

Staying on Track: SUMMER EDITION

April 2026



Health and Nutrition Services
Arizona Department of Education



Intended Audience

This training is intended for School Food Authorities (SFAs) and Community Organizations (COs) wishing to serve meals in summer 2026. All regulations are specific to operating the programs under the direction of HNS.

Objectives

We're switching this month's Staying on Track Webinar up to review HNS guidance for summer 2026 applications. This webinar edition will:

- Ensure vital information is understood
- Allow HNS to provide detailed training on important topics related to applying for summer meal service
- Provide directors an opportunity to submit questions, that ADE can expand on in later communications.

TRAINING HOURS

Information to include when documenting training completion:

Training Title: April Staying on Track
SUMMER EDITION

Length: 1 hour



Disclaimer

This training was developed by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Health and Nutrition Services Division (HNS). The content in this training is intended for professionals operating one or more USDA Child Nutrition Programs in Arizona under the direction of ADE. The information in this training is subject to change. Attendees are encouraged to access professional development materials directly from the training library to prevent use of outdated content.

Questions

- Questions can be asked in the Q&A at any time during the webinar.
- Questions will not be answered live but will instead be addressed in a follow-up communication to ensure all operators have access to the responses.
- If you require additional assistance following HNS's communication, please reach out to your HNS Specialist through HelpDesk.



Agenda

Section 1: Review of Application and Eligibility Requirements

Section 2: SUN Meals To-Go

Section 3: SUN Bucks - Summer-EBT

Section 4: Nutrition Promotion during Summer Meal Service

Section 1

Review of Application and Eligibility Requirements



HNS Summer Meal Memorandums and Guidance



HNS 03-2026: APPLICATION FOR SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide SFAs and COs the following information:

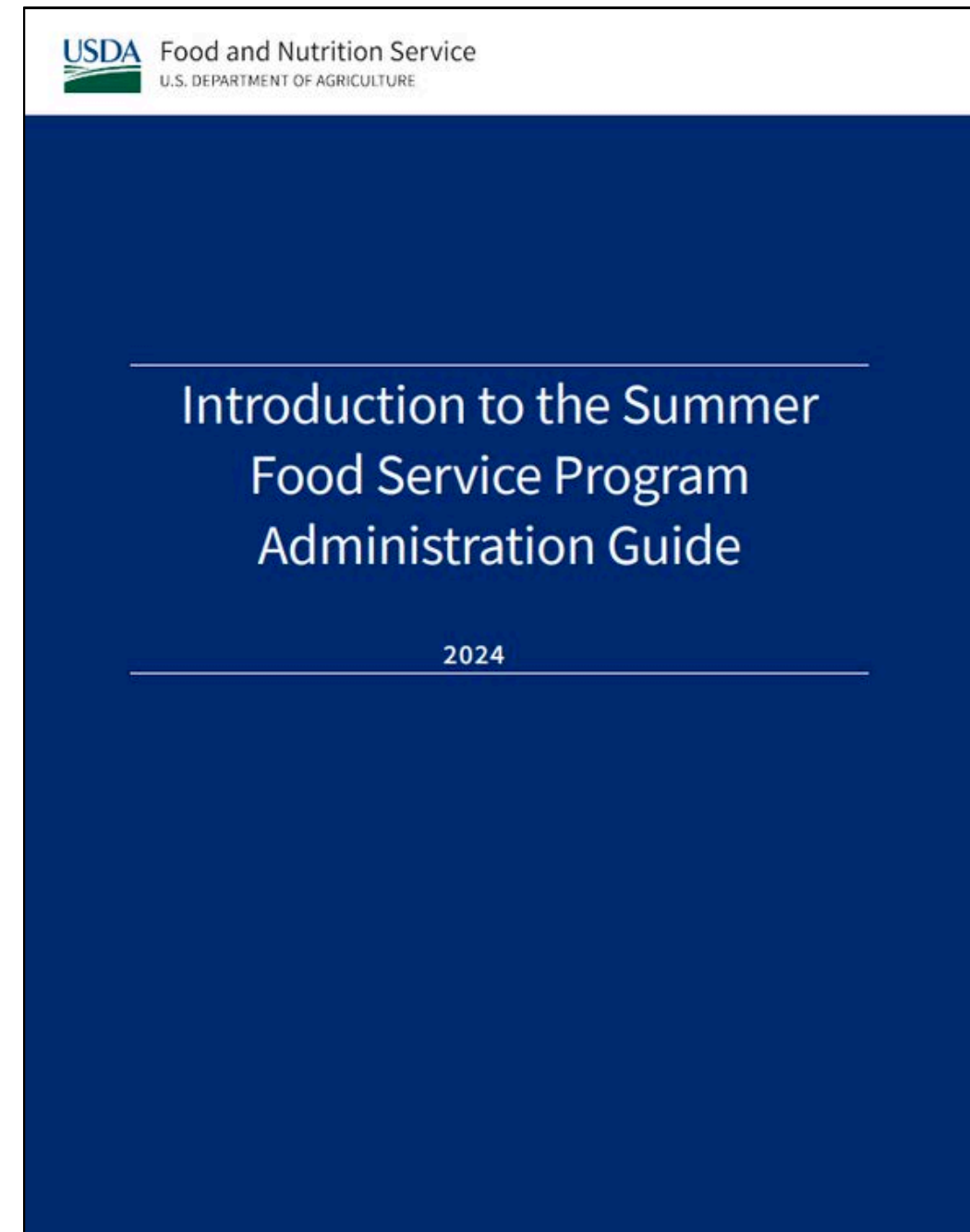
- Application requirements and deadlines for the SFSP, including details on demonstrating financial viability, administrative capability, and program accountability.
- Reminds SFAs of their eligibility to apply for SSO, or to extend the NSLP for any school that is hosting academic summer school.
- Includes a comprehensive Q&A on Deadlines and Reminders, Site Types and Eligibility, and Academic Summer School.

HNS Summer Meal Guidance



INTRODUCTION TO THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to provide SFAs and COs a general overview of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This manual covers participating in SFSP, applying to SFSP, administering SFSP, and operating SFSP meal service. Included is also a list of definitions and prototype forms.



Summer Feeding Options Overview

- Summer Feeding Option for Schools
 - Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
 - Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
 - Extended School Lunch and Breakfast (NSLP/SBP)
- Summer Feeding Options for Community Organizations (COs)
 - Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Additional Summer Feeding Options for the Children
 - SUN Bucks, or the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (Summer-EBT) adds an additional supplement to the summer meals programs by providing grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children when schools are closed for the summer.

**Arizona Department of Education | Health and Nutrition Services**



SUMMER FEEDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Summer break is here, but hunger doesn't take a vacation. Children need good nutrition, all year long. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) make it possible for schools to provide nutritious meals, after the regular school year ends.

Seamless Summer Option	Summer Food Service Program	School Lunch & Breakfast
Schools participating in the NSLP/SBP are eligible to apply for the SSO. SSO requires less internal monitoring and follows the same meal pattern as NSLP/SBP, negating the need to change menus or regular school-year operations. Once the State Agency approves the application, the school can provide meals at no cost to children, including teens up to age 18, in accordance with the rules of the school meal program. Meals are reimbursed at the free rates for school lunches, school breakfasts, and afterschool snacks, which are slightly lower than the SFSP rates. Administrative Reviews are conducted by the State Agency in the summer following the sponsor's school year Administrative Review.	The SFSP is ideal if you sponsor enrichment, recreational, or activity programs over the summer. The State Agency reimburses sponsors for free meals served to children, including teenagers through age 18, at approved meal sites in low-income areas. SFSP allows sponsors to earn the maximum rates of reimbursement for the meals served and use the money as needed to enhance the food program for children. Administrative Reviews are conducted by the State Agency in the sponsor's first year of operating SFSP and then at least every 3 years.	The NSLP and SBP are both available for any school that is hosting an academic summer school. Academic summer schools that intend to serve meals only to enrolled students follow the same rules and claiming procedures for free, reduced-price, and paid meals that they follow during the regular school year. Summer school is an additional session for select students who seek or need academic credits for graduation or promotion to the next grade.

For more information and assistance selecting the right option for your school, please visit www.azed.gov/hns/sfsp.

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**SUMMER FEEDING OPTIONS
FOR SCHOOLS**



Summer Feeding Options

SEAMLESS SUMMER OPTION (SSO)

- For SFAs participating in NSLP/SBP
- Requires submission and approval of a CNPWeb site/sponsor application
- Serves meals free of charge to children, including teenagers through age 18, under the school meal program rules
- Meals must follow the NSLP regulations and guidelines



Meals served may not be claimed without an approved application

Summer Feeding Options



Meals served may not be claimed without an approved application

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)

- Ideal for sponsoring enrichment, recreational, or activity programs over the summer for SFAs or Community Organizations.
- Reimburses sponsors for free meals served to children, including teenagers through age 18, at approved meal sites in low-income areas.
- Requires submission/approval of a management plan*, budget**, and a CNPWeb site/sponsor application.
 - *SFAs in good standing that have not experienced operational problems, will not be required to submit a management plan for SFSP, however, ADE may request additional evidence of administrative capability sufficient to ensure the SFA can comply with the performance standards for the SFSP
 - **SFAs in good standing that have not experienced operational problems, will not be required to submit a budget for SFSP, however, ADE may request additional evidence of financial viability sufficient to ensure the SFA can comply with the performance standards for the SFSP
- Brand new sponsors may be required to complete a pre-approval visit prior to beginning operations. Please reach out to your assigned specialist via HelpDesk for more information.

Summer Feeding Options

EXTENDED SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST (NSLP/SBP)

- Available for any school that is hosting an academic summer school.
- Academic summer schools that intend to serve meals only to enrolled students follow the same rules and claiming procedures for free, reduced-price, and paid meals that they follow during the regular school year.
- This option is for credit only. Summer enrichment or studying does not qualify to extend the NSLP/SBP.



