

NEW YORK
SCHOOL
NUTRITION
ASSOCIATION

2026 NYSNA EVENT INFORMATION

2026 Spring State Conference

April 28 - April 30, 2026
OnCenter & Marriott Downtown
Syracuse, NY

2026 Regional Industry Seminars:

October 20: Batavia, NY
October 22: Troy, NY
December 1: Long Island, NY
December 9: Syracuse, NY

*Disclaimer: Dates, pricing & offerings are subject to change.
Information within is the estimate based on 2025 NYSNA events.*



Designing the Future of NYSNA Events: *A Journey of Purpose and Innovation*

BY ADDY WALDIE, CMP, CED (CERTIFIED EVENT DESIGNER)
Events Manager
New York School Nutrition Association

What if we stopped planning events based solely on tradition and logistics—and instead designed them with intention, empathy, and impact?

This was the driving question behind NYSNA's recent journey into the Event Design Certificate (EDC) Program and the launch of our first Event Design cohort. Over the past year, a select group of NYSNA board and committee members came together to reimagine what our Annual Conference—and broader event portfolio—could be. Not just how it looks, but why it matters.

Event Design is more than a process. It's a mindset. Through this globally recognized executive education program, I joined professionals from around the world to learn and apply the #EventCanvas methodologySM. With over 8,900 trained professionals and 595 Certified Event Designers worldwide, I gained access to a thriving community of event innovators—and the tools to bring that innovation home to NYSNA.

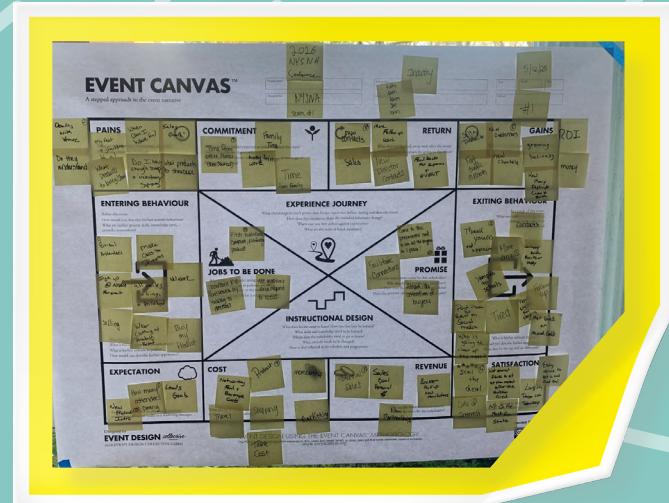
During the immersive multi-day experience the NYSNA Event Design Team took a deep dive into the needs, motivations, and behaviors of our key stakeholders. We mapped experiences from their perspective, explored real-world case studies from organizations like Google and the United Nations, and developed a shared language for collaboration and creativity.

But this wasn't theory—it was real work for real impact. We applied the methodology directly to NYSNA's 2026 Annual Conference, focusing on how to create meaningful outcomes for attendees, members, and partners alike. We asked tough questions, challenged assumptions, and prototyped new ideas. What emerged is a bold, human-centered redesign that will begin to take shape in 2026—and transform how we think about events through 2027 and beyond.

The impact? Deeper alignment. Clearer purpose. A vision rooted in our mission and guided by empathy.

This experience was transformative for me personally and professionally. As a newly certified Event Designer (CED), I am now equipped to lead teams through this methodology—facilitating alignment, strategy, and innovation across NYSNA's entire event portfolio. I also look forward to sharing these tools with peers across the association space, helping others elevate their events with intention and clarity.

And the best part? We're doing this together. The voices and perspectives of the NYSNA Event Design Team have been essential in shaping this vision, and I've invited them to share their reflections, insights, and "aha" moments in this issue as well. Because this isn't just about better events. It's about a better way of working, leading, and connecting as our NYSNA community.



MESSAGE FROM OUR

2026 Conference Committee

The 2026 Conference Committee is thrilled to invite you to our newly redesigned NYSNA Annual Conference, taking place in spring in Syracuse, NY. After years of thoughtful planning and transition, this new spring format arrives at the perfect time—because our theme, “Imagine the Possibilities,” reflects exactly what we’ve spent the past year exploring.

