please visit Eatright.org for more information. | Promotions | [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/resources/national-nutrition-month/national-nutrition-month) |
| **March 2023** | **SNA-VA State Conference** The School Nutrition Association of Virginia (SNA-VA) holds their conference in March of each year. Details of the event will be posted to the SNA-VA website. | Conferences | [SNA-VA Website](https://sna-va.org/) |
| **April 1, 2023** | **January 2023 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 1, 2023** | **Community Eligibility Provision - ISP Data Collection**LEAs must submit a report of the identified student percentage (ISP) as of April 1. Identified students are approved for free meals by DC or categorical eligibility without a meal application. The report must be submitted by April 15 annually in SNPWeb for all schools.  | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **April 29, 2023** | **February 2023 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 2023** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. |  |  |
| **April 2023** | **April 2023 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is June 29, 2023 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **April 2023** | **Options for Providing Meals to Students in the Summer**This memo highlights the different program options for LEA to feed students during the summer months. | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **May 30, 2023** | **March 2023 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **May 2023** | **May 2023 Claims**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb is July 30, 2023 | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **May 2023** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. | Operations |  |
| **May 2023** | **School Lunch Hero Day**  May 5, 2023 | Promotions | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included[SNA website](https://schoolnutrition.org/Meetings/Events/SLHD/) |
| **May 2023** | **School Nutrition Professionals Week** | Promotions | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included[SNA website](https://schoolnutrition.org/Meetings/Events/SLHD/) |
| **May 2023** | **Virginia Agriculture Month** | Promotions | [Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/index.shtml) |
| **May 2023** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP and Medicaid participation data from the Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb. LEAs will use this data to match students in their database for automatic benefits in the Child Nutrition Programs. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **May-August, 2023**  | **SFSP Site Reviews** | Operations | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **June 29, 2023** | **April 2023 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **June 30, 2023** | **NSLP/SBP Program Year Ends** | Operations |  |
| **June 2023** | **Direct Certification Process**SNAP, TANF, Foster care, and Medicaid data from the Virginia Department of Social Services is uploaded into SNPWeb each month around the 15th of the month. SFAs are required to upload an enrollment file and perform a DC match each month July-June. | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **June-August 2023** | **Summer Manager’s Workshops**Annual training program for cafeteria managers.  | Professional Development | Information is distributed through a Director's memo.  |
| **July 30, 2023** | **May 2023 Claims Due**Last Day for submission in SNPWeb | Operations | [The information can be found in SNPWeb](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws/login.page.do) |
| **July 2023** | **SNA National Annual Conference**The School Nutrition Association holds their conference in July of each year. | Conferences | [SNA Website](https://schoolnutrition.org/) |
| **Annually 2023** | **HACCP Plan**Review and update the HACCP Plan. | Operations | Code of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.13 (c)(1) |
| **Annually 2023** | **Local Wellness Policy** Review of the Local Wellness Plan and inform the public about the content and implementation of the local school wellness policy and make any updates to the policy available.  | Operations | Code of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.31 |
| **Annually 2023** | **Health Inspections**Before school ends in May or June, determine if each school received two local health inspections. If not, arrange for an inspection with the local health department. Complete food safety Inspection report in SNPWeb by June 30. | Operations | Code of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.13 (b) |
| **Annually 2023** | **Meal Charge Policy** | Operations | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be included |
| **Annually 2023** | **Professional Standards**Review professional development for all staff to determine if they are compliant with the new professional standards requirements. | Professional Development | [Superintendent's Memo](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/index.shtml)Important reminders and dates will be includedCode of Federal Regulations7 CFR §210.30 |

## Marketing School Meals to Maintain/Increase Participation

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical role of school meals in childhood food security, health and wellness, and academic achievement. Unfortunately, the [Food Research and Action Center 2022 School Meals Report](https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SchoolMealsReport2022.pdf) indicated significant reductions in breakfast and lunch participation during the school year 2020–2021 and Virginia was no exception. Exacerbated by supply chain disruptions and worker shortages Virginia schools were challenged with limited menu offerings. With COVID-19 waiver expirations, it is now, more than ever, critical to equip Virginia school nutrition professionals with resources to promote school meal participation, ensuring all students have access to appealing, nutritious, freshly-prepared, and culturally-inclusive meals that align with USDA nutrition standards.

### Virginia Trends in Meal Participation 2016–2021

Overall total school meal participation decreased compared to previous years during the 2020–2021 school year,. Virginia, however, Virginia was one of 22 states that saw increased participation in breakfast compared to the 2019–2022 school year.



### Strategies for Maintaining/Increasing Participation

* In order to target your strategy for maintaining or increasing meal participation, using baseline data, establish your goal and benchmarks to help inform progress towards reaching your goal. Track the strategies you use and document their impact on participation.
* Communicate pertinent information to students and families at the beginning of the school year and on a regular basis throughout the school year. Coordinate with school administration to determine opportunities for school meal promotion such as during:
	+ kindergarten registration;
	+ back to school nights;
	+ Parent Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/PTO) meetings;
	+ sports/recreational league registrations; and
	+ school events.
* Promote awareness of your school nutrition program by engaging parents with informative and relevant information that enhances participation including:
	+ income eligibility criteria and application process for free/reduced-price lunch;
	+ costs for paid meals and how to pay for school meals;
	+ meal pattern/components overview providing resources for parents/guardians to understand the meal components served and the serving sizes for various age groups;
	+ nutrition information and ingredients highlighting nutritional quality and considerations for allergies, dietary restrictions; and preferences; and
	+ menus to allow parents/guarding to plan the days their child will participate in school meals.
* Highlight the benefits of school meals:
	+ time saved by not having to prepare meals at home;
	+ affordability; and
	+ health and academic achievement.
* Showcase school meal programs:
	+ Invite parents to join children for lunch if permitted.
	+ Offer samples of menu items to students and families during school events.
	+ Conduct student taste tests.
* Appeal to students by offering appealing menu items. Consider:
	+ visual appeal;
	+ tray and food style;
	+ creative menu item names; and
	+ elevating menu descriptions.
* Engage students in the cafeteria with taste tests and themed meals that align with holidays/promotions/campaigns.
* Emphasize scratch made and locally procured foods.
* Promote the Virginia Harvest of the Month (utilize promotional and educational materials).

Broaden your reach and create brand awareness of school meals within the school community.

* + Engage teachers to connect the cafeteria to the classroom through:
		- nutrition education;
		- kitchen tours;
		- classroom visits; and
		- school gardens.
	+ Engage coaches to encourage student athletes to participate school meals (fueling activity)
	+ Review menu options during morning announcements.
	+ Promote your programs on social media and in school newsletters.

### Resources

* [ICN | Marketing School Nutrition](https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/marketing-your-SNP)
* [School Nutrition Association | Communications & Marketing](https://schoolnutrition.org/learning-center/communications-marketing/)
* [Chef Ann Foundation | Lunch Box](https://www.thelunchbox.org/marketing)
* [Building Back Better School Meals Website](https://www.fns.usda.gov/building-back-better-school-meals)
* [Ten Reasons to Build Back Better with School Meals](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/bbbsm-ten-reasons.pdf)
* [Shaking It Up Resources from ICN](https://theicn.org/shaking-it-up/)
* [Stronger with School Breakfast Infographic](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/NSBW_InfographicEN.pdf)
* [Team Nutrition School Breakfast Materials](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/sbp-materials)
* [Nutri Students K-12 | Templates](https://nutristudentsk-12.com/index.php?cID=807)
* [FRAC Webinar | Summer Meals: Mitigating the Impact of the Loss of the Summer Nutrition Waivers](https://frac.webex.com/webappng/sites/frac/meeting/register/8353677242f24d45972888d27cc603de?ticket=4832534b000000059812af5b29b96483f60759f0cd8dc3c21d3edcf5d2d633c5251e1bff619e236e&timestamp=1650396242806&locale=en_US)
* [Virginia Harvest of the Month](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/hom/index.shtml)
* [Benefits of School Meals](https://schoolnutrition.org/aboutschoolmeals/schoolmealtrendsstats/#8)
* [NKH Summer Meals Outreach Toolkit](https://express.adobe.com/page/3te8qNBRfot7k/)
* [NKH Communicating Summer Meals 2022 Operations Changes to Parents and Families](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i_yPOtcAzRCPrNtMfbKz32bqNU1gXUZCRfdrwfD2Q1U/edit?usp=sharing)
* [NKH Summer Meals in Your Community: Engagement Toolkit for Mayors](http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/resource/summer-meals-your-community-engagement-toolkit-mayors)
* [March 30th 3-4pm EST - Planning for Summer: Operation Strategies Without Waivers (Webinar Recording)](http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/webinars/schools-out-foods-planning-summer-operation-strategies-without-waivers)
* [April 26th 3-4pm EST - Summer Meals 101: Back to Basics (Webinar Registration)](http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/webinars/schools-out-foods-summer-webinar-series-summer-meals-101-back-basics-usda-update)