Meals served may not be claimed without an approved application

Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

MEALS SERVED AND CLAIMED FREE

Only available for SFAs.

Allowable Site Types

- **Open** - Serve all children
 - Must be Area Eligible
- **Restricted Open** - Serve all children up to capacity
 - Must be Area Eligible
- **Closed** - Serve only enrolled children
 - Must be either Area Eligible or 50% of enrolled children must be Free or Reduced-Price Eligible

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

MEALS SERVED AND CLAIMED FREE

Higher reimbursement rates with specific application and monitoring requirements, and a simplified meal pattern.

Allowable Site Types

- **Open** - Serve all children
 - Must be Area Eligible
- **Restricted Open** - Serve all children up to capacity
 - Must be Area Eligible
- **Closed** - Serve only enrolled children
 - Must be either Area Eligible or 50% of enrolled children must be Free or Reduced-Price Eligible

EXTENDED NSLP

Extending school meals does not require summer site eligibility, therefore no area eligibility is required. Serve and claim meals by free, reduced-price, and paid eligibility.

Summer Feeding Options for Schools

MEAL PATTERNS

SFAs who operate the NSLP during the school year have the option to continue serving meals that follow the NSLP meal pattern OR the SFSP meal pattern. Operators must select which meal pattern they are choosing to follow in their sponsor application. The meal pattern selected in the approved application is the meal pattern that must be adhered to at all operating sites. COs do not have an option and must follow the SFSP meal pattern.

Meal Patterns		
SFSP	NSLP/SBP	Seamless Summer Option
Meal Pattern must meet 7 CFR 225.16(d) standards, though School Food Authorities may substitute NSLP/SBP meal patterns.	Must meet requirements for NSLP in 7 CFR 210.10 ; or SBP in 7 CFR 220.8 .	Same as NSLP/SBP* *Additional flexibilities granted in specific circumstances; Refer to policy memo SP-39-2014



For further guidance review the [Questions and Answers for the National School Lunch Program’s Seamless Summer Option](#)

Summer Feeding Options for Schools

MEAL PATTERNS

Meal Patterns		
SFSP	NSLP/SBP	Seamless Summer Option
Daily requirements for components	Weekly requirements for components and vegetable subgroups must be met	Same as NSLP/SBP*
Combines fruits and vegetables into one component	Fruits and vegetables are considered separate components.	
	Two milk varieties must be offered at meal service.	
	80% of grains offered must qualify as whole grain-rich.	*Additional flexibilities granted in specific circumstances; Refer to policy memo SP-39-2014

Eligibility Requirements

Summer Feeding Site Eligibility

SITE ELIGIBILITY AND OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

- Sponsors may operate summer meal service at one or more sites as long as the site and meal services have been approved by ADE prior to the start of the site operation.
- Eligibility requirements vary based on type of site administering summer meals.
- Operators may not begin until the application is approved.



Summer Meal Service Site Eligibility

This resource outlines the data that operators of the Summer Meals Programs can use to establish site eligibility.

Sponsors may operate summer meal service at one or more sites as long as the site and meal services have been approved by ADE prior to the start of the site operation. Below are common site types and their eligibility requirements.

SCHOOL DATA: Sponsors may use free and reduced data from elementary, middle, or high schools to qualify SFSP sites. The site must be located within the attendance area of a school with at least 50% of its children eligible for free and reduced-price meals. School data is updated annually and posted on the Health and Nutrition Services webpage.

CENSUS DATA: If the site is not located within an eligible attendance area, sponsors may use census data to see if the potential site(s) fall within a tract that qualifies. The USDA Capacity Builder Mapping Tool can assist with making eligibility determinations and locating eligible areas within a community.

Site Type	Description	Eligibility
Open Site	Meals are made available to all children in the area. Schools with academic summer school are required to be open to the community.	Must be located within the attendance area of a school with 50% or more free/reduced-price meals or within a census tract that qualifies.
Open Restricted Site	Operates much like an open site, but there is a need to restrict or limit meal participation for reasons of space, security, safety, or control.	Same as open site. Sponsors must make it publicly known that the site offers free meals to children, but it will be limited for the reasons noted.
Closed Enrolled Site	Meals are made available to only the enrolled group of children attending the site, as opposed to the community at large. This site type may be selected when the site is unable to accommodate additional children from the community.	Same as open or restricted open sites OR it may be located outside of an eligible area, but then at least 50% of the children enrolled must be considered to be low-income. When not area eligible, sponsors are required to keep enrollment records and participant eligibility documentation each month to verify that at least 50% of the children are eligible.
Camps	Camps can be residential or nonresidential day camps that offer regularly scheduled food service as part of an organized program for enrolled children.	Unlike open, restricted open, and closed enrolled sites, sponsors of both residential and nonresidential camps do not have to establish area eligibility. However, they must collect and maintain participant eligibility documentation. Camps are only reimbursed for those enrolled children who meet the free and/or reduced-price eligibility standards.
Migrant Site	Serves primarily migrant children.	Migrant status is confirmed annually by having the Sponsor submit information obtained from a migrant organization that certifies that the site serves a majority of children of migrant workers.

March 2024 | Health and Nutrition Services | Arizona Department of Education | This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

[SUMMER MEAL SERVICE SITE ELIGIBILITY](#)



Area Eligibility

DETERMINING AREA ELIGIBILITY

As part of the application, the sponsor must certify the eligibility of each site it proposes to operate. Current-year school data may be used to establish area eligibility for the SFSP and SSO, excluding camps. For a site to be determined area eligible, school data must indicate that the proposed meal site is located in the attendance area of an elementary, middle, or high school where at least 50 percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

Sites may use any of the following to qualify for participation:

- School data ([Free and Reduced-Price Percentage Report](#))
- Census data ([CACFP and SFSP Area Eligibility Mapper](#))
- Participant income application data

If census data or school data does not support area eligibility, closed-enrolled sites may collect income applications for the enrolled students. If 50% or more of the enrolled students are free or reduced eligible the site may use this data to be considered eligible.

Area Eligibility

DURATION OF AREA ELIGIBILITY

In an effort to provide consistent administration across child nutrition programs, sponsors of sites determined to be area eligible based upon school, census, CEP, and other approved alternative data sources, such as public housing data, are only required to submit documentation every 5 years.

As such, area eligibility determinations made using school or census data must be re-determined every five years.

- School data from 2021-2022 through 2025-2026 may be used for eligibility determinations.
- Summer feeding sites previously determined as eligible in or after SY 2021-22 continue to be eligible under the five-year eligibility rule.

Sponsors using additional types of data sources, including migrant certification and household applications, must document site eligibility annually.

Summer Feeding Site Eligibility

SITE ELIGIBILITY AND OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Open Sites:

- Meals are made available to all children in the area.
- Schools participating as an open site that are offering academic summer school are required to be open to the community.
- All children eat free in communities where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free/reduced-price school meals.
 - School or census data may be used to determine eligibility.
- Open sites operate on a first-come, first-served basis to all children 18 and under at an eligible location.
- Meals are reimbursed at the appropriate free rate for all participating children.
- Reference [Summer Meal Service Site Eligibility](#) Sheet.

Summer Feeding Site Eligibility

SITE ELIGIBILITY AND OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Restricted Open Sites:

- Operates much like an open site, but there is a need to restrict or limit meal participation for reasons of space, security, safety, or control.
- All children eat free in communities where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free/reduced-price school meals.
 - School or census data may be used to determine eligibility
- Sponsors must make it publicly known that the site offers free meals to children, but it will be limited for the reasons noted above.
- Restricted open sites operate on a first-come, first-served basis to all children 18 and under at an eligible location.
- Meals are reimbursed at the appropriate free rate for all participating children.

Summer Feeding Site Eligibility

SITE ELIGIBILITY AND OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Closed Enrolled Sites:

- Meals are made available to only the enrolled group of children attending the site, as opposed to the community at large. This site type may be selected when the site is unable to accommodate additional children from the community.
- Meals are reimbursed for all participating children at the appropriate free rates when:
 - at least 50 percent of the children enrolled at the site are approved for free or reduced-price school meals; or
 - documentation indicates that the site is located within the geographical boundaries of a school attendance area with at least 50 percent of its children approved for free or reduced-price school meals.
- Closed enrolled sites only serve an identified group of children through age 18 who are participating in a specific program or activity.
 - Summer school is not considered a closed enrolled site under the SFSP or SSO.

Summer Feeding Site Eligibility

SITE ELIGIBILITY AND OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Closed Enrolled Sites:

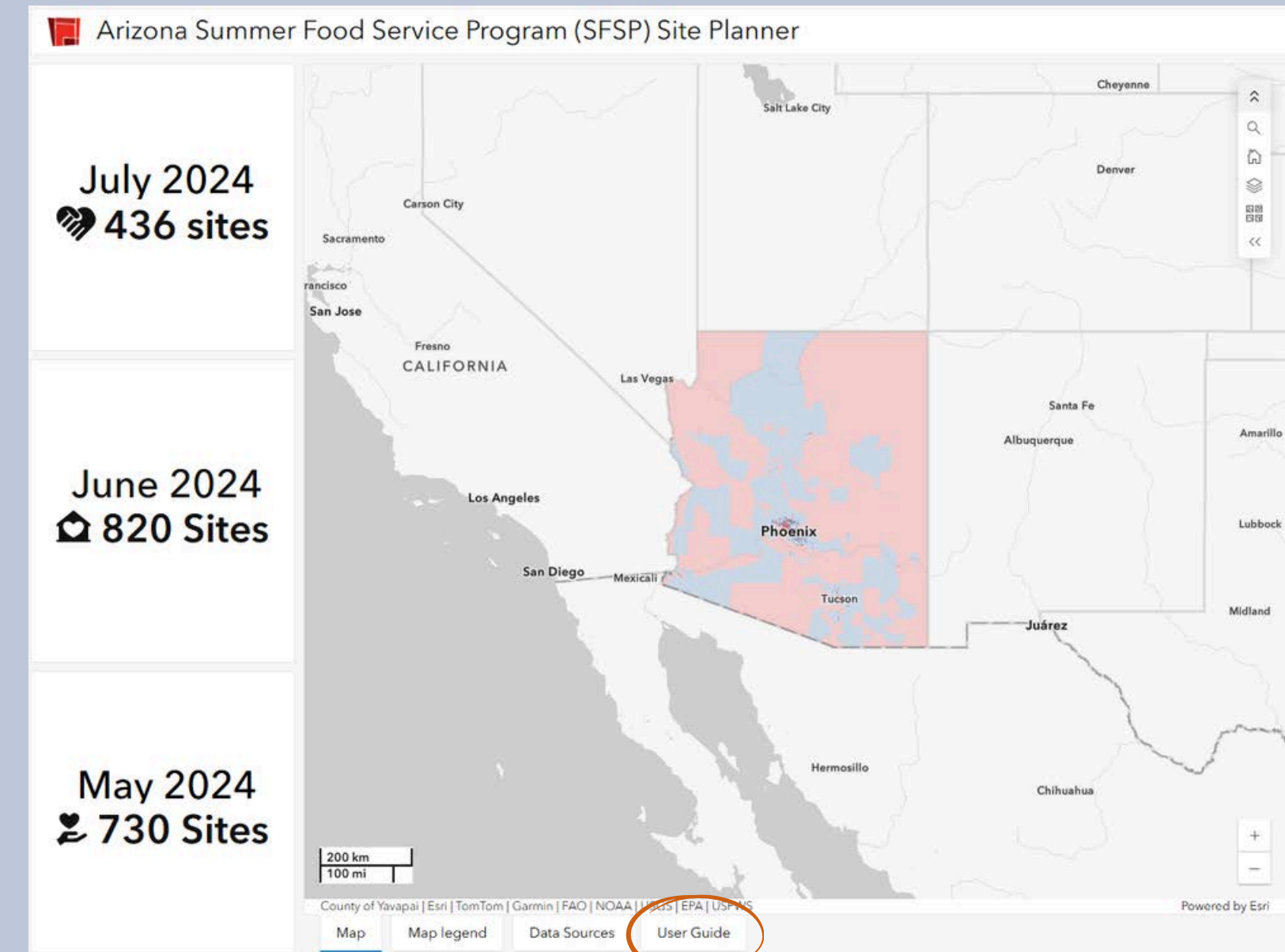
- Please note, a closed enrolled site that does not meet one of the previous criteria is not eligible to participate unless it is qualified to participate as a day camp. Camps are not required to establish area eligibility; however, they must collect and maintain individual income eligibility forms and can only be reimbursed for meals offered to enrolled children who meet the free and reduced-price eligibility standards.

Site Eligibility

SITE PLANNING TOOL

Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) has provided the [Arizona Summer Food Service Site Planner](#). This tool can be used by Operators to evaluate possible site locations using the data layer that shows the 2-mile rural buffer zone. Sites cannot be located in close enough proximity that each site could serve the same children the same meals.

Please view the User Guide on the fourth tab of this resource for instruction.



Application Requirements

Applying for Summer Feeding for SFAs

CHOOSE THE FEEDING OPTION THAT WORKS BEST FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

- **Seamless Summer Option (SSO) - SFAs only**
 - Requires submission and approval of a CNPWeb site/sponsor application
- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**
 - Requires submission/approval of a management plan*, budget**, and a CNPWeb site/sponsor application
 - *Unless eligible for modified application requirements
 - **Unless the SFA has submitted an Annual Financial Report (AFR)
- **Extended School Lunch and Breakfast (NSLP/SBP) - SFAs only**
 - Available for any school that is hosting an academic summer school, requires extending CNPWeb NSLP application operational dates

Site and Area Eligibility Determination

MUST BE PROVIDED WITH APPLICATION

Qualifying documentation must be submitted with all application documentation.

This can be documented with the following:

- School data ([Free and Reduced-Price Percentage Report](#))
- Participant income application data
- Census data ([CACFP and SFSP Area Eligibility Mapper](#))

For additional information on area eligibility reference [SP 08-2017: Area Eligibility in Child Nutrition Programs](#).

Applying for SFSP for SFAs and COs

APPLYING TO BE A SPONSOR IN SUMMER 2026

SFAs and new or returning COs applying to be a sponsor of SFSP must have all application requirements submitted to HNS by May 30, 2026. The following must be submitted by the May 30, 2026 deadline to be a complete application:

- Management Plan
- Budget
- CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications
- Any applications received after May 30, 2026, will not be considered for SFSP sponsorship but may be considered as an SFSP site

Prospective COs applying to operate for the first time must complete the pre-approval process and enter into an agreement with ADE. Entities will achieve this through the [SFSP Prospective Entity Form](#).

All applications must be submitted and approved by HNS before meal service begins.

Applying for SFSP

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All organizations applying to operate the SFSP must demonstrate to HNS, compliance with the performance standards for Financial Viability, Administrative Capability, and Program Accountability. This is done through the submission of a management plan*, budget*, and any additional documentation needed to evaluate an applicant's ability and resources to operate the Program.

*Operators in good standing may have a modified requirement in demonstrating compliance with performance standards.



Good standing has been defined as the status of a program operator that meets its Program responsibilities, is current with its financial obligations, and, if applicable, has fully implemented all corrective actions within the required period of time. Reference SFSP 03-2024 for codified definitions.

Modified SFSP Application Requirements

SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITIES (SFA):

SFAs applying for SFSP that successfully operate the NSLP may consider this sufficient evidence of compliance with administrative capability and financial viability.

- SFAs in good standing that have not experienced operational problems, will not be required to submit a management plan, however, HNS may request additional evidence of administrative capability sufficient to ensure the SFA can comply with the performance standards for the SFSP.
- SFAs must also submit an Annual Financial Report (AFR) to ADE to be considered in good standing and will be exempt from submitting a budget if financial viability is evident through the Food Service AFR.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (CO):

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Institutions are required to demonstrate compliance with financial viability, administrative capability, and program accountability; therefore, COs will be required to submit a management plan and budget for SFSP participation.

Applying to Extend NSLP/SBP

OPERATING NSLP IN SUMMER MONTHS

SFAs may choose to operate NSLP and claim reimbursement for meals (lunches under NSLP and breakfasts under the School Breakfast Program) served during the summer months to children enrolled in summer school. USDA defines summer school as an integral part of the curriculum or an extension of the local educational program. This will require an extension of the end date in the NSLP site application in CNPWeb.

Afterschool Care Snack Program - SFAs also have the option to operate the Afterschool Care Snack Program through NSLP to provide snacks served in afterschool care programs used for children on days attending summer school.

At-Risk Afterschool Meals - may only be operated during the academic school year when school is in session. At-Risk Afterschool Meals cannot be operated during the summer months under any circumstance.

Adding New Sites

ELECTRONICALLY-HELP DESK

- Go to <https://helpdeskexternal.azed.gov/home>
- Click on "Request a Service"
- Select "Health and Nutrition Services"
- Click on "HNS Add/Change/Delete Form"
 - This submits an Add/Change/Delete HelpDesk ticket to add sites to CNPWeb, change addresses or names of entities, or delete sites from CNPWeb.

TO COMPLETE NEW SITE APPROVAL THE FOLLOWING MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED:

- A copy of the **site eligibility documentation**
- [Non-Associated Site Agreement](#) (if applicable)
- [Pre-Operational Site Visit Form](#) (if applicable)

These documents must be submitted to HelpDesk.

Summary: Steps to Apply for Summer Meals



CHOOSE PROGRAM

- SFSP, SSO, Extend NSLP



CHOOSE SITE TYPE

- Open, Open-Restricted, Closed (SFSP, SSO), Rural Non-Congregate



DOCUMENT AREA ELIGIBILITY

- School Data, Census Data, Participant Income Data (SFSP, SSO)



DOCUMENT SITE ELIGIBILITY

- Arizona Summer Food Service Site Planner (SFSP, SSO)



APPLY

- [SFSP Prospective Entity Form](#) (Brand New, Prospective COs only)
- CNPWeb Site and Sponsor Applications
- CNP Management Plan and Budget (SFSP only)

Operational Requirements



Promote Summer Meals

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM 2026 CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

The Summer Meals promotional brand will help your community identify that your site is serving summer meals.

Check out the [Summer Food Service Program Promotional Starter Kit!](#)

Operators may request SFSP physical materials such as large banners, posters, and stickers, and have these items mailed directly. Please fill out the [SFSP Toolkit Order Form](#) to request these materials by **April 21, 2026**.



Outreach

REQUIREMENT

It is mandatory that SFSP operators inform eligible families of the availability and location of free meals for students when the regular school year ends. Operators must submit a [public/media release](#) to a local media source serving the area from which the sites draw attendance. The statement must indicate:

- Summer feeding program participation
- Participating sites
- Dates
- Times
- Locations
- Name of media outlet

SFAs must inform families of the availability and location of free summer meals when school is not in session *even if the school is not operating summer feeding*.

- Examples of this could include customization of the [Summer SFA Letter to Parents and Guardians](#) to help promote summer feeding or including the link to [AZ Health Zone Summer Meals Site Finder](#) on materials viewed by parents such as May menus, the school webpage or a flyer in the front office.

