

# HNU NEWS

The Official Newsletter of the Health and Nutrition Unit



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## New Additions to HNU:

We are pleased to welcome the newest members of our HNU Team.

Jarek Graves - Grants Specialist

ShaLonda Beene - Program Eligibility Specialist

## Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education Health and Nutrition Unit Quarterly Newsletter: New Year Edition

The Health and Nutrition Unit's mission is to increase food security and reduce hunger by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthy diet and nutrition education in a way that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

## FY 2023 Farm to School Grants



### The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act

(NSLA) (**42 USC 1751** et seq.) establishes a Farm to School Program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in the USDA Food and Nutrition (FNS) Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

### The 2023 Farm to School Grant deadline is January 6, 2023

To apply, visit [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and follow the instructions found in the FY2023 RFA. For all questions pertaining to the USDA Farm to School grant program, please email [Farm to School](mailto:Farm to School).

## Healthy Meals Incentives

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has established the Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative to improve the nutritional quality of school meals through food systems transformation, school food authority recognition and technical assistance, the generation and sharing of innovative ideas and tested practices, and grants.

Healthy Meals Incentives also offer sub-grants entitled Healthy Meals Incentives School Food System Transformation Challenge Sub-Grants. Full grant applications are due via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 pm ET Feb. 1, 2023. Applications received after the deadline are deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed or considered. For questions regarding applications, please contact the Grant Officer, [Anna Arrowsmith](mailto:Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov).

Please click [here](#) for more details regarding the Healthy Meals Incentives.



## Child Nutrition Recipe Box

# honey lime chicken

To view the full recipe, click on the link below.

[Honey Lime Chicken USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers – Child Nutrition Recipe Box \(theicn.org\)](https://theicn.org)

## CACFP

### National CACFP Week

[National CACFP Week - National CACFP Sponsors Association](#)

### 37th National Child Nutrition Conference

Early Registration (December 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023)

Standard Registration (February 1 - February 28, 2023)

Late Registration (March 1 - March 31, 2023)

Onsite Registration (April 1 - April 14, 2023)

[National Conference - National CACFP Sponsors Association](#)

## Review Team

### CACFP Program Review Tips

Here are some ideas to help easily and permanently correct the most common Compliance Review Findings:

- **TIP #1:** Have a system in place that ensures staff records meals at the time of service.
- **TIP #2:** Automate your enrollment and income forms. Use software that allows you to send forms to parents electronically and updates your system in real time, including categorizing parent's income/classifying the child.
- **TIP #3:** Actively monitor your program expenses to ensure they equal or exceed your monthly reimbursement. You may need to amend your contract budget as well.
- **TIP #4:** Utilize CACFP software for organizing and documenting milk purchases.
- **TIP #5:** Time Distribution reports can be automated to ensure they are completed each month.

## Applications

**January 14, 2023** – Schools open enrollment to submit applications for the 2023 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

**February 14, 2023** – Open enrollment for all institutions begin for the 2023 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

**April 30, 2023** – The deadline date for all applications to be submitted for approval

**April 30, 2023** – The deadline date to request commodities for SFSP 2023 (the application must be approved by April 30, 2023, to receive commodities).

### Tips for Applications:

1. Contact your Application Coordinator (AC) to set an appointment to start the process.
2. Know where you want to establish a site(s) and get the site agreement completed.
3. Know your budget, i.e., your expenses, salaries, food cost, food supplies, and all other possible expenses.
4. Be proactive in the application process and do not wait until the last minute.
5. A Successful SFSP year requires both the State Agency and the Sponsor working together throughout the entire process.

## HNU TRAINING DATES

Click the [link](#) to access upcoming HNU training dates.



## Commodities Team - Meet CDU's New Staff

### Jarek Graves

#### Grants Specialist

My name is Jarek Graves. I was born in Pine Bluff, AR and moved to Little Rock, AR in 2015.

When I moved to Little Rock in 2015, I started working at the Department of Finance and Administration in the Sales Tax Department as a DFA Representative. I worked with DFA from 2015-2019. Then from there I went to work at Arvest Mortgage Center, where I was a Loan Boarding Specialist. I worked with Arvest from 2019-2022.

On February 7, 2022 I came back to work with the State of Arkansas, and started working with the Department of Human Services, in the DCCECE Division and worked in the Health and Nutrition Unit as a Grant Specialist/Reviewer. On November 14, 2022, I transitioned to the Commodity Unit, where I'm over the TEFAP Program.

I currently enjoy working with DHS and offering the best customer service to the families that we serve in the State of Arkansas. I understand that this job takes a lot of empathy and compassion to serve the less fortunate families and offer them with the resources available to help them along their journey.

For further questions, please feel free to email me at [Jarek.graves@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:Jarek.graves@dhs.arkansas.gov) or call me at 501.683.6322.

### ShaLonda Beene

#### Program Eligibility Specialist

My name is ShaLonda Beene. I was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas.

I was hired at DHS in October of 2003 as a Document Examiner for our Human Resources Department working alongside the security guard in the Donaghey Plaza South building lobby then I became a part of Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education in 2006 working for the Program Support Unit as an Administrative Assistant.

In 2015 I began working for the Better Beginnings Team as their assistant also, and I just recently gained promotion from the Better Beginnings Unit into the Commodity Distribution Unit as a Program Eligibility Specialist over the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) shortly after my 19-year milestone with DHS in October 2022.

Customer service has always been enjoyable for me because I love assisting people with their issues and I also celebrate with them when their issues have been resolved. Remaining teachable and open to change has been the core of my longevity with the Department of Human Services. Being able to be an intricate part of families, and especially the elderly, in getting food and being fed all over the state of Arkansas warms my heart and fulfills a special part of my overall purpose.

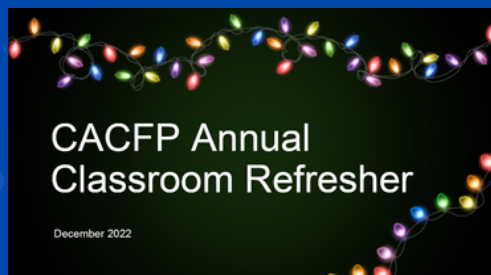
For further questions, please feel free to email me at [ShaLonda.Beene@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:ShaLonda.Beene@dhs.arkansas.gov) or call me at 501.320.8983.



## CACFP Annual Refresher Classroom Sessions

On December 6th, 2022, the Health and Nutrition Unit hosted two in-person Christmas themed CACFP Classroom Refresher Trainings at the Arkansas Food Bank. A total of 22 participants attended the classroom sessions. This is the first in-person refresher the State Agency has held since the start of the pandemic in 2020, so we

were thrilled to offer a content specific training for providers, based on some of the requested topics. During this refresher, training was provided on the infant meal pattern, infant feeding skills and modifying textures, Mealtimes with Toddlers, and the Exhibit A grains Tool including grains-based desserts. We hope you enjoy these pictures from some of our session 2 group members!



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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 responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. 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, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:**

Pamela Burton - Assistant Director (501-320-8978) - [Pamela.burton.dccece@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:Pamela.burton.dccece@dhs.arkansas.gov)

Ravynn Smith - Quality Assurance Coordinator (Outreach Coordinator) (501-916-4155) - [Ravynn.Smith.DHS@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:Ravynn.Smith.DHS@dhs.arkansas.gov)

DeKelton Lester - Child Care Service Specialist (501-320-8913) - [DeKelton.lester@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:DeKelton.lester@dhs.arkansas.gov)