

# Back to School Checklist

Ensure a smooth start to the 2023-24 School Year



This checklist outlines key activities and tools to help sponsors prepare for a successful year. To start:

- [Visit the Events and Program Deadlines webpage](#) for additional deadlines.
- [Subscribe to the Dish, School Nutrition's Newsletter, for the latest program updates, reminders and resources.](#)

## Renewal Applications

- Submit your applications for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool Snack Program in the [Child Nutrition Portal](#) no later than September 15, 2023. Find detailed application instructions on the [How to Apply webpage](#).
  - Afterschool Snack Program applications may be submitted anytime during the school year.

## School Meal Eligibility and Household Income Forms

- [Distribute, collect, and process household income applications](#) to determine student eligibility:
  - Sponsors with no eligible Community Eligibility Provision sites: Use the standard free and reduced-price application.
  - Sponsors with some CEP sites: Use the combination form to streamline information collection between all sites.
  - Sponsors with district-wide CEP: Use the [FEDS form](#) for household income collection. (optional)
- Complete the first [Direct Certification](#) match in the Child Nutrition Portal prior to the first day of school.

## Meal Counting & Claiming

- Ensure the Point Of Sale system is set up to claim meals by student eligibility (not required for sites operating CEP)
  - If participating in Healthy School Meals for All: ensure the POS is set up so no students will be charged for a meal. Sites not operating CEP must still count students by eligibility.
- Establish internal controls ([edit checks](#)) to ensure daily meal counts do not exceed the number of students eligible or in attendance. This will ensure an accurate claim for reimbursement is submitted. Follow unpaid meal charges protocols utilizing the [Unpaid Meal Charges Flyer](#) and [Debt and Donation Guidance](#) resources.
- Review the [updated meal claiming instructions](#) to ensure you will be prepared to enter claims prior to the deadline.

## Serving Preschool Students

- [Confirm program eligibility](#) for any preschool students you plan to serve.

## Civil Rights

- Utilize the [Civil Rights Requirements Self-Check](#) to review and document compliance.



## Professional Standards

- Track all completed trainings on a training tracker with key area and learning objective codes.

## Food Safety

- Contact your local public health agency to request two food safety inspections for the school year.

## Resource Management

- Complete the Paid Lunch Equity Tool to ensure the paid meals price meets federal requirements.
  - Waived for sponsors participating in Healthy School Meals for All and/or CEP
- Complete the Non-program Revenue Tool to ensure pricing for non-program foods meets federal requirements.

## Administrative Reviews and Technical Assistance Visits

- Check the AR and TA cycle to see if you will receive a review or a TA visit this year.

## Healthy School Meals for All (HSMA)

- Sponsors participating in HSMA can use the outreach toolkit to share more information with your school community. This toolkit includes talking points on the importance of families providing household income information.
- Sponsors will opt in or out of the program via the renewal application. Applications must be submitted by September 15.
- For more information on HSMA, visit the webpage and frequently asked questions document.

## CDE School Nutrition Contacts

- Review the Point of Contact list to determine who your CDE point person is for the upcoming school year. Your point person is your go-to person for answers to program questions and support with applications, reviews and technical assistance needs.

### Spotlight: On the Menu

On The Menu Calls are held the fourth Thursday of each month from 2-3 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Topics reflect current happenings and required annual training and provide opportunities for networking with peers.

Upcoming On the Menu trainings (click on the link to register):

- Aug 24: Back to School Checklist
  - Cover all your bases for School Year 2023-24 operations, including an emphasis on claiming federal and state reimbursements
- Sept 28: Verification
- Oct 26: Strategies to Address Hiring Challenges: Sponsor Panel
  - Learn what's worked from other Colorado sponsors!
- Nov 16: Healthy School Meals for All: Lessons Learned