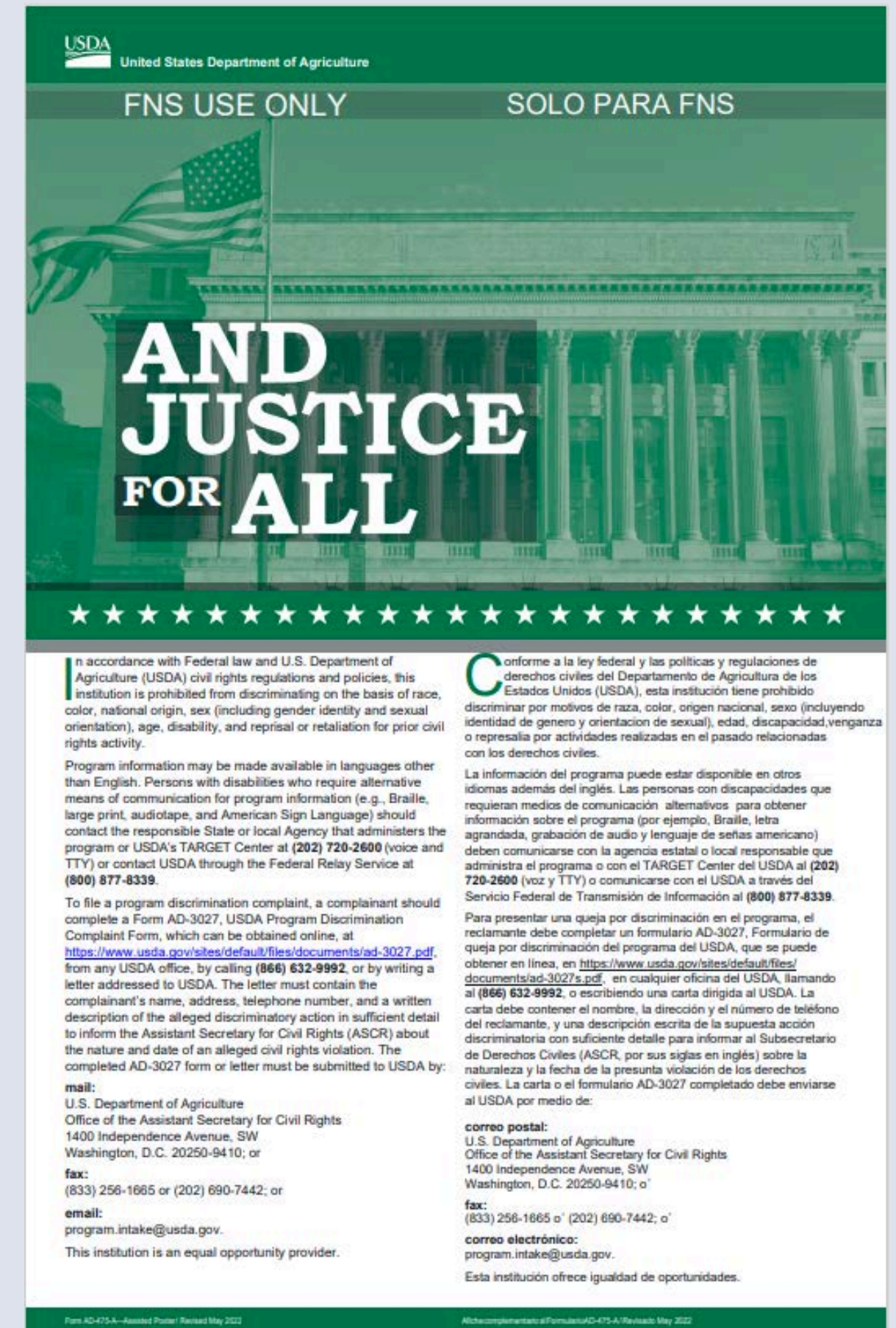
And Justice for all Poster

UPDATING AND DISPLAY REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with the recent guidance from the USDA regarding Civil Rights (FNS-113), HNS will not issue findings related to the display or updating of the “And Justice for All” poster during monitoring visits at this time.

Sponsors should continue to ensure the poster is prominently displayed and current. Once USDA releases updated posters or additional direction, this will be a required posting.

This guidance is subject to change at any time. Please stay informed through HNS communications to monitor any updates to the requirements for the "Justice for All" posters.





SFSP State Agency Monitoring

HNS is required to review:

- new operators at least once during the first year of operation;
- operators with significant operational issues the previous year;
 - Inaccurate meal counts and claim consolidation
 - Significant or repeated meal pattern violations resulting in meals being disallowed
 - Discrepancies in applications involving participating sites and site mealtimes
- all operators once every three years; and
- operators that were previously terminated and have reapplied.



Seamless Summer Option (SSO) reviews will be conducted summer following the sponsor's school year administrative review.

SFSP State Agency Monitoring

State agencies must review a minimum number of sites depending on the size of the sponsoring entity.

For a complete overview of the SFSP review, check out the:



Entities with 2-10 sites that operate both congregate and non-congregate SFSP meal service will receive **two** site reviews. Single-site entities operating congregate and non-congregate meal service will receive only one SFSP site review.



[What to Expect: Summer Food Service Program Administrative Review](#)

SFSP Site Monitoring Requirements

Sponsoring entities must conduct the following visits for new sites, sites that experienced operational problems the previous year, and existing sites that are new to non-congregate meal service:

- [Pre-Operational Site Visit](#)
- [Initial Site Visit](#)
- [Site Review](#)

If conducted within the first two weeks of operation, the Initial Site Visit and Site Review may be combined and only the Site Review Form would need to be completed per regulations at (7 CFR 225.15(d)(4)).

EXISTING SITES-SFSP

Conduct a full site review at each site at least once during the first four weeks of Program operations

- [Site Review Form](#)

SSO Sites - review each site at least once during operation.

Professional Development

SUMMER TRAINING

Training is required only for new organizations who intend to be an SFSP Sponsor in Summer 2026.

Training will be completed during the prospective entity process.

- [Orientation for Sponsoring Organizations: SFSP](#)
- [Civil Rights Compliance for Child Nutrition Program Operators](#)

Sponsoring organizations are required to provide training for their administrative and site personnel and must not allow a site to operate until personnel have attended training that covers the purpose of the SFSP, site eligibility, recordkeeping, site operations, meal pattern requirements, and the duties of a monitor.

HNS encourages all new or returning operators to review the [online training](#) and register for summer webinars!

- Staying on Track Monthly Webinar Series - occurs on the first Tuesday of every month
- Summer upLIFT webinars - occurs on the third Tuesday of every month
- What You Need to Know about Data & Access to Sun Bucks Benefits Webinar: Registration Link: <https://azed.geniussis.com/Registration.aspx?aid=11245>
- Summer Feeding Options for Schools Webinar: Registration Link: <https://azed.geniussis.com/Registration.aspx?aid=11110>

Demonstration Project for Non-Congregate Feeding for Outdoor Summer Sites Experiencing Excessive Heat

OUTDOOR MEAL SITES WITHOUT TEMPERATURE CONTROLLED ALTERNATIVE SITES

- Non-congregate meal service shall be permitted only on days when the National Weather Service has issued a Heat Advisory, an Excessive Heat Warning, or an Excessive Heat Watch for the area in which an approved outdoor meal site is located.
- Operators must notify the ADE HNS prior to the affected meal service by opting into the excessive heat waiver in the CNPWeb application.
- SFSP and NSLP SSO sponsoring entities must complete the non-congregate feeding for outdoor summer sites experiencing excessive heat waiver reporting survey.
- SFSP and NSLP SSO sponsoring entities will utilize the reporting form to report the use of non-congregate feeding for outdoor summer sites experiencing excessive heat. The form will be used to report the site(s), site address(es), date, and number of meals claimed that were taken off-site per each site that is approved to participate.

USDA Foods in Schools Program

USDA FOODS IN THE SUMMER

SFAs operating SSO or extended NSLP may use any remaining USDA Foods including DoD Fresh! SFAs operating SFSP will have access to additional SFSP entitlement through DoD Fresh from May until September, and can use any remaining NSLP entitlement until June 30th.

- New operators may contact HNS when requesting access or a new site addition in FFAVORS.
- Existing operators may order in FFAVORS for the sites operating SFSP through the end of summer or until funds are gone.

For assistance please email USDAFoods@azed.gov.

Try it Local

LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS IN THE SUMMER!



[How to Receive Try it Local Funding for Eligible Food Purchases](#)

WHAT IS IT?

Through Try it Local, schools participating in NSLP can be reimbursed for unprocessed or minimally processed local or regional foods purchased for school meal. Please submit for reimbursement prior to **June 30th, 2026**.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Purchase minimally processed local or regional foods to be used in school meals. Submit invoice or receipt to HNS in ADEConnect: CNP Supplemental Payments. Receive reimbursement for all qualifying purchased food.

WHAT ABOUT SUMMER MEALS?

Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and Extended NSLP operators may continue to be reimbursed through the summer!

Taste AZ Promotion

TRY IT LOCAL WITH THESE MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

Beans

FIND LOCAL BEANS IN ARIZONA:

2026 Producer List

BEAN TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LOCAL PRODUCERS
Mayocoba	Medium, pale yellow	Crooked Sky Farms
Pinto	Medium, speckled beige	Bonita Bean Company
Tepary (white, brown, black)	Small, high protein	Ramona Farms
Black (Tuttle)	Small, black exterior	Crooked Sky Farms
Garbanzo	Medium, round, beige	Ramona Farms

TEACH

BEAN HARVEST FACTS!

- The top five beans grown in the United States are pinto beans, navy beans, black beans, red kidney beans and great northern beans.
- They come in tons of colors. Beans can be black, white, red, green, yellow, purple, and even speckled!
- They're part of the "legume" family. Beans grow in pods, just like peas. That makes them part of a plant group called legumes.
- Beans and other legumes are "nitrogen-fixing" plants, putting essential nutrients back into the soil, which helps other plants grow.
- They're high in plant protein and fiber. They are also a good source of magnesium, iron, potassium and folate.
- Soaking dried beans helps them cook faster, makes them easier to digest, improves texture, boosts nutrient absorption, and removes dust or impurities.

TASTE

LOCAL BEAN RECIPE:

Yield: Approximately: 20 cups cooked; 2 oz. eq. MMA per ½ cup serving **or** credits as ½ cup bean/pea/legume vegetable sub-group
(always refer to the nutrition label provided for the product or access the Food Buying Guide for meal component compliance)

For a delicious, homemade beans, follow this simple ingredient guide for any kind of dry bean when cooking.

