



Complying with Healthy Food Certification (HFC)



Module 1: Introduction to Training Modules and HFC




Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs

Revised March 2026

1

Applies to

- HFC contact person
- Individuals who coordinate sales of competitive foods to students on school premises
 - School food service staff
 - Coordinators of food and beverage sales



Connecticut State Department of Education

2

Module Topics


- Goal and training objectives
- Introduction to modules
- Overview of HFC requirements
- Overview of Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS)
- Resources



Connecticut State Department of Education

3

Goal and Training Objectives



Connecticut State Department of Education

4

Training Program Goal



Help schools comply with HFC requirements and related laws for competitive foods in schools

Connecticut State Department of Education

5

Competitive Foods

Foods and beverages available for sale to students on school premises separately from reimbursable meals served through the Child Nutrition Programs



Terms to Know

Connecticut State Department of Education

6



Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children

Terms to Know

Connecticut State Department of Education

7



Child Nutrition Programs Include

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of NSLP
- Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of NSLP
- Special Milk Program (SMP)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- At-risk Afterschool Meals operated in schools
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) operated in schools

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/child-nutrition-programs>

Connecticut State Department of Education

8


Training Objectives

- Understand how to**
 - implement HFC requirements including how CNS applies to different sources of foods
 - meet exemption criteria for noncompliant foods
 - evaluate foods for CNS compliance
 - avoid HFC noncompliance issues
 - meet other state and federal laws for foods and beverages
- Identify resources for guidance and training**

Resources and websites are listed in the yellow bar

Connecticut State Department of Education

9



Introduction to Training Modules

Connecticut State Department of Education

10

Six Training Modules

- Module 1 Introduction to Training Modules and HFC
- Module 2 HFC Requirements
- Module 3 Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS)
- Module 4 Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance
- Module 5 Laws for Foods and Beverages in HFC Schools
- Module 6 Fundraisers

Connecticut State Department of Education

11

CSDE Webpage

Healthy Food Certification (HFC) webpage


- HFC Training Program section



<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification/hfc-training-program>

Connecticut State Department of Education

12



Overview of HFC

Connecticut State Department of Education

13



Healthy Food Certification (HFC)

A state statute that requires each board of education or governing authority for all public schools participating in the NSLP to certify annually to the CSDE whether they will follow the CNS for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals

Terms to Know

https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_169.htm#sec_10-215f

Connecticut State Department of Education

14

HFC Applies Only to Public Schools

- Private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) are not eligible




Connecticut State Department of Education

15

Public Schools Include

Connecticut Public Schools =

- All local and regional school districts
- Regional educational service centers (RESCs)
- Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS)
- Charter schools
- Interdistrict magnet schools
- Endowed academies



Connecticut State Department of Education

16

HFC Does Not Apply to Beverages

- Beverages must comply with
 - state beverage statute (C.G.S. Section 10-221q)
 - USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards

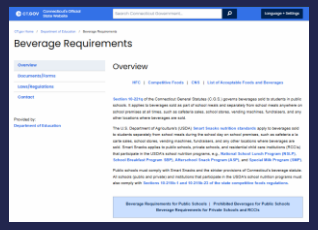


Connecticut State Department of Education

17

CSDE Webpage

Beverage Requirements webpage



<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/beverage-requirements>

Connecticut State Department of Education

18

Annual Certification

- Each public school that participates in NSLP must choose (certify) whether to follow CNS each year
 - Annual HFC Statement submitted to CSDE
 - Requires vote by board of education or school governing authority (BOE)




Connecticut State Department of Education

19

If District Chooses HFC Option

- Must comply with CNS
- Apply to all schools in district
- Additional state funding based on available fiscal year appropriations
- Determined through annual HFC Statement: Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)

https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_169.htm#sec_10-215b




Connecticut State Department of Education

20

Annual HFC Statement

- Completed in CSDE's Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System)
- Includes BOE minutes with votes for HFC participation and food exemptions
- Certification period is July 1 – June 30
- Submission deadline is July 1



Connecticut State Department of Education

21

How to Apply for HFC

- Visit "Annual HFC Application" section of CSDE's HFC webpage
 - Review and follow steps in CSDE's annual operational memorandum
 - Watch CSDE's training module, Completing the Application Process for HFC

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification/annual-hfc-application>

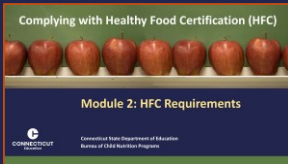


Connecticut State Department of Education

22

More Information About HFC


- Module 2: Complying with HFC



Connecticut State Department of Education

23

Overview of CNS



Connecticut State Department of Education

24

CNS Requirements

Nutrient Limits *

- Calories
- Total fat
- Saturated fat
- Sodium
- Total sugars

* Some exemptions for specific nutrient-rich foods

Prohibited Ingredients

- Nonnutritive sweeteners and sugar alcohols
- Chemically altered fat substitutes
- Caffeine
- Significant fortification
- Nutrition supplements

Connecticut State Department of Education

31

To Comply with CNS Foods Must Meet

1. General Standards
2. Nutrient Standards



Connecticut State Department of Education

32

CNS General Standards

- Must meet at least one general standard
 1. Whole grain-rich (WGR)
 2. Food group is first ingredient
 3. Combination food with at least ¼ cup of fruit or vegetable



Connecticut State Department of Education

33

CNS Nutrient Standards

- Serving with any accompaniments must meet all nutrient standards for applicable CNS category
 - Nutrient limits
 - Prohibited ingredients

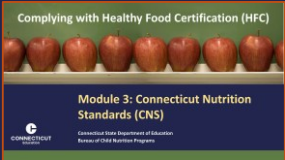


Connecticut State Department of Education

34

More Information About CNS

- **Module 3: Connecticut Nutrition Standards**



Connecticut State Department of Education

35

Resources



Connecticut State Department of Education

36

CSDE Webpage

Healthy Food Certification webpage

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification>

Connecticut State Department of Education

37

CSDE Webpage

Guidance and Resources section

Healthy Food Certification webpage

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification/guidance-and-resources>

Connecticut State Department of Education

38

CSDE Webpage

Connecticut Nutrition Standards

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/connecticut-nutrition-standards>

Connecticut State Department of Education

39

CSDE Resource

Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/requirements_competitive_foods_hfc.pdf

Connecticut State Department of Education

40

CSDE Resource

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/questions_answers_connecticut_statutes_school_foods_beverages.pdf

Connecticut State Department of Education

41

CSDE Resource

Responsibilities of District Contact Person for Healthy Food Certification

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/hfc_district_contact_responsibilities.pdf

Connecticut State Department of Education

42

CSDE Resource

Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/resources_federal_state_requirements_competitive_foods.pdf

Connecticut State Department of Education

43

CSDE Webpage

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/list-of-acceptable-foods-and-beverages>

Connecticut State Department of Education

44

Questions?

- Contact CSDE's HFC coordinator or school nutrition programs staff

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification/contact>
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cnstaff/countyassign.pdf>

Connecticut State Department of Education

45

Thank you for participating!

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification/hfc-training-program>

Connecticut State Department of Education

46

CSDE Nondiscrimination Statement

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; status as a victim 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.

Connecticut State Department of Education

47