


1

## Background

- Emergency Certification, House Bill (HB) 6671
- \$60 million additional federal American Rescue Plan Act (2021) funds
  - Food Assistance to Households
- “Free School Meals for Children” grant



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2

## Background

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) appropriation from the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA).
- ARPA guidance allows for the *provision of food assistance to households*.
- Enabling CGA language specifically states *Free School Meals for Children*.
- Funds are to provide, for the remainder of the current school year, school meals at no cost to students in National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participating schools that had access to no-cost meals during the public health emergency, but do not currently have such access since the expiration of the federal waivers.



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

3

## Background

- The funds will be referred to as School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) funds 2.0.
- Operational Memorandum No. 06-23: *School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds*
  - Attachment 1: *School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds 2.0: Questions and Answers for School Food Authorities*.



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

4

## Purpose

SMART funds 2.0 will:

- require participating SFAs to provide free breakfast and/or lunch meals to all students in schools that are approved to participate in the NSLP and SBP in SY 2022-23.
- reimburse SFAs the difference between the federal reimbursement rate for free meals and the federal reimbursement rate for reduced-price and paid meals from March 1, 2023, through the remainder of SY 2022-23.



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

5

## Who is Eligible?

SFAs in good standing are eligible to receive SMART funds 2.0 if they:

- participated in SMART funds 1.0.
- Authorized signer (not the food service director) completes and submits SMART funds 2.0 Opt-In Survey by today, February 24, 2023.



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

6

## Who is NOT Eligible?

SFAs that are NOT eligible to receive SMART funds are:

- sites participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for SY 2022-23
- Sites that did not participate in SMART funds 1.0



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

7

## How does the SFA receive SMART funds 2.0?

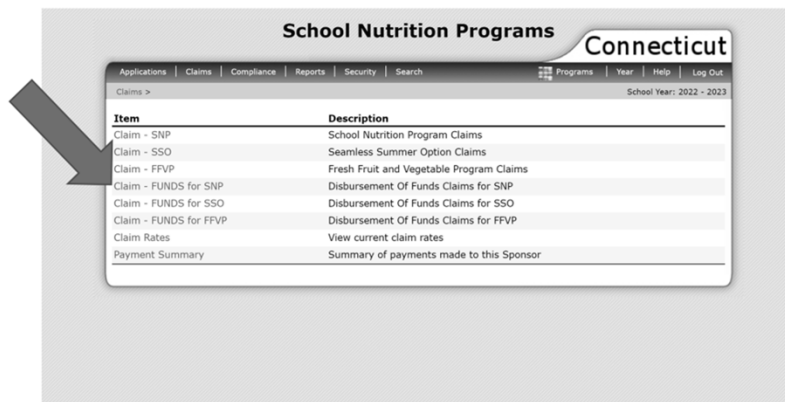
- Unlike SMART funds 1.0, SFAs will **not** receive a predetermined allocation in SMART funds 2.0
- SFAs will submit monthly claims for USDA reimbursement through the CNP System
- CSDE will calculate the SMART funds “earned” by the SFA based on number of reduced-priced and paid meals claimed
- SMART funds 2.0 will be processed in the same way as USDA reimbursements
- The SFA will see the earned amount of SMART funds 2.0 in Disbursement of Funds (DOF) module of the CNP System



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

8

## How does the SFA receive SMART funds 2.0?



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

9

## Example of Smart Funds 2.0 Payment

ABC School District:

- ✓ SFA is in good standing
- ✓ SFA has six sites that will be operating SBP and NSLP in SY 2022-23
- ✓ All six sites participated in SMART funds 1.0
- ✓ Three sites are participating in the CEP in SY 2022-23 and are not eligible to receive SMART funds 2.0
- ✓ The authorized signer has completed and submitted the SMART Funds 2.0 Opt-In Survey by February 24, 2023



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

10

## Example of Smart Funds 2.0 Payment

ABC School District places their March claim for reimbursement.

### SMART FUNDS 2.0 LUNCH REIMBURSEMENT:

Lunch meal category	Federal per meal reimbursement regular rate for lunch (SY 2022-23)	SMART funds lunch reimbursement rate	Number of lunch meals served in September	SMART funds reimbursement per lunch meal
Free meals	\$4.33	\$0.00	2,750	\$0.00
Reduced-price meals	\$3.93	\$0.40	800	\$320.00
Paid meals	\$0.77	\$3.56	6,500	\$23,140.00
Total lunch reimbursement				\$23,460.00



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

11

## Example of Smart Funds 2.0 Payment

ABC School District places their March claim for reimbursement.