On average, you'll need:

- **dried beans, 2#**
- **water, 8-10 cups**
- **garlic, 2-3 large, cloves**
- **whole onion, 1-2 medium**
- **salt, 1 tablespoon (add later)**

Sorting & Washing: Rinse beans thoroughly under cold water until the water runs clear to remove dirt and any rocks or debris.

QUICK MATH:

DRY TO COOKED BEANS

1 pound as purchased dry tepary beans yields approximately	11 ½ cups cooked black beans
1 pound as purchased dry black beans yields approximately	9 ½ cups cooked black beans
1 pound as purchased dry garbanzo beans yields approximately	12 ½ cups cooked garbanzo beans

Connect with us!
SCHOOL INTEREST FORM

April 2026 | TASTE AZ | The Arizona Department of Education
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

WHAT IS IT?

This promotion showcases Arizona's very own locally grown produce and available food options.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each month, HNS highlights a locally sourced food that is easily available by providing an informative resource. This includes fun facts, availability timelines, and unique recipes. For April, the spotlight is on [BEANS!](#)

WHY TASTE AZ?

HNS is thrilled to facilitate connections between SFAs and the farmers and producers who can incorporate these Arizona foods into school meals! This promotion will draw parallels to the Summer Farm Fresh Challenge and will include the logos for Taste, Teach, and/or Connect when the information complements the challenge criteria.

Training Webinar

SUMMER FEEDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

For more information, operators are encouraged to register for HNS' Summer Feeding Options for Schools Webinar.

HNS will host this webinar on April 16, 2026 and provide a comprehensive overview on understanding congregate and rural non-congregate summer feeding models, plus we will have guest speakers from the field that have applied key requirements and best practices for operating rural non-congregate and traditional congregate programs.



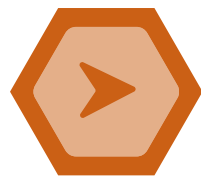
SUMMER FEEDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- 1:30 pm, **04/16/2026**
- Location: virtual
- Registration Link:
<https://azed.geniussis.com/Registration.aspx?aid=11110>

Registration is also available in the [ADE Professional Learning and Development \(APLD\)](#).

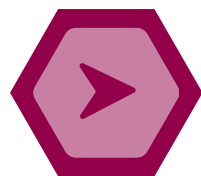
Resource Recap

LIST OF RESOURCES FOR APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY



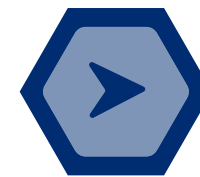
Guides and Mappers:

- [HNS 03-2026](#)
- [Introduction to the Summer Food Service Program Administration Guide](#)
- [Summer Feeding Options for Schools](#)
- [Summer Meal Service Site Eligibility](#)
- [Free and Reduced-Price Percentage Report](#)
- [CACFP and SFSP Area Eligibility Mapper](#)
- [Arizona Summer Food Service Site Planner](#)



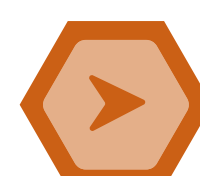
Forms:

- [Non-Associated Site Agreement](#)
- [Pre-Operational Site Visit](#)
- [Initial Site Visit](#)
- [Site Review](#)
- [SFSP Prospective Entity Form](#)
- [Public/media release](#)



Training:

- [Orientation for Sponsoring Organizations: SFSP](#)
- [Civil Rights Compliance for Child Nutrition Program Operators](#)
- [What You Need to Know about Data & Access to Sun Bucks Benefits](#)
- [What to Expect: Summer Food Service Program Administrative Review](#)
- [How to Receive Try it Local Funding for Eligible Food Purchases](#)



Promotional Materials:

- [Summer Food Kick-Off Toolkit!](#)
- [Promotional Toolkit Materials](#)
- [Summer SFA Letter to Parents and Guardians](#)

Section 2:

SUN Meals To-Go



Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service

SUN MEALS TO-GO FOR RURAL AREAS



The Consolidated Appropriations Act established a permanent non-congregate meal service option for rural areas without congregate meal service. 7 CFR 225.2 This non-congregate option intends to assist rural areas that struggle to reach their demographic and increase access to summer meals.

- ADE must ensure the site will not serve an area where children would receive the same meal at an approved congregate meal site, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of ADE that the site will serve a different group of children who may not be otherwise served. 7 CFR 225.6(h)(3)(iii)
- Non-congregate meal service is not allowed in non-rural areas.
- Each stop along a non-congregate mobile meal pick-up route is considered a site, including stops at parks, local recreation areas, etc.,
 - Each stop must be an approved site.
- A child's residence participating in home delivery is not considered a non-congregate meal site.

Is Your Site Designated Rural?

DOCUMENTING RURAL SITE DESIGNATION

Operators and HNS will rely on the FNS Rural Designation Map tool to designate sites as rural.

- Documentation must be provided by the operator designating the site as rural, and must include the date that the data was accessed.
- Rural designation documentation must be submitted to the assigned HNS program specialist with additional application documentation via HelpDesk.
- SFSP rural sites serving congregate meal service and planning to submit claims for the higher rural reimbursement rate will require rural designation documentation.

RURAL DESIGNATION MAP



Is Your Site Designated Rural?

DOCUMENTING RURAL SITE DESIGNATION

A rural site may serve meals as congregate, non-congregate, or both; however, both may not be served in the same meal. The proposed site may only conduct a non-congregate meal service when the site is not providing a congregate meal service. The sponsor must propose an organized and supervised system which prevents overlap between meal services and reasonably ensures children are not receiving more than the daily maximum allowance of meals. 7 CFR 225.6(h)(4)(iii)

RURAL DESIGNATION MAP



Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SUN MEALS TO-GO:

Operators interested in serving non-congregate must:

- be in good standing*;
- be designated as rural;
- must be more than 2 miles away from another site;
 - Sites cannot be located in close enough proximity that each site could serve the same children the same meals.
- and be located in an area that is eligible to participate in SFSP or SSO.

*Good standing means the operator has met its Program responsibilities, is current with its financial obligations, and, if applicable, has fully implemented all corrective actions within the required period of time. A site that qualifies for Program participation because it conducts a non-congregate meal service for eligible children in an area that does not meet the definition of area eligible and is not a “camp” could qualify for conditional non-congregate service. Conditional non-congregate meal service can be reimbursed only for meals served to children whose eligibility for Program meals is documented.

HNS must approve all non-congregate meal services through the summer meals application.

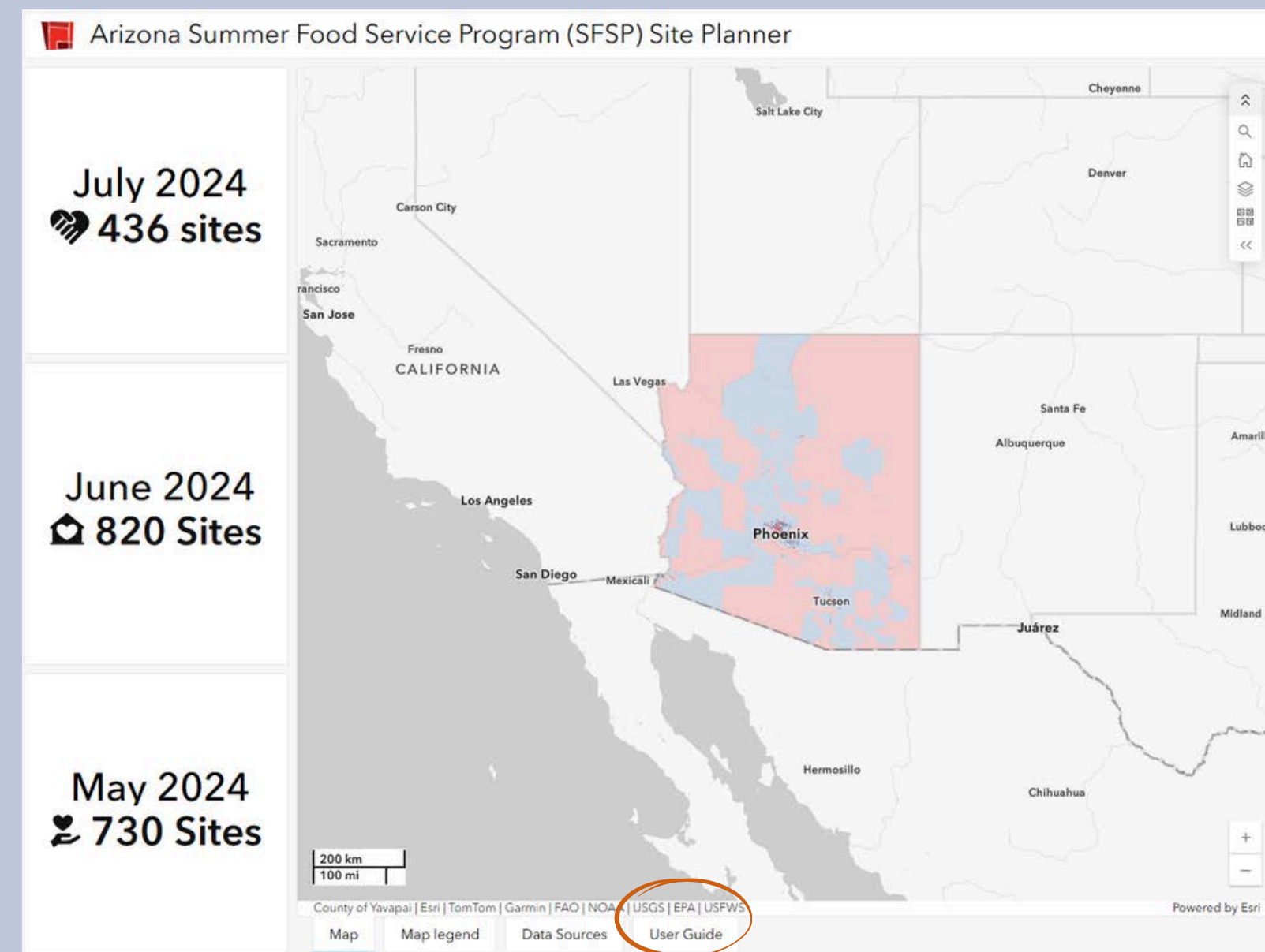


Site Eligibility

SITE PLANNING TOOL

ADHS has provided the [Arizona Summer Food Service Site Planner](#). This tool can be used by Operators to evaluate possible site locations using the data layer that shows the rural buffer zone. Sites cannot be located in close enough proximity that each site could serve the same children the same meals. Site proximity must be considered when approving sites during the SFSP sponsor application process.

