



2023-24 Activities

in support of the

2021-24 Strategic Plan

May 2024

Following is a list of the activities SNA proposed to take on during the 2023-2024 fiscal year in support of the Strategic Plan. This list is not intended as an exhaustive listing of all work SNA undertakes in a given year. Instead, it draws attention to the specific, measurable activities which drive toward achievement of the objectives for each Area of Focus.

Voice of School Nutrition. SNA is the voice of the school nutrition industry.

We are advocates for feeding our country's future.

- Propose and execute an approach to supporting member information needs related to the
 - *USDA Nutrition Program Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) (Final Rule)*
 - Collected and disseminated data via [SNA's 2024 Trends Survey](#) on school nutrition directors and industry members concerns about the proposed rule, including challenges with meeting sodium Target 1A and procuring menu items that meet nutrition standards, and concerns about proposed future targets, sugar limits and flavored milk mandates.
 - Shared and discussed results of the 2024 Trends Survey with USDA and members' ongoing challenges related to supply chain, meal costs, staffing, etc. throughout the 23-24 school year. The strong partnership and ongoing communication resulted in the final rule being much more manageable for operator and industry members to implement.
 - Created a [Nutrition Standards Resources and Feedback page on the Action Network](#) to walk members through key details and deadlines of the final rule and allow them to submit questions and feedback on each section of the rule. Information will be shared with the SNA Board and Public Policy and Legislation Committee to identify and prioritize how to support members during the transition to the new standards. In addition, input will be shared with USDA to inform future guidance and additional resources.
 - SNA worked with staff from the House Agriculture Committee to gain inclusion in the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, of an amendment that would provide for a new process of identifying members for the DGA Committee in the future. The

- new process would include the addition of an individual who has specific experience in child nutrition issues.
 - Government Accountability Office (GAO) USDA Foods Report
 - Created a subgroup of the Task Force to discuss potential next steps following the publication. The subgroup has met twice and is identifying next steps.
 - Convened the State Agency Advisory Council to provide input on the report and identified opportunities for SNA professional development programming to address some of the needs identified in the GAO report.
 - Unpaid Meal Debt
 - Collected stats via SNA's 2024 Trends Survey on unpaid meal debt, program challenges with meal charges and collecting FRP applications. This data will be used in advocacy and media outreach related to meal debt and universal meals and will advance the 2024 Position Paper asks.
 - SNA worked with Rep. Ilhan Omar to introduce legislation (HR 7639) that calls for a National Advisory Council on Unpaid School Meal Debt.
 - Provided an SNA Action Network advocacy campaign allowing advocates to urge their legislators to support the Unpaid School Meal Debt bill. 1,100 messages sent to Congress to date.
 - Created the annual [State Reimbursements and Mandate Report](#), which includes information on each state's unpaid meal debt regulations.
 - Financial sustainability of school nutrition programs
 - SNA's 2024 Trends Survey Report details member concerns about financial sustainability, inadequacy of the current reimbursement rates and challenges with increasing costs and staff shortages. This data is being used in advocacy and media outreach related to financial challenges and will support the 2024 Position Paper.
- Develop an advocacy "ambassador" program (MV¹)
 - A draft program plan was outlined, an initial feasibility study was conducted, and new Quorum public policy portal implemented to support members.
 - Worked with Quorum to offer an option for state associations to pay an annual subscription fee to utilize the portal for their state advocacy efforts and communication with members.
 - A webinar showcasing the portal was held for states and two – New York and Pennsylvania – have signed on to date; more expected in coming months.
 - The new Quorum portal (Action Network) has four active campaigns, resulting in over 2,500 messages from school nutrition advocates to Congress. A competitive public-facing engagement points system is in development.
 - Developed a live, regulations tracking page available on the Action Network, allowing members to easily track relevant regulatory updates and respond where appropriate.

¹ Activities which may lead to increased micro volunteering opportunities are marked with (MV).

