What is the USDA Foods Program?
The Ohio Department of Education’s Office of Integrated Student Supports partners with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to administer various nutrition programs. One of those programs is the USDA Foods Program.

The USDA provides financial support for foods through a calculated Planned Assistance Level (PAL) expressed in dollars. This amount is allocated to program participants based on the number of lunches served in the previous school year multiplied by a meal rate set by the USDA. Breakfast and after-school snack data are not included in the PAL computation. However, USDA foods may be used for these meals.

Providing USDA Foods
The following nutrition programs may request USDA Foods:

- National School Lunch Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program

Using USDA Foods in the School Breakfast Program
Sponsors are permitted to use USDA Foods in the School Breakfast Program. The USDA offers a variety of direct delivery foods that may be used in the School Breakfast Program and meet the components of the breakfast meal pattern. See the following examples of direct delivery products that may be served in the School Breakfast Program:

**Fruits**: Frozen orange juice cups, frozen fruit cups;

**Vegetables**: Frozen diced potatoes, tomato salsa

**Grains**: Oat circle cereal bowls, whole-grain pancakes; and

**Protein**: Frozen egg patties, peanut butter or sunflower seed butter.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USDA FOODS MAKE UP BETWEEN 15 AND 20 PERCENT OF THE PRODUCTS SERVED AS PART OF THE SCHOOL LUNCH
What types of foods are offered?
Sponsors may select from a wide variety of USDA products, including fruits and vegetables, meat, cheese, dry and canned beans, rice, pasta and grain products. For a list of available food offerings, fact sheets and ingredient listings, visit education.ohio.gov and search USDA Foods Program.

Ohio’s National School Lunch Program served more than 153 million meals in the 2018-2019 school year at more than 3,600 sites.
The Ohio Department of Education’s Office of Integrated Student Supports partners with the USDA to administer the National School Lunch Program, National School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, Seamless Summer Option, Special Milk Program and Afterschool At-Risk Program.

How can I use my Planned Assistance Level (PAL) to obtain USDA foods or end products made with USDA foods?
1. Order direct delivery (non-processed) foods through the Ohio Department of Education’s Commodity Allocation Tracking System (CATS);
2. Direct divert USDA foods to a processor for further processing into end products; and
3. Participate in the USDA Department of Defense’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

NEW FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR:
CHEESE, PEPPER JACK, SHREDDED

USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
Schools are encouraged to sign up with the USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). In this program, schools are permitted to divert PAL to purchase fresh produce from the USDA to serve in their schools. Schools can receive fresh produce from local growers with no out-of-pocket costs. Encourage healthy meal patterns and food choices with participation in this program!

Procurement of end products with USDA Foods
Schools wishing to divert USDA Foods to a vendor for further processing into end products must use proper procurement procedures. Procurements must be conducted in a way to promote free and fair competition. Procurement reviews are conducted every three years, in conjunction with administrative reviews, to ensure proper rules are being followed.

OHIO’S NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM SERVED MORE THAN 153 MILLION MEALS IN THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR AT NEARLY 3,600 SITES.
Ohio Department of Education

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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 Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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