Please view the User Guide on the fourth tab of this resource for instruction.



Non-USPS Sites

ADDING COORDINATES

Many sites, particularly those in rural areas, do not have a traditional numbered street address. For example, “1 mile north of HWY 41,” which is insufficient for mapping. As a result, these locations cannot be properly mapped, which led to several sites being omitted in last year’s site mapper.

To ensure that all eligible sites are accurately represented on the meal site maps, sponsors should **provide geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) in the Address 1 line provided on site applications.**



3. Physical Address

Address 1:	→	33.344289, -111.447318
Address 2:		
City:	→	Gold Canyon
State:		AZ
Zip Code:		85747

Non-USPS Sites

ADDING COORDINATES

Coordinates may be obtained using any standard mapping tool. For example,

1. Open Google Maps on your computer
2. Find your site's location
3. Click once where the location is.
4. Copy and paste the coordinates found at the bottom of the screen.



3. Physical Address

Address 1:	→	33.344289, -111.447318
Address 2:		
City:	→	Gold Canyon
State:		AZ
Zip Code:		85747

Applying for Rural Non-Congregate

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL

To be approved to serve non-congregate summer meals in area eligible rural locations:

Complete an SFSP or SSO application through CNPWeb and indicate the intent to either participate as a non-congregate feeding site, or both congregate and non-congregate feeding site.

HNS will review the application for rural/non-congregate participation to determine if the site is eligible. Once rural designation is determined, area eligibility must also be verified.

Approved operators must keep non-congregate meal documents separate as these will be reported in the claim.

Note that site cap (the maximum number of meals that may be claimed at a given site by an SFSP sponsor) will be set for each rural non-congregate site. States must confirm that the site caps reflect eligible children residing in the targeted rural community.



Conditional Non-Congregate

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL

To be approved to serve non-congregate summer meals in non-area eligible rural locations:

- Operators must certify that they will collect participants' eligibility to support the claim.
 - Household applications or income eligibility provided through the school system
- Operators must only claim reimbursement for meals served to eligible participants (children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals).
- Operators must notify participants of the availability of free meals and if a free meal application is needed, as is required for sponsors of camps and closed enrolled sites.
- May charge non-eligible children for meals (without overt identification) or use non-Federal funds to cover the cost of these meals.



Rural Non-Congregate

MEAL SERVICE OPTIONS



HNS may limit on a case-by-case basis.

Operators interested in serving non-congregate may offer:

- Meal deliveries on routes or directly to children's homes;
 - Meals delivered directly to children's homes require written parental consent before providing meals to the children.
- Parent or guardian pick-up;
 - Operators must have documented procedures to ensure that meals are only distributed to parents or guardians of eligible children and that duplicate meals are not distributed.
- Multi-day meal service;
 - Operators electing this option must have procedures in place that document, to a reasonable extent, that the proper number of meals are distributed to each eligible child. (cannot exceed 10 days max - or 5 if providing bulk items)
- And bulk food items.
 - Approved self-preparation operators may provide bulk food items that meet the minimum amounts of each food component of a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, supper, or snack. (Bulk items may not exceed the maximum number of meals that could be served in a 5 calendar day period.)

Non-Congregate Meal Service Requirements

DELIVERY AND PICK-UP REQUIREMENTS

Parental consent for home delivery:

- Written consent must be obtained prior to home delivery.
- Information to be included in written consent:
 - Address, Phone Number, Child(ren)'s name(s)/age(s)
 - Language inclusive of establishing both the presence of children in each household as well as the household's consent to receive meals.

Definition of “Guardian” for the purpose of non-congregate meal pick-up: the adult who is principally responsible for the care of a child on the day of meal service; excluding childcare providers who care for groups of unrelated children formally enrolled in their care.



Non-Congregate Meal Service Requirements

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Operators interested in serving non-congregate must follow the specific time requirements:

- Meal service times still need to be established for each site.
- HNS must approve any changes in meal service times.
- Breakfast is not required to be served in the morning.
 - If a non-congregate breakfast is served after lunch or supper it must be intended for a later date.
- There is no one-hour minimum between the end of one meal and the beginning of another.



SUN Meals To-Go Meal Service Procedures

When electing to use the non-congregate meal service in rural areas options of multi-day meal issuance and parent or guardian meal pick-up, Program operators must develop and maintain procedures to document that meals are only distributed, to a reasonable extent, to eligible children and that duplicate meals are not distributed to any child (7 CFR 225.6(c)(2)(xi)).

Program operators electing to offer multi-day meal issuance and parent or guardian meal pick-up must submit these procedures, as part of their summer meals application process, to their assigned HNS specialist.

1

DEVELOP PROCEDURES FOR NON-CONGREGATE MEAL SERVICE

2

INCLUDE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS OF MEAL SERVICE AND CLAIMING

3

SEND PROCEDURES TO ASSIGNED HNS SPECIALIST WITH ANY ADDITIONAL APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION

Food Safety for Summer Meals

SUN MEALS TO-GO FOOD SAFETY

- State and local health and food safety requirements must be met and instructions on at-home storage and preparation must be provided when applicable.
- Operators providing non-congregate meal service in rural areas should prepare a food safety plan to ensure the meal service will be conducted safely.
- All food service staff must be trained on Program operations, which include local health, food safety, and sanitation guidelines.



COMMUNITY FEEDING SITES FOOD SAFETY

These resources provide food safety best practices for summer meals served by community operations, including in non-congregate settings.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fs/safe-summer-meals>



Civil Rights Compliance

As reviewed in slide 39, in accordance with the recent guidance from the USDA regarding Civil Rights (FNS-113), HNS will not issue findings related to the display or updating of the “And Justice for All” poster during monitoring visits at this time.

HNS recommends Sponsors maintain compliance with civil rights requirements by including a printed copy of [USDA’s Nondiscrimination Statement \(NDS\)](#) with the meals each time meals are delivered.

- The full NDS must be used to appropriately meet the public notification requirement, which includes advising participants of their program rights and responsibilities and program discrimination complaints.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Additional Sponsor Responsibilities	
Offer Versus Serve	SFAs may use OVS when providing non-congregate meal service.
Off-Site Consumption of Food Items	The flexibility to allow children to take specific food items for off-site consumption only applies to congregate meal service.
Free Meal Policy Statement	Conditional non-congregate sites are exempt from including a statement that meals served are free at all sites. Conditional non-congregate sites that charge separately for meals must also include specific eligibility information in the policy statement, and that each operator of a conditional non-congregate site must submit a copy of its hearing procedures with its application.
Training	Congregate and non-congregate meal service operations are required components in the sponsor Program training sessions for its administrative and site personnel prior to the operation of a site’s first meal service.
Meal Ordering and Second Meals	Limits reimbursement of second meals to congregate meal service. State agencies must disallow claims if it is determined that a sponsor served second meals as part of a non-congregate meal service.

Applying for Non-Congregate Feeding

SUMMARY



DOCUMENT ELIGIBILITY

- **Rural Designation** using the Rural Designation Map
- **Area Eligibility** with School Data, Census Data, Participant Income Data
- **Site Eligibility** with AZ Summer Food Service Site Planner



INDICATE INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN CNPWEB APPLICATION



SET SITE CAPS



DETERMINE MEAL SERVICE OPTIONS

- Meal Pick-up, Home Delivery, Mobile Routes, Bulk (up to 5 days), Multi-day (up to 10 days)



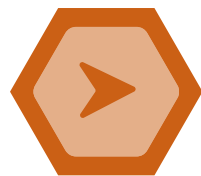
DOCUMENT CONSENTS AND PROCEDURES (AS NEEDED)



KEEP NON-CONGREGATE MEAL COUNTS SEPERATE FOR CLAIMING

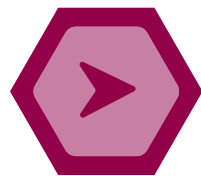
Resource Recap

LIST OF RESOURCES FOR NON-CONGREGATE FEEDING



Mappers:

- [Rural Designation Map](#)
- [Arizona Summer Food Service Site Planner](#)



Food Safety:

- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fs/safe-summer-meals>



Civil Rights:

- [USDA's Nondiscrimination Statement \(NDS\)](#)



HNS Resources:

- [Quick Guide: Offering a Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service](#)
- [Operating Both Congregate and Non-Congregate at the Same Site](#)
- [Six Reasons to Offer Rural Non-Congregate Summer Meals](#)

Section 3

SUN Bucks
Summer-EBT



HNS SUN Bucks Memorandums



HNS 04-2026: 2026 SUMMER EBT SUN BUCKS PROGRAM AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITIES

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide important information for School Food Authorities (SFA) regarding the 2026 Summer EBT SUN Bucks program, eligibility requirements, and SFA's role in reporting student enrollment and free and reduced-price eligibility information to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). This memorandum also reminds SFAs of the available SUN Bucks training and resources available to assist with reporting accurate student data and communicating with student households regarding the 2026 SUN Bucks program.



ADDITIONAL SUMMER FEEDING OPTION

SUN Bucks, or the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (Summer-EBT) adds an additional supplement to the summer meals programs by providing grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children when schools are closed for the summer. Households are issued the \$120 food assistance benefit for each eligible child.