This redesign didn’t just happen. It was intentionally shaped through NYSNA’s recent journey into the Event Design Program and the launch of our first Event Design cohort. Over the past year, a select team of NYSNA leaders worked through the globally recognized #EventCanvas methodologySM, closely examining the needs, motivations, and realities of everyone we serve. Together, we reimaged not only what the Annual Conference could look like, but why it matters—and how it can create deeper outcomes for members, attendees, and partners.

As our industry continues to evolve, so do we. Just think about where school nutrition was five years ago. None of us imagined curb-side meal service during a pandemic—or that universal school meals would become a reality for every child. And yet here we are, achieving things once considered impossible. That’s exactly why Event Design matters: it helps us prepare—not for the past, but for what’s possible next.

What emerged from this work is a bold, human-centered redesign that begins in 2026 and will continue shaping NYSNA events in the years ahead. This new approach brings clearer purpose, stronger alignment, and a vision rooted in mission—and guided by empathy.

So today, I invite you to imagine what the future of our profession could look like. Imagine the innovations we haven’t discovered yet.

Imagine the challenges we’ll solve together. Imagine the possibilities...

MEET THE 2026 Conference Committee

- ◆ **Megan Bates, SNS** | Capital Region BOCES
Conference Chair
- ◆ **Caitlin Lazarski, MS, RD, SNS** | Pine Bush CSD
- ◆ **Elena Montgomery** | Pittsford Central School District
- ◆ **Samantha Hartman** | Penfield Central School District
- ◆ **Beth Krause, RD, CDN** | Ithaca School Food Service
- ◆ **Maggie Anatriello** | Niskayuna Central Schools
- ◆ **Kristin Colarusso-Martin** | Massena Central School District
- ◆ **Stephanie Lawler** | Sabin Meyer Corp
- ◆ **Marianne Dayton, SNS** | Affinity Group



Click To Play ♦

Information at A Glance

Conference Location:
OnCenter & Marriott Downtown
Syracuse, NY

Conference Theme:
Imagine the Possibilities

Conference Dates:
Tuesday, April 28 – Thursday, April 30, 2026



2026 Hotel Info & Room Rate

Reservations:

Double Rooms – Discounted Group Rate: \$189/night

All rooms in the hotel come equipped with free Wi-Fi, in-room movies, hairdryers, coffeemakers and an in-room safe.

Secure your hotel room directly in the blocks during the registration process.

We encourage all Industry Partners to book within the official conference hotel block. Staying at our headquarters hotels helps NYSNA meet contractual commitments, supports the overall success of the conference, and helps keep future event costs manageable for everyone. Your support truly makes a difference.

Industry Partners

REGISTRATION FEES

**MUST PRE-REGISTER -Onsite registration is not allowed*

Full registration includes:

- Access to General Sessions and Education Sessions
- Tuesday Welcome Event/ Dinner ticket
- Wednesday Breakfast and Networking Lunch
- Thursday Breakfast and Networking Lunch

Industry Partner NYSNA Member:
Full Conference Registration (no lodging included)
\$700 per person

Industry Partner non-NYSNA Member:
Full Conference Registration (no lodging included)
\$975 per person

Conference Information ♦

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Schedule at A Glance

(subject to change)

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

11am – 1pm	SLAC Committee Meeting – <i>Invitation Only</i>
12pm – 5pm	Registration Open
2pm – 5pm	Opening General Session <i>Awards / F2S and 30% Programming / Mega discussion</i>
6pm – 8pm	Welcome Networking Event

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

7am – 4pm	Registration Open
8am – 10am	Marketplace Hours (Breakfast Available)
10am – 12pm	General Session
12pm – 2pm	Marketplace Hours (Lunch Available); Campfire Chats*
2pm – 3pm	Educational Breakouts
3:15pm – 4:15pm	Educational Breakouts
5:30pm – 7:30pm	Industry Game Night / Fundraising Event *

Teams/ Tickets available for purchase

To ensure maximum engagement at Industry Game Night, please abstain from hosting private events or dinners between 5:00–8:00 PM. Your cooperation helps create a more inclusive and successful experience for all attendees.

Thursday, April 30, 2026

7am – 4pm	Registration Open
7am – 9am	Marketplace Hours (Breakfast Available)
9am – 9:30am	Innovation Solutions Sessions * <i>Invitation Only</i> – ROUND ONE*
9am – 10:15am	Educational session for Industry Partners
9:45am – 10:15am	Innovation Solutions Sessions * <i>Invitation Only</i> – ROUND TWO*
10:30am – 12pm	Speed Networking* <i>Invitation Only</i>
12pm – 2pm	Marketplace Hours (Lunch Available)
2:30pm – 4:30pm	Closing General Session

Please note: Meals, General and Educational sessions are built into your registration.

*Access must be purchased through the online registration.

Brand Visibility Opportunities and Marketplace Host can be purchased during the online registration process.

NYSNA membership and Full Conference registration are required for all Brand Visibility Opportunities.

CONFERENCE

Highlights

Welcome Networking Event | Tuesday, April 28 (6pm-8pm)

Start the conference by coming together for an evening of connection and celebration at our Welcome Networking Event. Join colleagues and industry partners as we celebrate the power of collaboration and 75 years of School Nutrition. Enjoy dinner, meaningful conversations, and a relaxed atmosphere as we honor our partners, reconnect with peers, and set the stage for an inspiring conference experience.

Opening General Session: Mega Discussion (State-Focused – NYSNA)

Launch the conference with a dynamic, interactive Mega Discussion designed to bring voices from across New York State's school nutrition community together. This facilitated general session features roundtable discussions with mixed stakeholders at each table, including foodservice professionals, industry partners, state agency representatives, and nonprofit leaders.

Guided by Lowell Aplebaum, EdD, FASAE, CAE, CPF, an expert facilitator who has successfully led Mega Discussions at the national level, participants will engage in meaningful dialogue around key state-focused topics impacting school nutrition. This collaborative format encourages diverse perspectives, shared problem-solving, and collective insight—setting a strong, inclusive tone for the conference ahead.

Marketplace – Engage, Connect, Inspire

The Marketplace is a shared gathering space designed for connection, conversation, and recharging. Throughout the conference, attendees will come together here for meals, informal networking, and meaningful engagement with members of the school nutrition community. This welcoming environment offers a valuable platform to showcase your brand and foster authentic, lasting connections. The Marketplace emphasizes innovation, marketing, and networking. All are welcome throughout the entire conference.

Please note: This is not a food show. Food displays and sampling are NOT permitted.

General Sessions: Wednesday and Thursday

General Sessions provide structured learning and collaborative engagement for both Industry Partners and Food Service Operators. These sessions include state agency updates on key topics such as processing, food programs, and spend-down requirements, as well as Innovation Day content highlighting technology and equipment. Attendees will also participate in facilitated, table-based activities—such as menu building and team challenges—designed to encourage discussion, shared problem-solving, and cross-stakeholder perspectives within the school nutrition community.

Industry Partner Session (Industry Partners Only) - Thursday

This Industry Partner-only session is designed as a dedicated space for connection, learning, and shared conversation among peers. The session will offer relevant insights, facilitated discussion, and opportunities to exchange ideas around trends and challenges impacting the school nutrition community. Whether you are looking to gain perspective or strengthen relationships through meaningful engagement, this session provides focused time to connect with fellow Industry Partners and maximizes your conference experience.

Spring Conference

BRAND VISIBILITY OPPORTUNITIES

Boost meaningful engagement and connect with highly qualified prospects through interactive sponsorship options designed to put your company at the center of attendee activity. Enhance brand visibility with strategic logo placement and integrated experiences woven throughout the conference program.

NYSNA offers a wide range of sponsorship opportunities at multiple price points, allowing every company to elevate brand awareness, showcase new innovations, and demonstrate support for school nutrition professionals.

Full conference registration and NYSNA membership are required for all sponsors.

Have an idea for a custom opportunity? Contact [Addy Waldie](#) to design a sponsorship option tailored to your company's goals.



\$7,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Fuel Up First Sponsor

- One (1) 30-minute breakfast session on Wednesday.
- One (1) Educational breakout session. (60 minutes) on Wednesday.
- Up to three (3) complimentary tickets to Fuel Up Breakfast for team members.
- Signage on tables at Fuel -Up Breakfast session.

