



## LOUISIANA Festival of Flavors

### Celebrate flavor, cuisine and farm fresh ingredients with Louisiana school meals!

With over 400 festivals each year, it is easy to see why Louisiana is often called the Festival Capital of America. Just about every crop harvested, indigenous dish, and unique style of music is celebrated.

The [Louisiana Festival of Flavors](#) will celebrate Louisiana school meals through the development of new recipes served to students in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023. This project is part of the [USDA Team Nutrition Training Grants for School Meal Recipe Development](#). These grants assist states in helping schools offer meals supported by recipes that utilize local agricultural products and reflect local food preparation practices and taste preferences.

In the Fall of 2021, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) invited school nutrition programs in the state to apply for a Louisiana Festival of Flavors Sub-Grant. In February 2022, eight programs were selected to participate. Each program will develop two new recipes.

“We are so excited to be a part of the Louisiana Festival of Flavors! Thank you so much for this opportunity. We will have so much fun.”

- Jenny Montz, St. Tammany Parish

## Recipe Development

The flavors chosen for these recipes are designed to showcase regional and cultural tastes, including from local African American, Cajun, Creole and Asian communities. Local agricultural products to be featured in these recipes will include: sweet potatoes, catfish, brown rice, whole grain cornmeal, pecans, winter squash, citric fruits, broccoli, and dairy products. These recipes will be shared in Louisiana and nationwide as part of the USDA School Nutrition Toolbox for School meals departments. The dream to reach more kids with culturally relevant meals has begun.

The LDOE team encouraged parishes across the state to apply for mini-grants to implement culturally relevant recipe development in their regions. Keeping equity at the forefront, the team was intentional about sending information to all regions of the state to ensure regional representation, and came very close to meeting that goal with the applications they received. Some exciting recipes such as “Grits and Grillades, Ramen Bowls and Sweet Potato biscuits,” were submitted. There were several very new recipes and some regional favorites.

## Working with Chef Cyndie Story and the K-12 Nutrition Team

Chef Cyndie and the K-12 Team will be meeting with all the eight districts to work with them this Fall to develop and **standardize\*** their recipes.

Chef Cyndie has over 25 years specializing in school nutrition operations and recipe engineering and has been recognized by the White House as a Champion of Change for her work in child nutrition. Their K-12 Nutrition Team’s expertise includes recipe development, menu planning, recipe standardization, and photography.

\* a recipe that has been tried, tested, evaluated, and adapted for use by School food service. It produces consistent quality and yield.

## Training Grant Winners of the 2021 USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant (Cohort B)

- Archdiocese of New Orleans School Food and Nutrition Services, Inc.
- Calcasieu Parish School District School Nutrition Program
- Catahoula Parish School District School Nutrition Program
- Diocese of Baton Rouge Child Nutrition Program
- East Baton Rouge Parish School System Child Nutrition Program
- Morehouse Parish Schools Child Nutrition Program
- Richland Parish School System Child Nutrition Program
- St. Tammany Parish School District Child Nutrition Program





# FESTIVAL OF FLAVORS PROMISING PRACTICES

## Partnerships

LDOE had established good relationships with many partners over the years which served them well when they were writing their grant and as they work to implement this project. They expressed gratitude for having the foresight to partner with Chef Cyndie and her K-12 Team, which has provided the expertise they needed to get these school’s recipes ready for launch into the schools this FY22-23 year. Flexibility has been a key strategy as they work with schools and partners to realize the best outcomes for everyone.

## More to Come

This summer the LDOE team and the 8 school system grantees will be preparing for the launch of these recipes, two per district for a total of 16 recipes. They plan to share these recipes across the state, and enjoy a *Festival of Flavors* celebrating the recipes. Students will taste test the recipes and each one must achieve an 85% student acceptance rate. The LDOE team will also be collecting and highlighting stories from the project.

Once completed and tested, recipes will be added to the [Multicultural Child Care recipes toolkit on the USDA website](#) to be shared nationally for districts to use for school meals and after school meals.

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