Notably, families can benefit from SUN Bucks alongside other programs like SNAP, WIC, and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)/Seamless Summer Option (SSO).



For more information, please visit [Health and Nutrition Services SUN Bucks webpage](#).

Who is eligible for SUN Bucks?

- School-age children between 6 and 16 years old, who participate in SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, or Medicaid with a household income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, or who qualify as McKinney-Vento homeless, migrant, or foster, between July 1, 2025-August 3, 2026, may be eligible.
- Children enrolled for at least one day in schools that offer the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program; **AND** that qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on household income, receive SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, or Medicaid, Migrant, Foster, or in a Head Start Program.



SUN Bucks Benefits Eligibility

This chart provides a very basic overview of student eligibility requirements for SUN Bucks benefits.

SFAs are encouraged to connect with their assigned HNS Specialist with questions.

Parents and Families are encouraged to connect with their school contact or visit azed.gov/SUNBucks for more information.

Streamlined Eligible: Received benefits under SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, Medicaid (with a reported household income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level), Foster, McKinney-Vento Homeless, Migrant, or Head Start. Please note, a match in Foster, Migrant, or Homeless does not extend free meal or SUN Bucks benefits to other household members.

*The eligibility period for SUN Bucks changes each year, please visit azed.gov/SUNBucks for more information.

Enrolled in an NLP School for at least one instructional school day between July 1 - June 30
(Not Operating a Special Provision Option or in a Provision 2 or 3 Base Year)

Direct Certification Match or Extended Match

OR

Free or Reduced by Income Eligibility Application

OR

SUN Bucks Application

Enrolled in an NSLP School operating a Special Provision Option (CEP or Provision Non-Base Year) for at least one instructional school day between July 1 - June 30

Direct Certification Match or Extended Match

OR

SUN Bucks Application

Enrolled in a Non-NSLP School

Streamlined Eligible

&

Ages 6-16 during the SUN Bucks Eligibility Period*

What actions are required by SFAs?

- 1

REPORTING STUDENT DATA AND ELIGIBILITY

SFAs’ primary responsibility for the SUN Bucks Program is ensuring accurate student-level enrollment and free and reduced-price eligibility is provided to ADE via the CNP Summer EBT - SUN Bucks Data Portal in ADEConnect annually.
- 2

PROMOTING SUN BUCKS

Additionally, SFAs are responsible for promoting SUN Bucks and distributing ADE’s SUN Bucks Household application to families who are not automatically certified as eligible for the SUN Bucks benefit but who would otherwise qualify.



SUN Bucks Benefits

ACTIONS REQUIRED BY THE SFA

The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (SUN Bucks) provides a one-time summer benefit amount of \$120 per eligible child to purchase groceries during the summer when school is not in session. The following resource outlines the actions required by School Food Authorities (SFA) to ensure accurate and timely issuance for SUN Bucks.

1

REPORTING STUDENT DATA AND ELIGIBILITY

SFA’s primary responsibility for the SUN Bucks Program is ensuring accurate student-level enrollment and free and reduced-price eligibility is provided to ADE via the CNP Summer EBT - SUN Bucks Data Portal in ADEConnect annually.

KEY DATES

DATES OF ENROLLMENT

July 1 - June 30

All students who were enrolled at least one day from **July 1 to the last day of the academic school year or June 30**, whichever comes first must be reported.

DATES OF ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

July 1, 2025 - August 3, 2026

SFAs are to report free and reduced-price eligibility for students’ **eligibility determinations made up to August 3, 2026**. This means, SFAs are to report any new or changed free or reduced-price eligibility determinations for students who were enrolled from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026 up to August 3, 2026.

ACTION

COLLABORATE WITH SIS REPRESENTATIVE

Throughout the School Year

SFAs should be working closely with their Student Information System (SIS) contact to ensure student data from the Point of Service (POS) system matches the data maintained by the SIS.

A strong collaboration between School Nutrition and SIS is imperative for the success of SUN Bucks. By periodically verifying student data is consistent and accurate, SFAs will be better able to assure students who qualify will receive the SUN Bucks benefit at the soonest availability.

ACTION

REPORT STUDENT DATA

April 2026 - August 3, 2026

SFAs are responsible for logging into the CNP Summer EBT - SUN Bucks Data Portal in ADEConnect and:

- **Reviewing Pre-Populated Student Data (Students Reported in AzEDs):** SFAs should ensure pre-populated data elements in the ADEConnect Application - CNP Summer EBT- SUN Bucks Data Portal are accurate first before manually adding or uploading enrollment and eligibility data.
- **Manually Adding/Uploading Student Information (Non-AzEDs):** SFAs must add or upload student data for any students who were enrolled for at least one day from July 1 to the last day of the academic school year or June 30, whichever comes first if students are not already pre-populated. This includes student level enrollment and free and reduced-price eligibility data for any Bureau of Indian Education schools, private schools, and schools with pre-K or federally funded Head Start students.

For more information, please review ADE HNS’ How to Report Students for Summer-EBT in the CNP Summer EBT - SUN Bucks Portal Quick Guide.

ADE needs to know all students who were enrolled (even those who are not free or reduced-price eligible) as verifying NSLP enrollment is required for reviewing SUN Bucks applications submitted to ADE. If ADE cannot verify NSLP enrollment, a student will be denied even if their household income meets eligibility.

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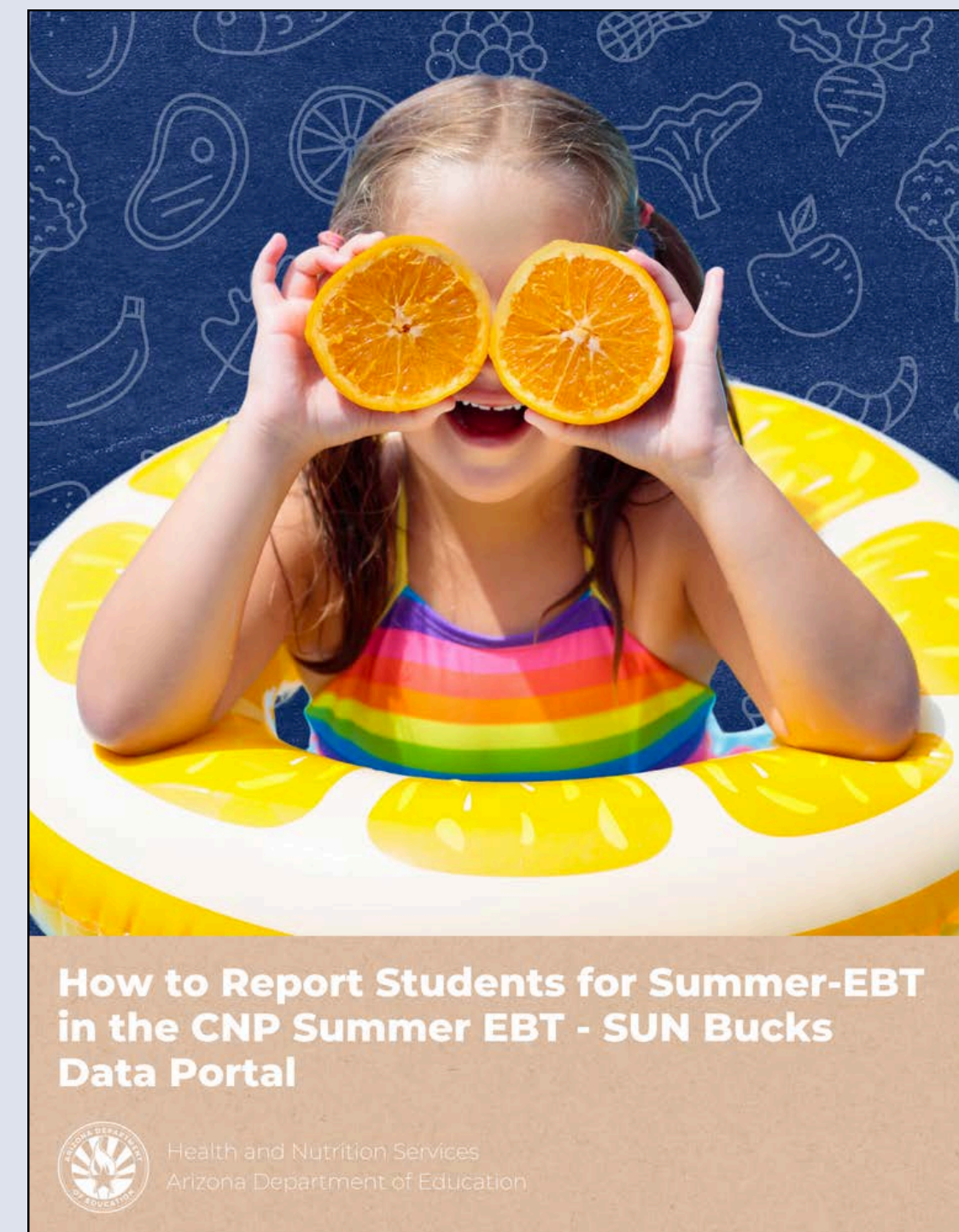
[SUN Bucks Benefits: Actions Required by the SFA](#)

Reporting Students for SUN Bucks Benefits

CNP SUMMER EBT - SUN BUCKS DATA PORTAL

SFAs are responsible for reporting any NSLP/SBP enrolled students not reported in AzEDS for SUN Bucks/Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (SEBT) and ensuring all eligible student data elements are accurate annually online in ADEConnect - CNP Summer EBT- SUN Bucks Data Portal.

HNS has created a quick guide resource that will take the SFA step-by-step through the process of reporting all students in this data portal for maximum access to SUN Bucks benefits.



[How to Report Students for Summer-EBT in the CNP Summer EBT - SUN Bucks Data Portal](#)

How do families apply for SUN Bucks?