\$3,500 (2 AVAILABLE)

Marketplace: Coffee Connect

Co-Sponsors

Fuel attendee conversations by sponsoring the Coffee Connect station in the Marketplace. Your brand will be front and center with custom branded coffee cozies and an opportunity to display products as guests grab a cup and connect. A simple, high-impact way to spark visibility and engagement during Marketplace Hours

\$3,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Welcome Networking Entrainment

Special signage displayed during Welcome Event entertainment. Verbal recognition and signage during Welcome Event. Introduce Entertainment at function.

There's More ♦

\$3,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Hotel Room Keycard (PENDING)

Company may design the hotel room key cards that all attendees receive at check-in at the HQ hotel. Company must provide artwork.

\$2,500 (4 AVAILABLE)

Welcome Networking Event Co-Sponsors

Be part of the excitement as we kick off the Spring conference with a themed night of networking and fun! As a co-sponsor, you'll greet guests as they check in, provide a welcome to set the tone for the evening, and host a sponsor table to foster connections while adding to the intrigue. Signage at Welcome Networking Event

\$2,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Accessibility Sponsor

Enhance the attendee experience by sponsoring the microphones used during our educational sessions. Your support ensures that all voices are heard, fostering meaningful discussions and engagement throughout the event. This sponsorship highlights your commitment to accessibility and inclusivity while providing great brand visibility.

\$2,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Breakfast After the Bell

Sponsor provides breakfast items to be displayed at the registration area after breakfast hours. Special signage displayed. Sponsor will be allowed to meet and network with attendees at the BATB area.

\$3,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Name badge/Lanyards

Customized lanyards with company name given to all conference attendees.

\$2,000 (4 AVAILABLE)

New Item Display Case Sponsor

Showcase your latest innovation where it can't be missed. As the New Item Display Case Sponsor, your product will be featured in a prominent display case at the conference, giving attendees a close-up look at what's new and noteworthy. A simple, effective way to generate buzz and highlight your newest offerings.

For More information contact HQ.

\$2,000 (2 AVAILABLE)

Networking Lunch

Fuel attendees' energy and productivity while making meaningful connections as a Lunch Co-Sponsor. Gain visibility as attendees gather to recharge during lunch and engage with them in a casual, approachable setting. Your company will be recognized in event materials and announcements, with branding opportunities in the lunch area such as signage or pre-approved product samples. One Sponsor per day. Select a day; Wednesday or Thursday.

\$1,500 (3 AVAILABLE)

SNACK Time/Member Connect Sponsor

Opportunity to enhance Thursday morning continental breakfast. Signage at SNACK Time Session. Each Sponsor provides HOT bite size samples for attendees during SNACK Time session. Sponsor will be allowed to meet and network with attendees at your table.

There's More ♦

1,500 (30 AVAILABLE)



Speed Networking Host

Engage directly with school foodservice operators and share how your company's cutting-edge products and services can elevate their operations! As a Speed Networking Host, industry representatives will actively move between small groups (pods) of foodservice professionals, fostering meaningful conversations, answering questions, gathering valuable feedback, and generating quality leads.

This dynamic sponsorship opportunity ensures maximum visibility and connection opportunities without the need for a stationary table display. Each sponsor receives one (1) complimentary Speed Networking Host slot during the event, offering an excellent platform to promote your brand while making impactful connections with attendees.

Key Details for Speed Networking Hosts:

- **Registration Required:** You must be registered for the full conference to participate in the Speed Networking activity.
- **Event Focus:** This is not a food show. The focus is on innovation, marketing, and networking.
- **Movement-Based Format:** Speed Networking Hosts will circulate throughout the room, interacting with all food service attendees rather than remaining at a stationary location. Hosts will be randomly assigned to one of the two Speed networking rooms.
- **Speed Networking Booklet:** Each Host will receive one page with company logo and QR (provide link) that will be provided to all FS Operators for reference.
- **Limited Availability:** Spaces are limited to the first 30 hosts, allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.



\$1,500 (5 AVAILABLE)

Innovative Solution Sessions (30 minutes/presented twice)

The Innovative Solution Sessions will take place on Thursday at the Spring Annual Conference. These sessions are designed for industry leaders to showcase their programs, products or services to key decision-makers, discuss their solutions in-depth, and receive valuable feedback. At the same time, operators will be introduced to the latest products in the market; spanning food, beverage, supplies, services, technology, and equipment. Network & Engage with Industry Leaders

Presenters agree to be available on April 30th. Speakers who are industry partners MUST purchase a Full Registration at the 2026 Annual Conference. Workshops are not guaranteed to be accepted. All submissions will be reviewed by the Conference Committee.

There's More

\$1,500

Marketplace Sponsorship – Engage, Connect, Inspire

Engage directly with school foodservice operators and showcase how your company's innovative products and services can elevate their operations! As a Marketplace Host, you'll have the opportunity to connect with foodservice professionals through meaningful conversations, answer questions, gather valuable feedback, and generate quality leads.

This dynamic sponsorship ensures maximum visibility in the Spring Conference Common Area, a high-traffic space used by attendees throughout the event. Each Marketplace Host receives:

- One (1) High-Top Table
- One (1) Pull-Up Banner Slot

Select a Day during Marketplace Hours:

- Wednesday OR Thursday
- Space is Limited.

Please Note: This is not a food show. The focus is on innovation, marketing, and networking—no food displays or sampling are permitted. One Day in the Marketplace.

Day of Placement is reserved during registration process.

Spaces are limited, allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Limit one Marketplace per company.



NYSNA Membership and Full Conference registration are required for all sponsors.

5- Star Member: One Marketplace Host Included in Membership

\$1,500 (1 AVAILABLE)

Award Sponsor

5-minute speaking opportunity at Opening General Session. Signage on tables for Awards Ceremony during General Session.

\$1,250 (2 AVAILABLE)

Digital Platform Banner Ad

Put your brand in front of every attendee with a prominent banner ad in the conference digital platform. Reach participants before, during, and after the event for maximum visibility and engagement.

\$1,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Networking BINGO Sponsor

Maximize your brand exposure by sponsoring our popular Networking BINGO game! Your logo will be featured on the Bingo game cards, which will be provided to all attendees at registration. Draw the winning Bingo card during the Closing General Session.

\$1,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Registration Welcome Gift

Someone from your company may hand out a gift of your choice to attendees at conference registration.

There's More ♦

\$1,000 (2 AVAILABLE)

Registration Kick Plate

Company logo will be displayed on the front of the attendee registration booth.

\$1,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Puzzle Lounge Sponsor

Support a relaxing and interactive space where attendees can unwind, recharge, and connect. As the Puzzle Lounge Sponsor, your brand will be featured on the conference puzzle. Lounge is complete with puzzles and brain games that spark conversation and collaboration. Signage in lounge.

\$1,000 (4 AVAILABLE)

Breakout Workshop Speaker

Speakers who are industry partners MUST purchase a Full Registration at the 2026 Annual Conference. Workshops are not guaranteed to be accepted. All submissions will be reviewed by the Conference Committee.

\$1,000 (1 AVAILABLE)

Hydration Station

Company provides customized water bottles with company logo. Company rep may stay at station to hand out to attendees during registration hours.

\$750 (4 AVAILABLE)

Campfire Chat Sponsors (30 minutes)

- Registration Required: You must be registered as an Industry Partner to secure your spot.
- Sessions will take place on Wednesday and Thursday in the Marketplace.
- The goal of Open Sessions is to informally exchange ideas and short best practices within 30 minutes.
- Presenters agree to be available on April 29 or 30, 2026. The conference committee will confirm the exact time in early Spring of 2026.
- Speakers who are industry partners MUST purchase a Full Registration at the 2026 Annual Conference.
- Workshops are not guaranteed to be accepted. All submissions will be reviewed by the Conference Committee.

\$750 (6 AVAILABLE / 3 PER DAY)

Brain Food Break

Sponsor provides brain food items for the attendees to be displayed and enjoyed during break sessions. Special signage provided. Sponsor is allowed to meet and network with the attendees at the station.

There's More ♦



2026 Industry Game Night

Wednesday, April 29, 2026 | 5:30-7:30pm

Industry: Build new relationships with food service personnel by sponsoring a team for game night.

Cost: \$500 to host a team (One Industry Rep/attendee per team)

***This is a fundraiser event for Industry sponsored Conference Registration awards for Food Service Professionals.**

Additional Tickets: Additional IP tickets can be purchased for your team. Industry partners cannot purchase individual tickets without first purchasing a team.

Teams will be selected at random at the event! RESERVE Your Team during Registration.

To support strong participation in Industry Game Night, we kindly ask Industry Partners to refrain from hosting private sponsored events or dinners between 5:00–8:00 PM. This allows all Foodservice Operators the opportunity to attend and engage in this shared networking experience. Thank you for your partnership and support.



2026 REGIONAL INDUSTRY SEMINARS

DATES & BOOTH PRICE

BATAVIA

Batavia Downs
8315 Park Road, Batavia, NY 14020

Dates: October 20, 2026
Cost Per Table: \$500
Electric Cost: \$65 per single outlet

TROY

Hilton Garden Inn – The Rensselaer
235 Hoosick Street, Troy, NY 12180

Dates: October 22, 2026
Cost Per Table: \$500
Electric Cost: \$65 per single outlet

LONG ISLAND

Hilton Long Island / Huntington
598 Broad Hollow Road, Melville, NY 11747

Dates: December 1, 2026
Cost Per Table: \$500
Electric Cost: \$65 per single outlet

SYRACUSE

Marriott Syracuse Downtown
100 E. Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

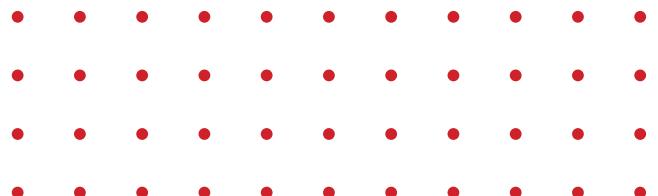
Dates: Decembe 9, 2026
Cost Per Table: \$500
Electric Cost: \$65 per single outlet

ALL RIS Locations

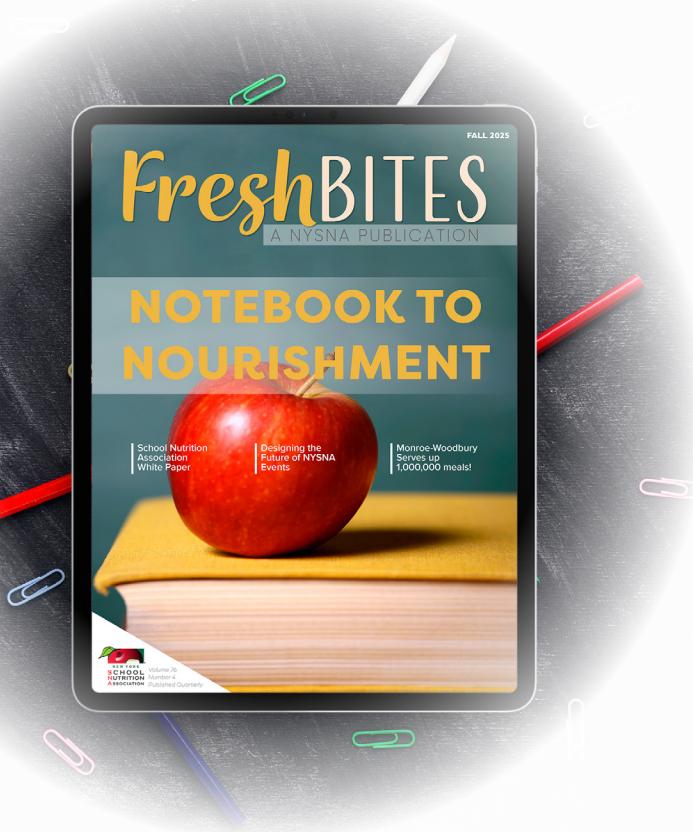
Additional Badges: \$25 each. Two badges are included with purchase of booth

Member Only events

*Disclaimer: Dates, pricing & offerings are subject to change.
Information within is the estimate based on 2025 NYSNA events.*



ADDITIONAL NYSNA INFORMATION



For more information, please contact
Jess Cogswell at
jessica@nyschoolnutrition.org

PLAN AHEAD

2027 Spring Conference
May 2027



21 Executive Park Drive,
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-446-9061

ADVERTISING AVAILABLE

Fresh Bites Advertising

Fresh Bites is NYSNA's triannual e-publication distributed to the public

FUN FACTS ABOUT FRESH BITES:

- Fresh Bites is an Award Winning Publication
- Fresh Bites listed as one of members' all-time FAVORITE benefits
- Issues posted and archived in member portal of website
- Advertising in publication is also a member's only benefit
- Articles and content written and supplied by members for members.

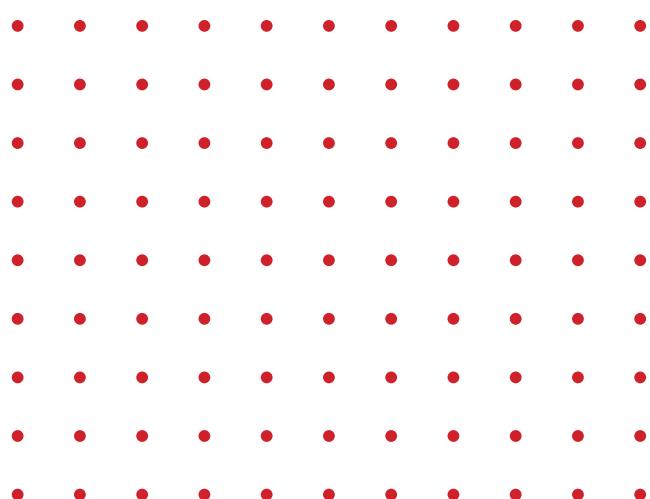
Website Advertising Options

Advertising on the NYSNA website is a great way to reach member and non-member visitors!

NYSNA's official website is the hub members visit to connect with one another, find out about upcoming events, professional development opportunities, and so much more. Advertising on nyschoolnutrition.org offers cost-effective advertising opportunities to position your company as a leader in front of an influential group of school nutrition professionals.

FUN FACTS ABOUT NYSNA WEBSITE:

- ALL event registrations are online
- ALL membership renewals are online
- ALL new members must sign up online



MEMBERSHIP & CONTACT INFORMATION

NYSNA Industry Membership

5 Star Corporate Member: \$2,350

Enhanced Corporate Member: \$1,000

Standard Corporate Member: \$300

BENEFITS

	5 STAR \$2,350	ENHANCED \$1,000	STANDARD \$300
E-subscription to the NYSNA magazine	✓	✓	✓
Member registration rates at events	✓	✓	✓
Invited to participate at Regional Industry Seminars (<i>members only events</i>)	✓	✓	✓
Access to NYSNA Members only site, with searchable membership directory	✓	✓	✓
Updates and communications from NYSNA (<i>including e-newsletters/videos</i>)	✓	✓	✓
Website: Company logo & link throughout each page	✓		
Website: Industry page - company listing with logo	✓		
Website: Industry page - company with hyperlink	✓	✓	
Website: Industry page - company listing	✓	✓	✓
One Complimentary registration at Spring Annual Conference (value \$975) without lodging	✓	✓	
Complimentary Marketplace Host at Spring annual conference (value \$1500)	✓		
Priority access to registration & sponsorship opportunities at Spring annual conference (2 weeks in advance prior to public release)	✓		
Priority access to registration & sponsorship opportunities at Spring annual conference (1 week in advance prior to public release)	✓	✓	
5 Star Corporate Member Ribbon for badges at Spring annual conference	✓		
Priority registration for the Regional Industry Seminars (RIS) (1 month in advance prior to public release)	✓		
Priority registration for the Regional Industry Seminars (RIS) (2 weeks in advance prior to public release)	✓	✓	
1 full page color ad in 1 issue of NYSNA triannual magazine (\$900 value) <i>Published Feb, June, Oct</i>	✓		
50% discount for additional advertising options available in the media kit	✓	✓	

For more information on membership and media needs, please contact:

Taryn Connors

Membership Engagement Coordinator

taryn@nyschoolnutrition.org

For more information on membership and media needs, please contact:

Addy Waldie, CMP, CED

Events Manager

addy@nyschoolnutrition.org