- Provide educational opportunities for members on how to advocate for state legislation (MV)
 - Scheduled a 3-hour precon on State/Federal Advocacy tips at LAC 2024. Create and release a report of state reimbursement rates for school meals.
 - Introduced a new opportunity for State Legislative Chairs to participate in bimonthly meetings to discuss and collaborate on both State and Federal Advocacy efforts. Three meetings have been held thus far and have covered such topics as “How to Conduct a Cafeteria Site Visit and “Share Your Experience During Your First 100 Days as Legislative Chair.”
- Increase State association responsiveness to FNS proposed regulations and develop related benchmarks.
 - Presented a session at the National Leadership Conference, *Engaging with Congress & USDA*. The session covered SNA’s advocacy path step-by-step and provided insights into how state leaders can be part of the discussions and pointers on how to establish a relationship with legislators and USDA.
 - Launched the new [2024 Key State School Nutrition Legislation](#) live, interactive map and sheet providing updates on state bills addressing issues such as expansion of healthy school meals for all, unpaid school meal debt, and program funding. It also includes critical upcoming state legislature hearing dates.
 - Benchmarks and tracking of state associations responding to USDA FND proposed regulations to begin in FY 24-25.

We elevate the professional image of school nutrition, both inside and outside of the industry.

- Expand on the [Bring more to the Table](#) PR campaign (continuing from FY 22-23)
 - Continuing to leverage assets on social media and, given the staffing shortages faced by our members, this campaign will still be relevant in 2024.
- Launch the *Made with School Lunch* PR campaign (*National Dairy Council supported*)
 - Campaign launched successfully during ANC23, all collateral available on the [SNA website](#).
 - Three school districts—Rialto USD, CA; Bridgeton Public Schools, NJ; and Chesapeake Public Schools, VA — have been selected for the first phase of implementation. We have two MOUs signed and a third one is pending. Specific schools within these districts will be chosen for the campaign, with implementation set to begin by fall 2024.
- Launch the SNA podcast, [School Food for Thought](#) (MV)
 - Podcast series was successfully launched at ANC23, and two seasons have been recorded. Six episodes of the pilot season are available on SNA [website](#). Season One was recorded at ANC23 and its six episodes will be launched prior to ANC24.

We are universally acknowledged and recognized school nutrition experts.

- Update *Keys to Excellence*
 - The Nutrition & Research Committee has completed revisions to SNA's *Keys to Excellence* with a public rollout scheduled for Summer/Fall 2024.

Career Development and Growth. SNA supports the professional growth and career pathways of members.

We create opportunities for professional growth for members and build their capacity to lead in their schools and districts.

- In coordination with USDA, provide training, information, and/or resources when the Final Rule is released (MV).
 - Shared information on the Final Rule with members in April when published by USDA and have identified educational opportunities for members including briefing for SNA Patrons on June 3 with USDA FNS presenting; providing a link to USDA webinars; planning 3+ USDA education and listening sessions at ANC and more to come based on input gathered from members on [Nutrition Standards Resources and Feedback page on the Action Network](#).
- Develop and release virtual educational programming based on ANC content
 - Launched the [Conference Video Series](#) in October 2023. This 10 video collection features content from ANC23 focusing on DEIA and marketing efforts.
- Revise and refresh the SNS exam preparatory materials (continuing from FY 22-23)
 - Pilot the SNS prep course for Operators
 - SNS Prep course for operators was piloted in the Fall 2023.
 - A revised on-demand [SNS Exam Prep Course](#) was made available in May 2024.
 - 37 members purchased access within the first three weeks of launch.
- Conduct short-form marketing training for members (*National Dairy Council supported*)
 - Working with vendor to develop the training over the next few months.
- Develop an SNA strategy for translation and multicultural content (MV)
 - An internal staff team met in the fall to begin defining a strategy.
 - The ANC24 Call for Proposals included options to feature sessions in Spanish. Eight were submitted and three were accepted as educational sessions.
- Identify how the [LEAD program](#) network will be maintained post-USDA funding (*USDA supported*)
 - In October 2022, SNA shared our continuity planning and ideas for the future of the LEAD grant with USDA. We are awaiting their evaluation.
 - These cadre trainers have been deployed since May 2, 2022 and have delivered 125 training requests in 42states reaching 11,718 people.

