Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council
Food Service Updates for November 2026

USDA
We are still waiting on details of the required allergy training. The Revised Meal Pattern announcement is also pending.

SWEPC
The Annual SWEPC Showcase and New Item Food Show is tomorrow, November 4!

75% of all Ohio districts participate in the SWEPC commodity program, and 40% of members used over 100% of their entitlement. This is possible because of the "reallocated balance/bonus" funds made available to SWEPC members. Using your entitlement is key to controlling food costs. High-usage members were surveyed on their strategies for using entitlement effectively, and those strategies will be presented at tomorrow's meeting.

SWEPC also plans to reevaluate its USDA unprocessed food offerings, such as fruits, vegetables, cheese, and protein items. Members will receive a survey soon to give input.

VERIFICATION OF FREE/REDUCED APPLICATIONS
Verification is happening now and must be complete no later than November 15.

- Remember, you must make at least ONE follow-up attempt when the household does not respond to the initial verification request

STUDENTS CANNOT BE REQUIRED TO TAKE MEALS
Participation in school meal programs is voluntary!

- Students cannot be required to take a meal, even if provided at no cost
- Students cannot be required to go through the service line
- Meals cannot be placed on students' desks to automatically claim reimbursement
- Households cannot be required to complete a meal application

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS
Administrative reviews will now require districts to provide a full nutrient analysis for one week from the month of review. EPC is working on updating our Menu/Nutritional Service to help districts meet this requirement.

AVERAGE STATEWIDE UNRESTRICTED INDIRECT COST RATES

For fiscal year 2027, the ODEW Office of Grants Administration has developed a process for state or local government agencies to request use of an average unrestricted indirect cost rate if they do not have an approved negotiated rate. Grantees who use an unrestricted indirect cost rate only for their Medicaid in Schools and National School Lunch Programs may benefit from this flexibility.

Questions about use of the rate can be answered in the Average Statewide Unrestricted Indirect Cost Rate Guidance or by contacting the Office of Grants Administration.

We appreciate your continued support and look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events!

SWEPC Foodservice Programs

EPC Commercial Bid Program & SWEPC Commodity Co-Op, District Food Service Management Assistance, Procurement Reviews, Administrative Reviews, Profit/Loss Analysis, Consulting & Training Needs, Networking Events, EPC Google Group, Vendor Fair Foodservice Update Meeting/Vendors & more!