

# Overview of USDA Foods in Connecticut

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) administers the Food Distribution Program (FDP), which coordinates the distribution of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods to Connecticut schools and institutions. The CSDE's role is to help school food authorities (SFA) obtain USDA purchased commodity foods.

Each year, schools are given a Planned Assistance Level (PAL). The PAL is based on the number of reimbursable lunches served in the previous school year multiplied by the federal meal rate. The federal meal rate changes yearly. Each SFA decides how to use their PAL budget.

The USDA Foods Program is available to schools in several ways: Direct Delivery (DD) Foods, Further Processed Foods, the USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the USDA Pilot Project for the Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables.

## Direct Delivery (DD) Foods

- State surveys schools
- State offers food items to schools
- Schools request food through Web-Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM)
- State orders food from USDA
- USDA procures foods
- Food delivered to schools by state contracted warehouse

DD is the traditional way to use PAL funds. In late winter/early spring, the CSDE surveys SFAs to see what items they would like available on these orders. In the spring, SFAs order from a variety of items for the following school year. If possible, the CSDE will allow additional orders throughout the school year. The recipient agency (RA) places orders in the USDA's Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) system. The CSDE orders these foods directly from the USDA, on behalf of SFAs, and manages distribution to all participating schools. PAL funds cover the value of USDA Foods, but SFAs are responsible for payment of delivery, administration, and storage fees.

## Further Processed Foods

- State offers foods for further processing to schools
- Schools order foods for further processing through WBSCM, indicating which processor they are using
- USDA procures food
- USDA sends ordered food to processor

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- Processor makes end products
- School orders end products through commercial distributor
- Distributor delivers food

Further Processing is an optional way to use PAL funds for processed foods. Each spring, SFAs can elect to allocate dollars towards the purchase of processed items for the following school year. Each RA must properly procure processing services from processors that are approved by the CSDE. During the school year, SFAs can order these products from their commercial food distributor. PAL funds cover the value of the USDA Foods contained in the product, but SFAs are responsible for payment of processing and distributor fees.

## USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

- DoD procures produce vendor
- State requests DoD allocations
- DoD approves allocations and site requests
- Schools order produce through Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS)
- Vendor delivers produce

The USDA DoD Fresh Program is an optional way to use PAL funds for fresh produce. In late winter, SFAs can elect to allocate entitlement dollars towards the purchase of these items for the following school year. During the school year, SFAs can order produce as often as once per week through FFAVORS. PAL funds cover the cost of the produce in addition to the delivery fees.

## USDA Pilot Project for the Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables

Connecticut is one of eight states chosen by the USDA to conduct the USDA Pilot Project for the Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables. This pilot project provides more purchasing flexibility and options for unprocessed fruits and vegetables. It allows Connecticut schools to use local approved vendors with their entitlement dollars and supports the use of locally grown foods in school meal programs. This pilot initially started with a small number of participating approved schools. The option to participate was extended to all school districts starting in school year 2016-17. Schools choose the amount of PAL they wish to put toward the pilot, and order weekly from an approved vendor list. PAL funds cover the cost of the produce.

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## CSDE USDA Foods Program Contacts

Allison Calhoun-White

860-807-2008

[allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov](mailto:allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov)

Monica Pacheco

860-807-2086

[monica.pacheco@ct.gov](mailto:monica.pacheco@ct.gov)

Website: [Food Distribution Program \(USDA Foods\)](#)

For more information on USDA Foods, visit the CSDE's [Food Distribution Program \(USDA Foods\)](#) webpage or contact the [FDP program staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/fdp/overview\\_ct\\_usda\\_foods\\_program.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/fdp/overview_ct_usda_foods_program.pdf).



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