- In May 2024, SNA was granted a 12-month extension from the USDA to maintain LEAD and its associated cadre of trainers.
- Diversify the pool of SNA content experts (MV)
 - In November 2022, the PD team launched a subject matter expert (SME) form to collect a pool of self-identified experts on a myriad of topics. As of May 2024, we have 62 SMEs.
 - SNIC 2024, for the first time, launched a call for proposals.
- Explore moving the SNS credentialing exam online
 - New items (questions) developed earlier in the year are currently being piloted on a revised exam form which was released in November 2023.
 - Expanding the number of available questions in the item bank is an initial step in the ability to move the exam online.
 - The Certificate and Credentialing Governing Council has actioned the Exam Working Group to review the examination specification and reduce the number of test items while maintaining the reliability of the exam.
 - A second revised exam form is being prepared for release in July 2024. This form will have a new set of pilot questions and is being reviewed to ensure the content meets any regulation changes going into effect for school year 2024-25.
- Identify, create, and fund new [SNF scholarships](#)
 - SNF offered more scholarships for members to attend SNIC, LAC and ANC based on a SNA donation to SNF and \$25,000 in new professional development funding.
 - Secured funding from Super Bakery for the Franco Harris Memorial Scholarship, which includes 11 scholarships for SNIC and ANC and \$10,000 in professional development scholarships.
 - Total scholarships awarded for SNIC (21), LAC (15) and ANC (45) = 81
 - Expanded equipment grant opportunities available for members with the support of AmTab and Low Temp Industries who donated equipment with combined value of \$800,000.

We serve as the hub for members to network and build lifelong relationships around common goals and interests.

- Refresh the member onboarding process (MV)
 - SNA enhanced the digital "[Membership Playbook](#)", which is available as a customizable resource, for state associations and membership chairs to use for onboarding new and returning members. The playbook includes a checklist of the most important to-dos for new members.
 - SNA is also developing a series of email templates for state associations to use for sending renewal reminders to increase membership and welcoming new members to increase retention.
- Develop non-CEU, new, interactive member engagement formats (MV)

- We are piloting a moderated LinkedIn group to encourage continued networking and resource sharing for the 2024 Georgetown Executive Leadership Program cohort.
- A recruiter training series is also in development and will coincide with the annual membership campaign. The training series is intended to create a community and provide members with the necessary skills, resources, and case studies to recruit new members confidently and effectively,

Stakeholder Community. SNA cultivates a vibrant community of school nutrition stakeholders.

We have redefined and elevated the relationship and partnerships with industry.

- Evolve the [Patron Program](#)
 - Offered Patron members the opportunity to bring more than one team member to the Patron meeting and 14 companies took advantage of the opportunity.
 - Launched a new approach to advertising, providing Patrons with early access to opportunities in print and digital properties.
- Created the Speaker Series to (virtually) bring in thought leaders to speak to Patron members to continue the conversations and the exchange of best practices throughout the year.
 - Brought in a guest speaker – Jeff De Cagna - to the Patron meeting to lead a strategic discussion on challenges and opportunities for school nutrition programs.
 - Invited USDA FNS staff to the June 2024 Patron Meeting to present on the newly released Nutrition Standards and answer Patrons questions.
- Refresh [Industry Boot Camp](#) to best address the needs of Industry members
 - The November 2023 Industry Boot Camp was revised to focus on the needs of Industry Members. As a result, the Net Promoter Score and evaluations were significantly more positive when compared with 2022.
 - Planning is underway to revise the next Industry Boot Camp (Nov. 2024) to better accommodate member schedules. It will feature a mixture of on-demand and live sessions spread over a longer duration.
- Refine membership renewal process for Industry members
 - Implemented a new process to ensure that company records are accurate and up to date to facilitate receiving company updates in conjunction with the membership renewal. The process is similar to the renewal and update procedures for School District Membership (SDM). Evaluate the Industry Member of the Year award
 - The Membership Committee with review from the Industry Advisory Committee has suggested a number of revisions to the Industry Member of the Year Award which will expand the pool of qualified candidates and simplify the nomination process.
 - The Board approved the recommended changes in December 2023, and they went into effect for the 2024 award cycle.