### SMART FUNDS 2.0 BREAKFAST REIMBURSEMENT:

Breakfast meal category	Federal per meal reimbursement regular rate for breakfast (SY 2022-23)	SMART funds breakfast reimbursement rate	Number of breakfast meals served in September	SMART funds reimbursement per lunch meal
Free meals	\$2.26	\$0.00	800	\$0.00
Reduced-price meals	\$1.96	\$0.30	125	\$37.50
Paid meals	\$0.50	\$1.76	350	\$616.00
Total breakfast reimbursement				\$653.50



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

12

## Example of Smart Funds 2.0 Payment

- ABC School District will receive \$24,113.50 in SMART funds 2.0 for March 2023
  - SMART funds 2.0 Lunch Reimbursement: \$23,460.00
  - SMART funds 2.0 Breakfast Reimbursement: \$653.50



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

13

## How will Payments be Sent to SFAs?

- Eligible SFAs will receive reimbursement payments monthly (if claims are submitted monthly)
- Payments will be sent to SFAs using the same process for payment of monthly claims for reimbursement
- CFDA # 21.027
- CSDE coding description – Free Meals for Students (SID 28105)
- Treat awarded funds as fiscal year (FY) 2023 funds



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

14

## What Child Nutrition Programs can be SMART funds 2.0 be used for?

- SMART funds can only be used to support serving NSLP and SBP meals at no cost to students
- SMART funds cannot be used at schools that do not participate in the NSLP
- Attachment 1: School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds 2.0 Question and Answers for School Food Authorities



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

15

## What Child Nutrition Programs can be supported by SMART funds 2.0?

SMART funds CANNOT be used in support of:

- A la Carte items or meals
- Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP
- Afterschool Snack Program
- Special Milk Program
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Programs
- Student Debt



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

16



## How do SFAs accept SMART funds 2.0?

To accept the funds, the SFA must:

1) Complete all required sections of the SMART Funds 2.0 Opt-In Survey; and,

2) An authorized signer (NOT the food service director) must submit survey by today, February 24, 2023.



### School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition Funds 2.0 Opt-in Survey

For the purposes of distributing SMART Funds 2.0, school food authorities (SFAs) that have already signed the CSDE's SMART Fund Attestation Statement as part of accepting the SMART funds 1.0 allocation are not required to sign another statement to receive additional funds.

In lieu of the attestation statement, SFAs electing to receive these funds must notify the CSDE of their intent to accept these funds by completing the SMART funds 2.0 Opt-In Survey by February 24, 2023.

The survey must be completed by the school food authority's authorized signer 1 or 2, as approved on the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (not the food service director or representative from the food service management company).

6. By accepting the funds, I attest that the aforementioned SFA and all eligible schools under its jurisdiction operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), will comply with the criteria below. **Not checking any criterion will disqualify the SFA from receipt of SMART funds.**

Please select 5 options.

- The SFA will offer at no cost reimbursable lunch and/or breakfast meals to all students at all eligible sites participating under their CNP sponsor agreement for the duration of the availability of the SMART funds allocation and notify parents, guardians, and students as such.
- The SFA will not charge students for reimbursable lunch and/or breakfast meals regardless of their individual student eligibility.
- The SFA will utilize the Direct Certification list to identify individual student eligibility and collect free and reduced price meal applications to determine individual student eligibility.
- The SFA will collect proper point of service counts based on individual student eligibility, claim reimbursable meals by individual student eligibility and submit monthly claims for reimbursement to the CSDE in accordance with the current schedule for submitting online reimbursement claim data.
- The SFA will comply with all applicable Federal procurement and financial management requirements per 2 CFR 200 and all recordkeeping and review requirements per 7 CFR 210.50(i)(17) and 7 CFR 210.18, including maintaining documentation demonstrating appropriate use of SMART funds.

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

17

## How do SFAs accept the SMART funds 2.0?

SFAs accepting the SMART funds 1.0 attested to and are agreeing to continue adhering to terms in the Attestation Statement from 1.0 to participate in 2.0:

- will offer no cost reimbursable lunch and/or breakfast meals to all students at all eligible sites participating under their CNP sponsor agreement for the duration of the availability of the SMART funds and notify parents, guardians, and students
- will not charge students for reimbursable lunch and/or breakfast meals regardless of their individual student eligibility



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

18

## How do SFAs accept the SMART funds 2.0?

### Attestation Continued:

- will utilize the Direct Certification list to identify individual student eligibility
- will collect free and reduced-price meal applications to determine individual student eligibility
- will collect proper point of service counts based on individual student eligibility
- will claim reimbursable meals by individual student eligibility