SUN Bucks benefits will be automatic for most students who qualify for benefits. However, students who were enrolled for a minimum of one instructional school day and were not previously certified as eligible for free or reduced-price meals AND/OR students who were enrolled in an NSLP/SBP participating school that did not distribute NSLP household applications and therefore could not be determined eligible through the application could **still potentially receive SUN Bucks benefits!** These individuals are encouraged to submit a SUN Bucks Application to ADE.



The SUN Bucks Application for this program year is currently available through the Arizona Department of Education's Health and Nutrition Services website. In order to apply online, the applicant will first complete the SUN Bucks Eligibility Screener Guide ([English](#) or [Spanish](#) version) to determine if the child will receive benefits automatically. There is also a paper SUN Bucks application that can be accessed via the website.

Eligibility Reporting and SPO Operators

Students who are enrolled in schools that operate Special Provision Option (SPO) like the Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2 or 3 non-base year do not have the opportunity to submit school meal applications. If a student does NOT meet the following, they should be provided the SUN Bucks application.

- Match results from the CNP Direct Certification system
- Extended Direct Certification Match results
 - SPO operators with students that are extended DC matches, will need to track and upload these extended eligibles manually in the portal.

How will the other students who are eligible receive SUN Bucks benefits?

- **These families will need to fill out a SUN Bucks Application**

*The '[No Meal Application, No Problem](#)' resource for SPO operators contains a QR code linked to the SUN Bucks application.

No Meal Application, No Problem...

How to receive SUN Bucks for students who attend schools that do not collect Household Applications for Meal Benefits



The information collected on meal applications for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) can qualify students for SUN Bucks. However, if your school doesn't collect meal applications, you may fill out a SUN Bucks application to see if your child is eligible for this grocery buying benefit.

COMPLETE THE SUN BUCKS SCREENER TO
Apply for SUN Bucks Today!

SUN Bucks Eligibility Screener

Scan the QR code to be directed to the screening tool that will ensure households that are pre-qualified do not complete a SUN Bucks Household Application when it is not required. For those deemed necessary to complete a SUN Bucks Household Application, the link to the application will be made available within the screener.

For Spanish visit: <https://www.azed.gov/SUNBucks>



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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SUN Bucks Household Application

The SUN Bucks application is available annually at azed.gov/SUNBucks - Applying for SUN Bucks.

School Food Authorities (SFAs) are required to:

- Ensure the application is available to households that believe they qualify for the SUN Bucks benefit but were not identified as eligible by the SFA.
- Ensure students attending schools that operate Special Provision Options have access to the SUN Bucks Household application if they do not match in CNP Direct Certification.

Eligible households may:

- Complete and submit the 2026 SUN Bucks Application to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) by August 3, 2026 (subject to date change)
- Expect ADE to process the application and subsequently notify the household of approval/denial of benefits.

SUN Bucks (Summer EBT/S-EBT): Information for Parents



The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (Summer-EBT/SUN Bucks) provides grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children who lose access to free or reduced-price school meals when schools are closed for the summer.

▶ Will my child automatically receive SUN Bucks in 2026?

▶ If my child's school serves free meals to all students, are they automatically eligible for SUN Bucks?

▶ How do I know if my child is automatically eligible for SUN Bucks based on participation in AHCCCS/Medicaid?

▶ How do I apply for SUN Bucks?

▶ How will I be receiving my benefits?

▶ How do I use my SUN Bucks benefits?

▶ What if I don't want my benefits or if I'd like to opt out?

▶ What to do if my benefits were stolen?

▶ Who do I contact if I have further questions?

▶ Where can I submit an appeal of my benefits decision?

SUN Bucks Household Application

APPLICANT MUST FILL OUT THE SUN BUCKS ELIGIBILITY SCREENER GUIDE

- The SUN Bucks Eligibility Screener Guide ([English](#) or [Spanish](#) version) will determine if a child will receive benefits automatically. Completion of the eligibility screener will provide the link to the SUN Bucks household application if applicable.

APPLICANT MUST FILL OUT ALL REQUIRED FIELDS

The following information will be collected when completing the SUN Bucks application:

- Custodial parent name;
- Contact information including address;
- Each child's name, school, grade, and birth date;
- All household members;
- Gross income information for each household member and child (if applicable for child);
- SNAP, TANF, FDPIR case number if household participates; and,
- Signature and attesting to information on the application.

SUN Bucks Household Application

THE APPLICATION WILL BE PROCESSED AND BENEFITS WILL BE GIVEN TO ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

SUN Bucks Household Applications will be submitted to and processed by ADE. These applications must be submitted to ADE by August 3, 2026. This date is subject to change.

- *This date is subject to change annually.*

SUN Bucks parent hotline/phone number:
833-648-4406

SUN Bucks email address:
SUNBucks@azed.gov

SUN Bucks website for households:
<https://www.azed.gov/SUNBucks>

Training Webinar

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DATA AND ACCESS TO SUN BUCKS BENEFITS

For detailed information, operators are encouraged to register for HNS' What You Need to Know About Data and Access to SUN Bucks Benefits webinar. For those that can't make it, HNS will make the recording available following the live webinar.

HNS will host this webinar on April 14, 2026 and provide a comprehensive overview of USDA's guidelines for data management and access to SUN Bucks benefits.



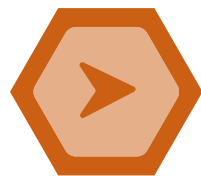
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DATA AND ACCESS TO SUN BUCKS BENEFITS

- 1:30 pm, **04/14/2026**
- Location: virtual
- Registration Link:
<https://azed.geniussis.com/Registration.aspx?aid=11245>

Registration is also available in the [ADE Professional Learning and Development \(APLD\)](#).

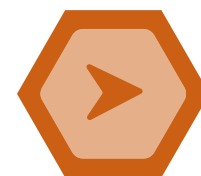
Resource Recap

HERE IS A LIST OF RESOURCES FOR SUN BUCKS



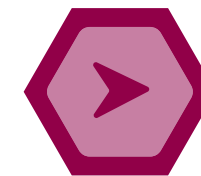
Memorandums:

- [HNS 04-2026: 2026 Summer EBT SUN Bucks School Food Authority Requirements and Information](#)



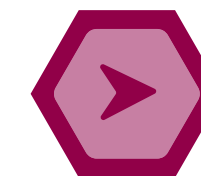
Resources:

- [SUN Bucks Benefits: Actions Required by the SFA](#)
- [No Meal Application, No Problem](#)



Trainings:

- [Quick Guide: How to Report Students in the SUN Bucks Portal](#)



Applications and Systems:

- CNP Summer EBT - SUN Bucks - SFA Data Portal in ADEConnect
- [SUN Bucks Household Application](#)

Section 4

Nutrition
Promotion during
Summer Meal
Service





Farm to Summer Challenge

THE SUMMER 2026 FARM FRESH CHALLENGE

This challenge is an HNS initiative designed to empower summer program operators to cultivate excitement around fresh and locally sourced foods. Participating operators must complete a series of challenges that promote the tasting, teaching, and connection of participants to foods local to Arizona. Be on the lookout for Farm to Summer Challenge communications!

Turnip the Beet

AWARD FOR HIGH-QUALITY SUMMER MEALS

- ✓ All Summer Meal Programs sponsors, including SFSP sponsors and NSLP SSO sponsors, may be eligible for a Turnip the Beet Award by self-nominating or being nominated.
- ✓ USDA's Turnip the Beet Award recognizes outstanding Summer Meal Program sponsors who work hard to offer high-quality meals that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious.
- ✓ Winners will receive a certificate and will be nationally recognized and featured on the Turnip the Beet webpage.



upLIFT

UPLIFT WEBINAR SERIES



The monthly webinar series focuses on sharing relevant nutrition knowledge as well as standout stories from the field on successful service models, inspiring menu ideas, and tips and tricks to implement nutrition initiatives in schools! These webinars are intended to provide you with real, applicable, and helpful information that you can use to operate the best school food service program possible at your sites this year!

Summer upLIFT webinars:

- **April 21, 2026:** Creating Confidence in the Kitchen: Scratch Cooking Edition
- **May 19, 2026:** Taste Testing and Feedback: Involving Students to Improve Meal Programs
- **June 16, 2026:** Parent Involvement: Encouraging Family Participation in School Nutrition

Summer Feeding Plan Survey

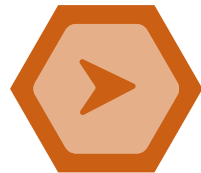
PY 26 SUMMER FEEDING PLANS

Please take a minute to fill the [Summer Feeding Plans Survey](#) to help HNS connect operators that have sponsored summer feeding sites in the past with sites seeking sponsorship this year.



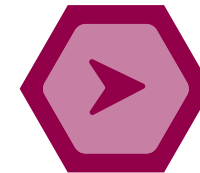
Resource Recap

LIST OF RESOURCES FOR SUMMER NUTRITION PROMOTION



Surveys:

- [Summer Feeding Plans Survey](#)



Websites:

- [Nutrition Promotion Accordion on the Summer Meals Website](#)
- [upLIFT Website](#)



Join Us Next Month!

Staying On Track: May

May 5, 2026
1:30-2:30 pm

We will review HNS Communications and policy memorandums released in April, and upcoming key tasks, deadlines, and action items for May.

Thank you!

PLEASE PUT QUESTIONS IN THE Q&A

If you are attending the live webinar, you will receive an email once attendance has been completed. Once you have received this email, your training certificate will be available in APLD.

If you are watching the recorded webinar, you can access the survey link and certificate of completion at the end of the webinar slides.



Certificate

Requesting a training certificate

Please click the button to complete a brief survey about this online training. Once the survey is complete, you will be able to print your certificate of completion from Survey Monkey.



Information to include when documenting this training for Professional Standards:

Training Title: Staying on Track: April 2026

Length: 1 hour

Please note, attendees must document the amount of training hours indicated on the training despite the amount of time it takes to complete it.





In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#), found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

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