- The changes to the Industry Member of the Year award led to a very successful awards cycle. This year there were 9 valid nominations submitted by the initial deadline versus two nominations overall last year.
- Evaluate and improve industry member contributions to SNA thought leadership
 - Industry members continue to be featured in SNA publications as sources or authors through both editorial and paid opportunities as well as speakers at SNA meetings and webinar. However, the development of a more robust system for ongoing tracking has been postponed due to staff transitions within the MarCom department.

We influence, convene, and connect stakeholders who seek to shape the school nutrition industry.

- Host a Supply Chain Summit (*No Kid Hungry supported*)
 - We hosted this summit in tandem with the 2023 Patron Meeting. A summary of the outcomes can be found in [Supply Chain](#).
 - Recorded discussion panels during Summit and posted on SNA website.

Thriving Organization. SNA is a thriving organization.

We have a strong and varied pathway to volunteer leadership and provide inclusive opportunities for contribution.

- Refresh the Future Leaders program (postponed from FY 22-23)
 - The program refresh was again postponed due to the length of time it took to recruit and hire the new Senior State Relations Associate. A proposal is currently in development.
- Define the future role of the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) in the context of governance changes
 - The SNA Board engaged in intensive discussions about the governance pipeline and the role of the LDC in supporting the new election model at the July and October Board meetings. The governance modifications were approved in the January 4 Board meeting and the required bylaw amendments will go before the Delegate Assembly in July.
 - Procedural changes to the LDC were discussed by the Executive Committee and shared with the LDC for input. The changes were discussed and approved at the April 25 Board meeting and will be shared with the LDC at their June meeting.
- Strengthen the capabilities, knowledge, and skills of state volunteer leaders
 - In preparation for developing the NLC agenda, we polled the state executive directors on what they feel the most important content for the meeting will be, a similar poll has gone out to the state presidents and presidents elect.
 - A webinar series is under development (to be implemented in FY25) to provide ongoing education on topics relevant to state leaders.

- Guidance was provided to 21 states on various governance and association-management-related issues during FY24.
- Refine the SNA DEIA strategy (continuing from FY 22-23)
 - With the support of consultant, Sharon Newport, SNA has undertaken a two-pronged approach to our DEIA strategy with the Board focusing on increasing their awareness of and capacity to engage in dialogue about DEIA and the Work Group focusing on developing a specific set of recommendations.
 - In January 2024, the Board and Working group met and engaged in collaborative dialogue about the culture they want to create at SNA as well as action plan which could be undertaken for the FY25 year.
 - Both groups met separately over the spring of 2024 and will come together again in July before ANC to finalize the culture statements and action plan.
- Increase opportunities for micro volunteering
 - Continuing micro volunteer opportunities included NLC speaker solicitations, national awards judges, and subject matter expert form.
 - The ANC24 Call for Proposals process was assisted by up to 65-member peer-reviewers to evaluate session proposals.
 - Reviewers were solicited to award SNF equipment grants and ANC scholarships
 - A formal process has been created for SNA staff management of micro volunteering opportunities to ensure a consistent approach and experience for volunteers.

We are a digital-first organization with a strong, nimble technology infrastructure and efficient processes.

- Improve SNA technology infrastructure
 - Select and implement a new meeting registration system
 - In December, a months-long selection process culminated in the selection of Cvent as SNA's new meeting registration system.
 - We began using the Cvent event app with LAC24 and fully transitioned to the Cvent registration system with NLC24.
 - Improve the user experience when transitioning from the SNA website to the Training Zone
 - The new SSO (see below) was implemented to allow members to move seamlessly (without having login a second time) to the Training Zone site once they are logged in to the SNA website.
 - We had a meeting with SAEs in late summer to gather their feedback on the SNA website, one year after it was launched. Modifications were made to the website based on their feedback.
 - Develop a holistic email marketing strategy
 - This is postponed pending the implementation of the new SNA database.
 - Implement Single Sign On (SSO) for Aptify, Training Zone, and the SNA website

- The new, more secure, and reliable Single Sign On (SSO) system was deployed in August 2023.
- Explore future roadmap for SNA's member database
 - We engaged a consultant to conduct an assessment of SNA's current state as it pertains to the database. They have provided their findings and have recommended SNA seek a new database.
 - After a phase of detailed discovery of needs and requirements with SNA staff an RFP was developed by a consultant reviewed by SNA and released to vendors in May 2024.
- Implement an efficient, fiscally responsible, and user-friendly digital bill-pay solution
 - This was postponed due to a staffing transition and the length of time it took to recruit and hire the new Accounting Manager.

We look for ways to disrupt our own business models, leading the way to innovation and new revenue opportunities.

- Undertake next phase of the strategic review of the SNA membership model (continuing from FY22-23)
 - The results of the membership analysis conducted by Avenue M were provided to the SNA Board of Directors at the December 2023 meeting.
 - Qualitative feedback on the research outcomes and proposed models was sought from several leadership stakeholder groups during the Spring months.
 - Utilizing this feedback a revised model and proposed implementation timeline was presented to the SNA Board of Directors at the April 2024 meeting
- Integrate social media and content development across the organization
 - We leveraged video and member-generated content to increase engagement across different platforms. Examples include:
 - [https://fb.watch/sgx_ATOL4T/ \(member\)](https://fb.watch/sgx_ATOL4T/)
 - [https://schoolnutrition.org/resource/snic24-tabletop-exhibits/ \(SNIC23 tabletops\)](https://schoolnutrition.org/resource/snic24-tabletop-exhibits/)
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/school-nutrition-association-nationalvolunteerweek-volunteerweek-snastrong-activity-7188583205116022784-LtZq>
 - <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C35bmy6sE9T/>
- Build an internal culture of feedback
 - In August 2023, a DEI facilitator presented two workshops to staff: *Collaborative Communication* and *Psychological Safety* which have helped build an understanding of personal biases and how to communicate with each other.
 - In March, May, and June 2024, DEI facilitator Sharon Newport conducted workshops with SNA staff focused on opening lines of communication and self-reflection.
- Strengthen the leadership and supervisory skills of SNA supervisors

- Individual coaching has been conducted with several supervisors to assist them with expanding their supervisory skills.
- New supervisors are sent to the [Managing People](#) courses at ASAE to orient them to supervisory basics.
- Starting in January 2024, supervisor training sessions have been scheduled every 6 weeks to provide additional learning and development on various topics.
- Analyze future options for the SNA office space
 - We met with Cresa, SNA's tenant representative, in May to review the current leasing market conditions and options to review and modify the SNA lease in 2026.
 - Cresa is working with SNA on a strategic real estate plan which will be presented to the Board at the October 2024 Board meeting.
- Update the SNA and SNF investment policies
 - Postponed due to the strong stock market and because it took longer than anticipated to hire a new Accounting Manager. Will be implemented in FY25.
- Align SNF fundraising to support new SNA initiatives
 - Focus in the first half of the year was on expanding equipment grants and scholarships for members.
 - Other sources of funding were not solicited due to the departure of the Foundation Manager. This will be a priority when the new Foundation Manager is hired.
- Develop a webinar/professional development content sunseting strategy
 - The Professional Development Committee drafted a sunseting strategy in May 2024 which will be implemented in the new fiscal year.
- Assess the Return on Investment (ROI) on programs as they occur and recommend program adjustments or removal.
 - Postponed due to not having Accounting Manger on staff until May 2024. This will be initiated in FY25.

Priority Projects

The following projects, in no particular order, were identified as key drivers of the strategic plan and are proposed during the plan period.

- Activities related to USDA's release of the Final Rule – *Ongoing*
- Analysis of the SNA membership model – *Completed*
- Select and implement a new registration system - *Completed*
- Governance and DEIA initiatives - *Completed*
- Development of a future roadmap for SNA's member database – *Completed and RFP released*
- SNS preparatory materials revisions - *Ongoing*