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

19

## How do SFAs accept the SMART funds 2.0?

### Attestation Continued:

- will submit monthly claims for reimbursement to the CSDE in accordance with the current schedule for submitting online reimbursement claim data
- will use SMART funds only to support providing the NSLP and SBP at no cost to all students under their CNP sponsor agreement



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

20

## How do SFAs accept the SMART funds 2.0?

Attestation Continued:

- SFA will comply with all applicable Federal procurement and financial management requirements per 2 CFR 200
- will comply with all recordkeeping and review requirements per 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.18, including maintaining documentation demonstrating appropriate use of SMART funds



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

21

## How do SFAs accept the SMART funds 2.0?

SMART funds 2.0 cannot be used for:

- to indirectly or directly offset a reduction in net tax revenue
- to make a deposit to a pension fund
- for debt service or replenishing financial reserves
- to satisfy any obligation of settlements and judgments
- for a project that conflicts with or contravenes the purpose of the American Rescue Plan Act statute
- in violation of the Award Terms and Conditions or conflict of interest requirements under the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200)



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

22

## How do SFAs decline the SMART funds 2.0?

To decline the funds, the SFA must check the **Decline** box, and an Authorized Signer certifying the attestation is true and correct must sign the form.

5. As the duly authorized representative of the Child Nutrition Programs, I do hereby: \*

**DECLINE** SMART Funds 2.0.  
If a SFA declines, there will not be another opportunity to opt in and accept the SMART funds 2.0.

**ACCEPT** SMART Funds 2.0.

Submit

NOTE: If an SFA declines their allocation, there will be no additional opportunities to opt-in.



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

23

## Operating Fund Balances

- SFAs are still eligible for SMART funds 2.0 if their net cash resources exceed a three-month operating balance as described in 7 CFR 210.19(a)(1)
- SFAs that exceed three months' average expenditures and have an approved Plan for Reducing Excess Operating Balance for SY 2022-23
- may need to submit a revised plan



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

24

## Reporting

- at this time, all reporting requirements are at the State agency level



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

25

## Monitoring

- SFA's SMART funds 1.0 and 2.0 reimbursements will be monitored to ensure compliance with the SMART funds requirements pursuant to 2 CFR §200.332
- SMART funds 1.0 and 2.0 will be reviewed during the Administrative Review process for school nutrition programs
- SMART funds 1.0 and 2.0 may be subject to future external audit activity under standard auditing practices



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

26

# Resources

## Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19

- Overview
- How To
- Documents/Forms
- Related Resources
- Laws/Regulations
- Contact

Provided by:  
Department of Education

### How To

#### School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds 2.0

Pursuant to House Bill (HB) 6671, an additional \$60 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds was allocated to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) for the Free School Meals for Children grant, which is referred to as SMART funds 2.0. Beginning March 1, 2023, the additional funding will allow eligible school food authorities (SFAs) operating the NSLP and SBP to offer meals at no cost to students for the remainder of school year (SY) 2022-23.

**Note:** All eligible NSLP sponsors must complete the SMART Funds 2.0 Opt In Survey by **February 24, 2023**.

- Operational Memorandum No.06-23 : School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds
  - Attachment 1: *School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds 2.0: Questions and Answers for School Food Authorities.*

**Note:** This attachment is at the end of Operational Memorandum No.06-23.

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Operating-Child-Nutrition-Programs-during-COVID-19/How-To>

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

27

# Questions

## Email Questions to:

School Nutrition Programs Staff	
County	Consultant
<b>Fairfield County</b> (includes Region 9) <b>Litchfield County</b> (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14) School wellness policies	Fionnuala Brown 860-807-2129 <a href="mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov">fionnuala.brown@ct.gov</a>
<b>Hartford County</b> (includes Region 10) <b>Middlesex County</b> (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17)	Teri Dandeneau 860-807-2079 <a href="mailto:teri.dandeneau@ct.gov">teri.dandeneau@ct.gov</a>
<b>New Haven County</b> (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16)	Greg King 860-713-6804 <a href="mailto:greg.king@ct.gov">greg.king@ct.gov</a>
<b>New London County</b> <b>Tolland County</b> (includes Regions 8 and 19) <b>Windham County</b> (includes Region 11) Claims processing	Susan Alston 860-807-2081 <a href="mailto:susan.alston@ct.gov">susan.alston@ct.gov</a>

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

28

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; victims of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email [louis.todisco@ct.gov](mailto:louis.todisco@ct.gov).



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION