

# Summer Meals Updates 2024

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) e-newsletter for sponsors of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

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- USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- USDA Memo SP 22-2024, CACFP 08-2024, and SFSP 13-2024: Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
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# Summer Meals Updates 2024

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- Reminder: Summer Meals Training on May 23, 2024, for all potential SFSP and SSO sponsoring organizations
- Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program
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## Topics May 15, 2024

- Summer 2024 SFSP Applications Due Today!
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- Comment Period Closes on May 21, 2024, for Proposed Rule, Serious Deficiency Process in the CACFP and SFSP
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## Topics May 8, 2024

- Updated SFSP Meal Patterns and Menu Planning Resources
- USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, and SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meals Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program
- Updated CSDE Resources for Crediting Foods in the SFSP
- Updated CSDE Resource List: Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns
- Reminder: Crediting Commercial Products in the SFSP
- Reminder: Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in the SFSP
- Webinar on USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, May 16, 2024

# Summer Meals Updates 2024

## Topics May 1, 2024

- Distributing Meals to Children Outside of Congregate Settings in Rural Areas
- Consolidated Appropriations Act: Rural Non-congregate Summer Meals
- Extension of Comment Period Deadline for USDA Interim Final Rule: Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs: August 27, 2024
- Integrity Assurance for Rural Non-congregate Summer Meals
- USDA Rural Designation Map
- Non-congregate Meal Distribution Methods
- USDA Policy Memos and Guidance for Non-congregate Meal Service

## Topics April 24, 2024

- Options for Operating the SFSP
- Definition of Vended Site for the SFSP
- Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Application for SFSP Sponsors
- USDA Memo SFSP 09-2024: Meal Claim Validation in the Summer Food Service Program

## Topics April 17, 2024

- Summer 2024 SFSP Application Due May 15, 2024
- Performance Standards for the SFSP: Financial Viability, Administrative Capability, and Program Accountability (VCA)
- New Required Form: Management Plan for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): Program Year 2024
- Recording Available for Summer Meals Training from April 11, 2024: SFSP Application Process and SFSP Administrative Review Process

## Topics April 10, 2024

- CSDE Launches Summer Meals Updates
- Reminder: Annual Summer Meals Training 2024
- Rebranded USDA Summer Programs: SUN Programs – USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids
- USDA Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Bookmark the CSDE's Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs Webpage

# Summer Meals Updates 2024

June 7, 2024

This edition of Summer Meals Updates provided an overview of the requirements for submitting claims for reimbursement for SFSP meals and snacks. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE’s [Operational Memorandum No. 01-24 – SFSP 2024 SFSP Reimbursement Rates and Schedule for Submitting Online Reimbursement Claim Data](#).

## SFSP Reimbursement Rates

The chart below summarizes the 2024 reimbursement rates for SFSP meals and snacks, as indicated in [Operational Memorandum No. 01-24 – SFSP](#).

### 2024 Combined Operating and Administrative Rates for the SFSP

Type of meal	Self-preparation or rural sites	Other types of sites (vended)
Breakfast	\$ 2.9775	\$ 2.9225
Lunch/Supper	\$ 5.2125	\$ 5.1300
Snack	\$ 1.2350	\$ 1.2050

## SFSP Claim Submission Schedule

The chart below summarizes the CSDE’s claim submission schedule for summer 2024, as indicated in [Operational Memorandum No. 01-24 – SFSP](#). Sponsors must adhere to the claim submission schedule to ensure timely payment of claims. The recommended timeframe for submitting claims is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following the month covered by the claim (column 2). Original and revised claims **must** be submitted no later than 60 days following the last day of the month covered by the claim (column 3).

### 2024 SFSP Claim Submission Schedule

Column 1: Claim Month	Column 2: Due Date for Prompt Payment	Column 3: Deadline for Final Payment
June 2024	July 15, 2024	August 29, 2024
July 2024	August 15, 2024	September 30, 2024
August 2024	September 15, 2024	October 30, 2024

## Summer Meals Updates 2024

**Note:** A claim that is reaching the final deadline date for submission (column 3) **might not be paid** if it is not submitted by the final deadline in column 3. **“Submitted”** means claims for reimbursement are prepared by the sponsor’s designated claims preparer and then subsequently certified (i.e., submitted) by the authorized signer in the CNP system.

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### Submitting Claims to the CSDE

All SFSP sponsors must submit claims in the [Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Connecticut Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CNP System). The CNP System allows sponsors to enter and submit claims throughout the month. Claims may be submitted by the date in column 2 of the 2024 SFSP Claim Submission Schedule for timely reimbursement by the CSDE.

Claims **must** be submitted by the date in column 3 to ensure compliance with the required time frame (60 days). Although sponsors may prepare and submit a claim in the CNP System at any time, a claim that is reaching the final deadline date for submission (column 3 of the 2024 SFSP Claim Submission Schedule) **might not be paid** if it is not submitted by this final deadline date. The CSDE reserves the right to deny payment if the claim is not filed or corrected by these dates. Sponsors must therefore make every effort to submit timely and accurate information. **“Submitted”** means 1) claims for reimbursement are prepared by the sponsor’s designated claims preparer; and 2) then subsequently certified (i.e., submitted) by the authorized signer in the CNP system.

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### One-time Exception for Failure to Submit Claims

The CSDE has the authority to approve a one-time exception over a 36-month period for reimbursing a valid, late monthly claim. The one-time exception must be from the federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30) to which the claim applies. To be considered for payment, one of the two approved authorized signers must submit a request for the one-time exception (including a corrective action plan) no later than December 15, 2024. For additional guidance, contact your [Summer Meals Team Member](#).

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# Summer Meals Updates 2024

June 26, 2024

This edition of Summer Meals Updates focuses on the monitoring requirements that apply to SFSP sponsors.

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## SFSP Monitoring Staff

Having an efficient and capable Summer Food Service (SFSP) monitoring staff is one of the first steps in successful operations. A SFSP monitor serves as a direct link between the SFSP sponsor's administrative office and the actual food service sites. Establishing a proper monitoring system helps prevent problems from occurring and makes it easier to correct any problems that arise during the summer. The size of the monitoring staff will depend on the size of the sponsor's SFSP.

The SFSP sponsor must ensure that the monitor's responsibilities and authority are clear to the monitoring staff, site supervisors, additional site staff, and office personnel. SFSP monitors must:

- participate in annual training, understand Program requirements, including civil rights requirements;
  - ensure that sites operate according to Program guidelines;
  - carry a supply of all necessary forms during site visits and reviews;
  - provide training for site personnel when needed; and
  - spend enough time at each site to ensure proper SFSP operations.
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## Types of Site Visits and Reviews

SFSP monitors are required to perform site visits and site reviews at various times throughout SFSP operations. Refer to the [Sponsor Monitor's Guide](#) for more detailed information on sponsor monitoring requirements and sample forms. These reviews are an important part of the state agency's responsibility to ensure the integrity of the SFSP.

- **Site visits** require the monitor to ensure that the food service is operating smoothly, and any apparent problems are immediately resolved.
- **Site reviews** require the monitor to determine if the site is meeting all the various SFSP requirements. The monitor must observe a complete meal service from beginning to end, including delivery or preparation of meals, meal service, and clean up after meals.

Sponsors must meet the minimum monitoring requirements below.

**Pre-operational visits [7 CFR 225.15(d)(2)]:** SFSP sponsors must conduct pre-operational visits for new sites, sites that experienced operational problems the previous year, and existing sites that are new to non-congregate meal service, to determine that the sites have the capacity to provide meal

service for the anticipated number of children in attendance and the capability to conduct the proposed meal service.

**Initial Site Visits [7 CFR 225.15(d)(3)]:** SFSP sponsors must visit each of their sites at least once during the first two weeks of program operations and must promptly take such actions as are necessary to correct any deficiencies. In cases where the site operates for seven calendar days or fewer, the visit must be conducted during the period of operation. Sponsors must conduct these visits for:

- all new SFSP sites;
- all existing sites that are new to providing non-congregate meal service;
- all sites that have been determined by the sponsor to need a visit based on criteria established by the State agency pertaining to operational problems noted in the prior year, and
- any other sites that the state agency has determined need a visit.

This visit is not required for returning SFSP sites that operated successfully during the previous summer (or other most recent period of operation) and had no operational challenges. However, early and regular visits to observe site operation is a best practice to ensure regulatory compliance.

**Foodservice Review [7 CFR 225.15(d)(4)]:** SFSP sponsors must conduct a full review of food service operations at each site at least once during the first four weeks of SFSP operations and thereafter must maintain a reasonable level of site monitoring. Sponsors must complete a monitoring form developed by the CSDE during these reviews. Sponsors may conduct a full review of food service operations at the same time they conduct an Initial Site Visit, as described above. If the Initial SFSP Site Visit and SFSP Foodservice Review are conducted concurrently, both forms must be completed in their entirety.

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### Monitoring Reports

All visits and reviews must be documented. Records of visits and reviews will help SFSP sponsors assess the operation of sites. Records are only useful when they are carefully reviewed by sponsor personnel and when follow-up monitoring is scheduled to ensure that any corrective actions have been taken to improve site operations. Each sponsor must design a tracking system for handling monitor reports. SFSP sponsors should have a system that will ensure that monitors return reports frequently, if possible, every day. The reports should be immediately reviewed by a specific member of the sponsor's staff who is responsible for following up on any problems. The staff member should:

- review any problems found by the monitor;
- call the site supervisor, if necessary;
- document corrective action taken at the site;
- schedule a follow-up review, if necessary, basing the timing of a follow-up review on the severity of the problem; and
- sign and date the report.

### Reviewing Monitoring Reports

When reviewing monitor reports, SFSP sponsors or their staff should pay attention to the quality of the reports. There are several indicators that may be apparent in the monitor's reports that may suggest the monitor's lack of program knowledge or the monitor's misunderstanding of their responsibilities. Additional training would be appropriate if the monitor:

- did not answer all questions on the report or the responses are incomplete;
- rarely notes problems and does not include comments in the remarks section of the report;
- observes that the number of meals delivered and/or served and the number of children who are in attendance are always the same but does not follow-up on this suspicious pattern to see if meal counts are being taken appropriately;
- recommends a corrective action and fails to note the action taken or fails to initiate correction of the problems;
- fails to recommend adjustments to orders when the number of meals significantly exceeds attendance; and
- arrives at sites late and/or does not stay for the entire meal service for a Foodservice Review.

SFSP sponsors must be sure that monitors schedule visits and reviews so that they can meet the SFSP requirements. A good monitoring schedule and an efficient system for the review and follow-up on the SFSP monitor's reports are necessary for effective SFSP operations.

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### Preparing Summer Meal Program Site Staff for Monitoring

Each year, the CSDE's Summer Meal Program annual training emphasizes that site staff must be aware of the duties and responsibilities of sponsor monitors. It is also critical for site staff to understand that they may have a site visit or site review conducted on any day of service with little or no advance notice. Please ensure all site staff are aware of the potential for site visits and reviews by:

- sponsor monitors;
- sponsor administrative staff;
- Connecticut Department of Public Health Food Protection Program staff;
- CSDE Summer Meal Program staff; and
- USDA staff;

The CSDE is aware that SFSP monitors of any type can cause anxiety for site staff. SFSP sponsors can help alleviate any concerns or anxiety about the review process by providing clear guidance of the expectations for site staff during the monitoring process. Site staff should be instructed to maintain "business as usual" during the monitoring process.

## Summer Meals Updates 2024

Program Year 2024 will experience more site visits than usual since Connecticut has been selected to participate in the USDA Summer Food Service Program Improper Payment Study, as described during the June 20, 2024, CSDE Summer Meal Program training webinar.

For questions related to sponsor monitoring, food preparation facility and meal site health inspections, or the administrative review process, please contact your [Summer Meals Staff](#) support team member.

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June 19, 2024

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## Turnip the Beet 2024 Nomination Packet

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) [Turnip the Beet 2024 Nomination Packet](#) is available for applications through November 30, 2026. The Turnip the Beet Award recognizes outstanding summer meal program sponsors across the nation who work hard to offer high quality meals to children that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious during the summer months. Please consider promoting the opportunity to apply for a Turnip the Beet award. More information can be found on the Turnip the Beet webpage.

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## USDA Memo SP 18-2024, CACFP 06-2024, and SFSP 11-2024: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs

On May 14, 2024, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released [USDA Memo SP 18-2024, CACFP 06-2024, and SFSP 11-2024: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs](#). This memo provides notice to Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators regarding Sections 739, 747, 748, 769, and 770 of Division B of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42) (the Appropriations Act), enacted on March 9, 2024. This memorandum applies to local organizations operating the federal CNPs.

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## USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

On May 14, 2024, the USDA FNS released [USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, and SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). This memo addresses the final rule, including a chart with an overview of the current requirements, the changes in the final rule, which programs they impact, and the implementation dates.

This final rule finalizes practical, science-based, long-term school nutrition requirements based on the goals of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 (Dietary Guidelines), extensive stakeholder input, and lessons learned from prior rulemakings. This rule also includes minor updates to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to better align Child Nutrition Program (CNP) requirements. These updates represent continued progress toward supporting the nutritional quality of school meals, strengthening the CNPs, and advancing USDA's commitment to nutrition security.

### Summary of SFSP Meal Pattern Updates Effective July 1, 2024: USDA's Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The USDA's final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), includes several updates to the SFSP meal patterns effective July 1, 2024. These updates are summarized below and will be reflected soon in all CSDE SFSP meal pattern, crediting, and menu planning resources. **Note:** This summary does **not** include other final rule changes such as geographic preference. For a complete summary of all changes and implementation dates, refer to [USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, and SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

These updates do **not** require changes to menus or operations for 2024 Summer Meals.

- **Terminology update for meal components:** Changes all previous “food component” references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs to “meal components.”
- **Nuts and seeds:** Allows nuts and seeds to credit for the full meats/meat alternates component in all meals and snacks, removing the previous 50 percent crediting limit for nuts and seeds at lunch.
- **Beans, peas, and lentils:** Changes the name of the previous “legumes (beans and peas)” vegetable subgroup to the “beans, peas, and lentils” vegetable subgroup for consistency with the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

For more information and resources on the final rule, visit the USDA's [Updates to the School Nutrition Standards](#).

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### USDA Memo SP 22-2024, CACFP 08-2024, and SFSP 13-2024: Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

On Wednesday, May 22, 2024, the USDA FNS released [USDA Memo SP 22-2024, CACFP 08-2024, and SFSP 13-2024: Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). The Final Rule covers a broad range of Child Nutrition Programs provisions, including, but not limited to, the expansion of the geographic preference option. This memorandum explains the expanded geographic preference option, including the allowance of local as a specification.

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This guidance applies to schools, sponsors, and institutions participating in any Child Nutrition Program, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO), as well as to purchases made for these programs by state agencies.

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### USDA 2024 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Administration Guide

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released the [2024 Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) Administration Guide](#) on May 13, 2024. This guide is now available as one PDF document that includes all units and appendices. Additionally, Appendix 2: Prototype Forms is now available as a Word document. These additional documents, along with the previously released individual units, are available on the USDA's [SFSP Administration Guide](#) webpage.

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### Summer EBT Customer Service: 1-844-503-6871

The Connecticut State Department of Social Services (DSS), in partnership with the CSDE, is administering the Summer Electronic Benefits (S-EBT) program starting in summer 2024. While most of the benefits will be issued in late June, families may have started asking questions now. For any inquiries, please direct families to call the toll-free hotline at Summer EBT Customer Service, 1-844-503-6871 or visit [Summer EBT - SEBT](#) where information will be made available on an ongoing basis.

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### Summer Meals Outreach for Homeless Children, Youth, and Families

It is essential that homeless children, youth, and families receive referrals for critical services, such as health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse, and other appropriate services. Summer Meals are an appropriate service! Please consider extending your Summer Meal Program outreach to target homeless youth in your community. Visit Connecticut's "*No matter what. School is for Everyone.*" campaign at [ct.gov/nomatterwhat](http://ct.gov/nomatterwhat) for ideas about reaching out to homeless youth.

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June 12, 2024

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## Food Safety Requirements for SFSP Sponsors

All SFSP sponsors are required to enter into an agreement with the CSDE that their sites will maintain proper sanitation and health standards in conformance with all applicable state and local laws and regulations [[7 CFR 225.6\(i\)\(9\)](#)]. The CSDE Summer Meal Program staff work closely with the [Connecticut Department of Public Health \(DPH\) Food Protection Program \(FPP\)](#) to ensure Connecticut's children have access to safe, healthy meals during the summer months when school is out of session. The overall mission of the DPH FPP is to reduce the risk of foodborne disease by ensuring reasonable protection from contaminated food and improving the sanitary condition of food establishments. This is accomplished by enforcement of regulations, training and education, technical consultation, special investigations, and food safety promotion.

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## USDA Requires the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code

The USDA requires that all entities participating in the [Child Nutrition Programs](#) must comply with the [current FDA Food Code](#). The DPH FPP monitors food service establishments for compliance with the Food Code requirements. For more information, food service operations should contact their [local health department](#) or visit the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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## Required Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) and Food Safety Training

Most food establishments in Connecticut, including all Summer Meal Program food preparation facilities, are required to have a [Certified Food Protection Manager \(CFPM\)](#) overseeing all food preparation. Since a CFPM must oversee all food preparation, each sponsor's Summer Meal Program staffing must be prepared to accommodate staff turnover, as well as vacation and sick days. Food safety training is separate from the federally required SFSP training that administrative, foodservice, and meal site staff must undergo prior to beginning Summer Meal Program responsibilities. Food safety training must be supported by documentation maintained on-site at the food preparation facility and be readily available during unannounced health inspections.

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## Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Food Safety for Summer Meals Webpage

The ICN's [Food Safety for Summer Meals](#) webpage provides resources for sponsors and site managers to train SFSP site staff on food safety best practices. These resources promote food safety practices essential to a successful summer meals site, such as practicing good personal

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hygiene, checking and documenting food temperatures, and proper cleaning and sanitizing. These practices reduce the risk of a foodborne illness outbreak and ensure that the food children consume is safe. This prevents children and staff from becoming sick, possibly causing the shutdown of the site and bad publicity for the site, sponsor, and program. Resources are available in both English and Spanish, include posters on a variety of topics, and also include the ICN's [Summer Meals Food Safety Training Guide](#). The information on this webpage may or may not apply to all summer meals sites but can be adapted by sponsors as applicable.

**Note:** The ICN is the only federally funded national center dedicated to applied research, education and training, and technical assistance for the USDA Child Nutrition Programs.

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### FDA Food Safety Videos

The CSDE strongly urges sponsors to have all local Summer Meal Program staff view the FDA's food safety videos below.

- [Foodborne Illness Video Testimonials: Bernadette/Kate Jacobs](#)
  - [Preventing Foodborne Illness: Talking to Patients About Food Safety](#)
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### DPH FPP III Food Worker Educational Campaign

The objective of the DPH FPP's [III Food Worker Educational Campaign](#) is to decrease the occurrence of restaurant-associated norovirus outbreaks potentially caused by food workers working while ill with vomiting or diarrhea, by educating food workers and managers. The materials were developed to inform workers of the need to report illness and to not work when they are ill; assist management in promoting open communication with food workers; provide a resource for additional information on employee health policies; increase reporting of illness by food workers to management; and increase the required reporting of ill food workers by management to the local health department.

The resources include the sample forms below to help employees and management develop employee health policies and procedures.

- [Form 1-A](#): An **optional** interview form that a site manager or person in charge can use when a food worker reports illness (gastrointestinal symptoms), diagnosed with one of the big six pathogens, or exposure to someone that is diagnosed with one of the big six pathogens.
- [Form 1-B](#): A **required** signed acknowledgement that staff are aware they **must** report to the person in charge any specific symptoms, diagnosis of six specific pathogens, or exposure to those six pathogens.

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- [Form 1-C](#): An **optional** medical referral form that may be given to the employee so that they can seek medical care/clearance to return to work.

If a person in charge is unsure whether a person may return to work, they should reach out to their local health department. The local health department can assist with that determination or will reach out to the DPH FPP. Individuals that call out due to vomiting or diarrhea must be kept out of the location until a) symptoms have stopped and 24 hours have passed since the stop of symptoms; or b) they provide written medical documentation to the person in charge that the symptoms are from a noninfectious condition such as pregnancy or Crohn's disease.

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### Recordings Available for Summer Meals Annual Training 2024

All Summer Meals annual training webinar recordings and training slides are located in the "[SFSP Annual Sponsor Training 2024](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage, including the training on **May 23, 2024: Local Foods, USDA Foods, Food Safety**. The CSDE strongly recommends attending live training to gain maximum benefit from the question-and-answer opportunities. Recordings and slides are made available to address unavoidable scheduling conflicts.

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June 5, 2024

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## Mandatory Public Notification

All schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are required to inform families of the availability and location of free meals when school is not in session, as described in [7 CFR 210.12\(d\)](#). School food authorities must cooperate with SFSP sponsors to distribute materials that inform families of the availability and location of free SFSP meals for students when school is not in session. Sponsors can encourage schools to go beyond this requirement by issuing a public service announcement to all families or including details about Summer Meals on their school website or social media accounts.

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## Spread the Word About Summer Meals

Sponsors can coordinate with other organizations (such as statewide advocacy groups or public and private agencies) to conduct promotion efforts. Many of these organizations have experience with and systems for communicating with the public. Sponsors can also share promotional materials with staff members at these organizations. Last year, the CSDE partnered with Connecticut Foodshare to promote Summer Meals at their food pantries, mobile pantries, and community organizations.

The strategies below can broaden sponsors' Summer Meals outreach efforts with community organizations.

- Promote Summer Meals in surrounding towns that do not participate in Summer Meals Programs. Ensure these towns receive information that can help them access meals at the open Summer Meals site closest to their community.
- Circulate information electronically. Include links to the [Summer Meals Site Finder 2024](#) on the school and district websites and promote through social media.
- Enlist school partners to help spread the word. Out-of-school time partners that work with students (such as YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, and Little Leagues) can let families know about Summer Meals Programs. Ask local food banks, WIC clinics, libraries, and other partners to promote Summer Meals, as well.
- Host a Kick-off to Summer or Blitz event. Promote Summer Meals during a one-day event once school is out and Summer Meals operations will begin.
- March in a parade. Community parades typically allow community or town organizations to register for free. Get creative and hand out Summer Meals fliers with links or QR codes that take the viewer to the Summer Meals Site location finder.

# Summer Meals Updates 2024

## SUN Programs Shareable Materials

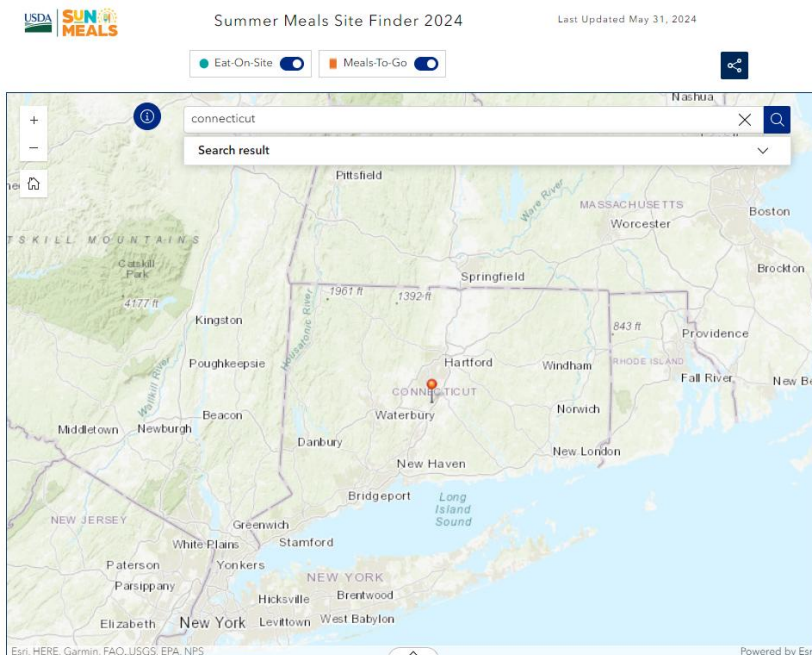
Nearly 30 million children participate in USDA’s school breakfast and lunch programs on an average school day. When school is out for summer, kids lose access to these healthy meals. This puts them at higher risk of hunger and makes it harder for them to get the nutrition they need to learn and grow.

The USDA now has more flexible strategies for providing kids with food and nutrition support so they can thrive in the summertime and beyond. These enhanced offerings are called SUN Programs: USDA’s Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids. They are being promoted in 2024 with the “[More Summer Smiles](#)” campaign.

Everyone has a role to play in getting the word out. Sponsors can download customizable materials to promote SUN programs and spread more summer smiles. The USDA offers [digital](#), [brand](#), and [print](#) materials in English, Spanish, and additional languages.

## How to Get SUN Meals

SUN Meals are available to any child aged 18 and under; no application or other information is needed. To best ensure strong participation all summer long, sponsors should continue to promote summer meals for the entire duration of the Program. Sponsors can promote the [Summer Meals Site Finder 2024](#), which families can use to find sites close to them. In addition to eat-on-site Summer Meals, the site finder can be used to find pick-up locations that offer SUN Meals To-Go. **Note:** The site finder does not list sites offering meal delivery for SUN Meals To-Go.



## Recommendations for Improving Summer Meal Outreach

In spring 2023, the University of Connecticut Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health created the [Promoting Your Summer Meal Program: Social Media Toolkit](#). This toolkit is designed for school meal program sponsors around the country and contains a wide range of information about how to use social media effectively. The toolkit helps schools reach eligible participants and effectively boost participation in their summer meal programs.

The Rudd Center also created the three-part training below on marketing for the Summer Meals Program: *Recommendations for Improving Outreach: How to save time and reach more people*.

- [Part 1](#): How research influenced our recommendation, families/heads of household, social media findings (14 minutes)
  - [Part 2](#): Recommendations, planning in advance (13 minutes)
  - [Part 3](#): toolkit and how-to's and demonstrations (16 minutes)
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## Strategies to Improve the Summer Meals Experience for Children and Families

In May 2023, No Kid Hungry offered a 1-hour training, [School's Out, Food's in! Strategies to Improve the Summer Meals Experience for Children and Families](#), that provided strategies to improve the Summer Meals experience for children and families. Increasing satisfaction with summer meals and the summer meals experience among children, teens, and caregivers is essential to the success of a summer meals program. This webinar provides guidance from three experts who improved the summer meals experience for children and families; and includes strategies and tactics for surveying children and caregivers along with developing inclusive menus and environments.

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## Summer Meals Updates 2024

### USDA National Hunger Hotline

To best ensure strong participation all summer long, sponsors should continue to promote Summer Meals for the entire duration of the Program. Sponsors can promote the [Summer Meals for Kids Site Finder](#) and the [National Hunger Clearinghouse](#), which families can use to find sites close to them.

The USDA National Hunger Hotline of the FNS can be accessed by phone at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-888-8-HAMBRE, or by text to the automated service at 914-342-7744 using keywords such as “food,” “summer,” or “meals.”

Sponsors often face a “mid-summer lull” – or participation drop – in late July. To keep momentum going strong, sponsors may consider hosting a “spike” event. Spike events take place typically in the middle of the summer, and can include a parade, health fair, music concert, or other family-friendly event. For more ideas and resources, visit the USDA’s [Summer Meals Toolkit](#).



# Summer Meals Updates 2024

May 22, 2024

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## Reminder: Summer Meals Training on May 23, 2024, for all potential SFSP and SSO sponsoring organizations

The CSDE reminds potential sponsoring organizations that participation in annual Summer Meal Programs training is required.

- **Training:** Local Foods, USDA Foods, Food Safety
- **Date and time:** Thursday, May 23, 2024, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

### Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 257 292 443 91

Passcode: Yizq7A

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075,,834102498#](#) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 834 102 498#

For questions about Summer Meals training, please contact [caroline.cooke@ct.gov](mailto:caroline.cooke@ct.gov).

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## Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program

Effective October 1, 2022, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#) redesignated Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR) [Section 225.6\(i\)\(7\)\(v\)](#). This section allows Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors to claim reimbursement only for meals specified in the state-sponsored agreement at an approved site, unless the requirements in [7 CFR 225.16\(g\)](#) are met. SFSP sponsors that provide advance notice to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) are allowed to receive reimbursement for meals served away from an approved site, such as meals served during field trips. The requirements for field trip meals are summarized in the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

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### Food Safety Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program

As specified in 7 CFR 225.16(g)(1)(ii), field trip meals must meet all applicable state and local health, safety, and sanitation standards. The greatest food safety concern for field trip meals is ensuring that foods defined by the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Code as "Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food" (TCS) – formerly known as potential hazardous foods (PHFs) – stay at proper temperatures during transport and service. TCS require time/temperature control for safety to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation that can lead to foodborne illness. The food safety requirements for field trip meals are summarized in the CSDE's resource, [Food Safety Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

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# Summer Meals Updates 2024

May 15, 2024

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## Summer 2024 SFSP Application Due May 15, 2024

The Summer 2024 SFSP application process is still open. The submission deadline is **today**. Applicants needing additional time to complete their application packet should contact the CSDE's [Summer Meal Program staff](#) to discuss an extension prior to missing the deadline.

Sponsors requesting an application extension should be prepared to indicate the first day of planned Summer Meals distribution in their community. The organization's application **must** be submitted no later than 2 weeks prior to that date, and only with an application extension approved in writing by CSDE Summer Meal Program staff.

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## Recordings Available for Summer Meals Annual Training 2024

All webinar recordings and training slides are located in the "[SFSP Annual Sponsor Training 2024](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

- March 28, 2024: USDA Updates
- April 11, 2024: SFSP Application Process and SFSP Administrative Review Process

Additional webinar recordings and training slides will be posted as they become available.

- May 9, 2024: SFSP Regulations
- May 16, 2024: SSO Regulations
- May 23, 2024: Local Foods, USDA Foods, Food Safety
- June 6, 2024: Outreach
- June 20, 2024: Summer 2024 Kick-off

The CSDE strongly recommends attending trainings live to gain maximum benefit of the question and answer opportunities provided. Recordings and slides are made available to address unavoidable scheduling conflicts.

SFSP sponsors must have a representative participate in all training sessions, with the exception of the May 16, 2024, SSO session. Sponsors will be required to submit an attestation statement after the conclusion of the webinar series, acknowledging their responsibility for the content and attesting to participation prior to the start of Summer Meals operations Program Year 2024.

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# Summer Meals Updates 2024

## Newly Released USDA 2024 Summer Food Service Program Administration Guide

USDA FNS recently announced the release of the [2024 Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) Administration Guide](#). This guide reflects policy updates to the SFSP since its last release in 2016, including policy updates made through the interim final rulemaking, [Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs \(88 FR 90230\)](#). The content is structured in units focused on participating, applying, administering, and operating the meal service in the SFSP, and is specific to those operating the SFSP, mainly state agencies and sponsors.

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## Reminder! Comment Period Closes on May 21, 2024, for Proposed Rule, Serious Deficiency Process in the CACFP and SFSP

The USDA proposed rule, [Serious Deficiency Process in the Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) and the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#), was published on February 21, 2024, and is open for public comment until **May 21, 2024**. Refer to the USDA's [Serious Deficiency Process in the CACFP and SFSP](#) webpage for more information, including a summary chart of proposed provisions.

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## Order Team Nutrition Materials in Print

SFSP sponsors can request free print copies of Team Nutrition materials, while supplies last.

- [Resource Kit](#)
  - [Placemat](#)
  - [Poster Set](#)
-

May 8, 2024

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## Updated SFSP Meal Patterns and Menu Planning Resources

Updated versions (May 2024) of the SFSP meal patterns and menu planning resources below are available in the "[How To](#)" section of SFSP webpage.

### SFSP Meal Patterns

- [SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Crediting Summary Charts for the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Noncreditable Foods in the SFSP](#)
- [Guide to Offer versus Serve \(OVS\) in the SFSP: OVS is only allowed for school food authority \(SFA\) sponsors of the SFSP](#)
- [Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)

### Meal Modifications

- [Guidance for Meal Modifications in the SFSP](#)
- Medical Statement: [Request Form for Meal Modifications in the SFSP](#)

### Menu Planning Forms

- [Breakfast Menu Form for the SFSP](#)
- [Lunch and Supper Menu Form for the SFSP](#)
- [Snack Menu Form for the SFSP](#)

### Production Records

- Overview: [Production Records for the SFSP](#)
  - [SFSP Production Record for Breakfast and Lunch/Supper](#)
  - [SFSP Production Record for Breakfast and Snack](#)
  - [SFSP Production Record for Lunch/Supper and Snack](#)
  - [SFSP Production Record for Meal Pattern Components](#)
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# Summer Meals Updates 2024

## USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, and SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meals Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program

Tofu and soy yogurt are now creditable as the meat/meat alternate component in the SFSP meal pattern. For more information refer to [USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meals Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program](#).

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### Updated CSDE Resources for Crediting Foods in the SFSP

Foods and beverages served in reimbursable meals and snacks must meet specific requirements to credit toward the SFSP meal patterns. Updated versions (May 2024) of the SFSP crediting resources below assist SFSP sponsors with meeting these requirements and are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the SFSP webpage. The revisions include:

- updated content, resources, and links;
- the addition of a table of contents with clickable links for easy access to topics;
- the addition of crediting guidance for tofu and soy yogurt to all applicable documents (now allowed in the SFSP per [USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meals Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program](#)); and
- the addition of crediting guidance for hummus to all applicable documents.

Two new crediting resources are also available, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the SFSP* and *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the SFSP*.

### Crediting Documentation

- [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP](#)
- [Standardized Recipe Form for the SFSP](#)
- [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the SFSP](#) **New**
- [Using Product Formulation Statements in the SFSP](#)

### Meat/Meat Alternates Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Deli Meats in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the SFSP](#) **New**
- [Crediting Yogurt in the SFSP](#)
- [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP](#)

## Summer Meals Updates 2024

### Vegetables/Fruits Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Juices in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Smoothies in the SFSP](#)

### Grains/Breads Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Grains/Breads Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)
- [Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Enriched Grains in the SFSP](#)
- [Crediting Whole Grains in the SFSP](#)
- [How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart](#)
- [Serving for Grains/Breads in the SFSP](#)
- [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the SFSP](#)

### Milk Component

- Overview: [Requirements for the Milk Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#)

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### Updated CSDE Resource List: Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns

An updated version (May 2024) version of the CSDE's [Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns](#) is available. This document includes resources and websites to assist sponsors with meeting the USDA meal pattern requirements for the SFSP.

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### Reminder: Crediting Commercial Products in the SFSP

SFSP sponsors must be able to document the crediting information for commercially prepared foods that are processed or contain added ingredients, such as deli meats, pizza, chicken nuggets, hummus, coleslaw, and smoothies. Allowable documentation includes:

- the original Child Nutrition (CN) label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a product formulation statement (PFS) signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product.

These are the only acceptable documents for determining a commercial product's contribution to the SFSP meal patterns. Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit toward the SFSP meal patterns. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the SFSP](#) and [Using Product Formulation Statements in the SFSP](#), and visit the "[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

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### Reminder: Crediting Foods Made from Scratch in the SFSP

Foods made from scratch require a recipe that documents the SFSP meal pattern crediting information per serving. For example, to credit macaroni and cheese as 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component and 2 servings of the grains/breads component, the SFSP sponsor's recipe must indicate that each serving contains 2 ounces of cheese and 1 cup of whole grain or enriched pasta. The CSDE encourages SFSP sponsors to use standardized recipes to ensure accurate crediting information. A standardized recipe is a recipe that has been carefully adapted and tested to ensure that it will produce a consistent product every time it is used. For more information, refer to the "[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

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## Summer Meals Updates 2024

### Webinar on USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, May 16, 2024

On April 25, 2024, the USDA released the final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). This rule finalizes practical, science-based, long-term school nutrition requirements consistent with the goals of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 and based on extensive public input as well as lessons learned from prior rulemakings.

On May 16, 2024, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is partnering with the National CACFP Sponsors Association to offer a webinar for program operators to introduce the provisions of the final rule that impact the CACFP and the Summer Food Service Programs (SFSP).

- **Date and time:** Thursday, May 16, 2024, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- **Registration:** [registration link](#)

**Note:** These changes will not affect current summer 2024 operations but will be phased in beginning in 2025.

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May 1, 2024

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## Distributing Meals to Children Outside of Congregate Settings in Rural Areas

Sponsors serving certain rural areas can distribute nutritious meals to children outside of the typically required group (congregate) settings through the SFSP and SSO. As part of the USDA's efforts to enhance the summer meal programs, approved program operators in rural areas can now use alternate service models tailored to the needs of the children and communities they serve. States will exercise discretion in approving sites for non-congregate meal service as they balance meeting the needs of their communities and ensuring program integrity.

Under the [Interim Final Rule: Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs \(IFR\)](#), non-congregate meals are available only in rural areas with no congregate meal service. If the rural area meets the definition of an 'area in which poor economic conditions exist' (per SFSP regulations at [7 CFR 225.2](#)), then meals for all children may be claimed for reimbursement. If the rural area does not meet the definition of an 'area in which poor economic conditions exist,' only the meals served to children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program (NLSP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) may be claimed.

When determining if an area served by a congregate site would be better operated as a non-congregate site, the sponsor should consider if any of the following apply to the congregate site:

- there are physical conditions or other barriers preventing children from accessing the site;
- there is limited capacity that prevents the site from serving the community at large;
- the site serves the same children on different days, different weeks, or for different meals on the same day; or
- the site appeals to specific age groups or to children with unique dietary requirements.

Sponsors that are considering meal distribution methods for non-congregate meals should contact Terese Maineri at [terese.maineri@ct.gov](mailto:terese.maineri@ct.gov).

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## Summer Meals Updates 2024

### Consolidated Appropriations Act: Rural Non-congregate Summer Meals

The [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#) issued on December 29, 2022, required the Secretary of Agriculture to make available an option to states to provide summer meals for non-congregate meal service in rural areas with no congregate meal service and to establish a permanent summer electronic benefits transfer for children program (Summer EBT) for the purpose of ensuring continued access to food when school is not in session for the summer.

As required by law, on December 29, 2023, the USDA issued the Interim Final Rule (IFR), [Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs](#). The IFR amends the SFSP and the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option (SSO) regulations to codify the flexibility for rural program operators to provide non-congregate meal service in the SFSP and SSO, collectively referred to as the summer meal programs. This rule also establishes regulations and codifies the Summer EBT Program in the Code of Federal Regulations.

The IFR takes immediate effect and will guide implementation in Summer 2024, but the IFR is still [open for public comment](#) until **August 27, 2024** (refer to "Extension of Comment Period Deadline for USDA Interim Final Rule: Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs: August 27, 2024" below). Comments received on the IFR will be used to inform a future final rule.

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### Extension of Comment Period Deadline for USDA Interim Final Rule: Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs: August 27, 2024

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service is extending for 120 days the public comment period on the interim final rule, [Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs](#), which was published in the Federal Register on December 29, 2023. This action extends the public comment period from April 29, 2024, to **August 27, 2024**, to give the public additional time to prepare and submit comments.

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## Integrity Assurance for Rural Non-congregate Summer Meals

Congregate and non-congregate sites cannot serve the same population of children for the same meal service on the same day. Sponsors opting to distribute meals to parents or guardians on behalf of their children must ensure through documented procedures that:

- meals are only distributed to parents or guardians of eligible children; and
- duplicate meals are not distributed to any child.

For more information on rural designations in Summer Meals, refer to [USDA Memo SFSP 15-2023: Best Practices for Determining Proximity of Sites in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

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## USDA Rural Designation Map

Sponsors may use the [USDA Rural Designation Map](#) to determine if a proposed site may be designated as rural for purposes of the SFSP and SSO, collectively known as the Summer Meal Programs. Use the steps below to determine if your location is designated as rural by the USDA.

1. Enter your location in the search tool in the upper left corner to find your location.
2. Use the plus and minus tool or scroll to zoom into the desired location.
3. The current layer has all the categories of rural. If the address is within a green area, it is considered rural.
4. You can use the folder button on the upper left side of the map to turn on and off the individual rural categories.

For more information on rural designations in the summer meal programs, refer to [USDA Memo SFSP 04-2024 and SP 06-2024: Rural Designations in the Summer Meal Programs - Revised](#). **Note:** A site must be designated as rural and eligible to participate in Summer Meals Programs and offer non-congregate meals to the whole community.

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# Summer Meals Updates 2024

## Non-congregate Meal Distribution Methods

The methods below are allowed for non-congregate meal distribution.

- **Meal pick-up:** Packaged meals are taken home for children to eat later. Examples include “grab and go,” curbside service, and take-home backpacks. In accordance with [7 CFR 225.16\(i\)\(2\)](#), approved sponsors may distribute meals to parents or guardians to take home to their children. Sponsors approved by the state agency to distribute meals to parents or guardians must maintain accountability and SFSP integrity. This includes establishing procedures and processes that ensure meals are distributed only to children or to the parents or guardians of eligible children, and that duplicate meals are not distributed.
- **Home delivery:** Meals are delivered directly to homes. Delivery could be completed by mail or delivery service, or hand-delivered by the sponsor’s staff or volunteers. Sponsors that are approved to operate a non-congregate meal service using home delivery must be able to identify and invite households of eligible children to participate in the meal delivery service and obtain written consent from the eligible child’s parent or guardian to receive delivered meals prior to providing home delivered meals ([7 CFR 225.14\(d\)\(6\)](#)).

Sponsors that are considering meal distribution methods for non-congregate meals should contact Terese Maineri at [terese.maineri@ct.gov](mailto:terese.maineri@ct.gov).

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## USDA Policy Memos and Guidance for Non-congregate Meal Service

- [Offering Multiple Meals as Part of Summer Non-Congregate Meal Service](#)
- [Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service Examples: Summer 2023](#)
- [USDA Memo SFSP 02-2023: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [USDA Memo SFSP 03-2023: Guidance on Performance Standards, Budgets, and Management Plans in the SFSP](#)
- [USDA Memo SFSP 03-2024 and SP 05-2024: Implementation Guidance for the Rural Non-congregate Option Provisions of the Interim Final Rule, Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs](#)
- [USDA Memo SFSP 04-2024 and SP 06-2024: Rural Designations in the Summer Meal Programs - Revised](#)
- [USDA Memo SFSP 07-2024 and SP 13-2024: Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas Questions and Answers](#)
- [USDA Memo SFSP 08-2024 and SP 15-2024: Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas Questions and Answers #2](#)
- [Webinar for Sponsors and Program Operators: IFR for Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service](#)

April 24, 2024

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## Options for Operating the SFSP

SFSP sponsors may use any of the following options for implementing the SFSP:

- self-preparation site or sponsor ([7 CFR 225.2](#));
- competitive procurement of meals from a food service management company (FSMC); and
- entering into an agreement with a school food authority (SFA).

Federal, state, and local laws and regulations specify the methods that SFSP sponsors must follow to properly procure goods and services. When contracting with a FSMC, the sponsor must adhere to the procurement standards outlined in the SFSP regulations ([7 CFR 225.17](#)) and [2 CFR 200](#). State agencies will ensure that SFSP sponsors comply with the applicable regulations through audits, administrative reviews, technical assistance, training, guidance materials, and other means.

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## Definition of Vended Site for the SFSP

The USDA's final rule, [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#), added the following definition to the SFSP regulations [7 CFR 225.2](#):

**Vended site** means a site that serves unitized meals, with or without milk, that were procured through a formal agreement or contract with: (1) public agencies or entities such as a school food authority; (2) private, nonprofit organizations; or (3) private, for-profit companies such as a commercial food distributor or food service management company.

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## Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Application for SFSP Sponsors

In accordance with SFSP regulations [7 CFR 225.6\(l\)](#), the CSDE has developed a standard contract form, [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) Invitation for Bid and Contract \(IFB\) for Food Service Management Companies \(SFSP IFB\)](#) for use by SFSP sponsors contracting with a FSMC. Sponsors may use their existing or usual form of contract, provided it has been submitted to and approved by the CSDE, and the following criteria apply: 1) the sponsor is a public entity; 2) the sponsor has at least one exclusive year-round contract with a food service management company; and 3) the sponsor's FSMC contracts do not exceed \$150,000 in aggregate value.

**FSMC Application for SFSP Registration:** As a prerequisite to participation in the SFSP in Connecticut, all FSMCs must register with the State of Connecticut by completing and submitting the CSDE's [Food Service Management Company Application for SFSP Registration](#). This document outlines the required components and instructions for submitting the FSMC registration application.

## Summer Meals Updates 2024

Instructions are available in the CSDE's [Guidance and Instructions for the Food Service Management Company Application for SFSP Registration](#).

Additional forms and guidance are below.

- [Recommendation for Bid Award for the SFSP](#)
- [SFSP Sponsor/Vendor Award Conference Checklist](#)
- [Summary of Instructions for SFSP Sponsors Contracting with a Food Service Management Company](#)

All resources are available in the "[Contracts in the SFSP](#)" section of the CSDE's FSMC webpage.

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### **USDA Memo SFSP 09-2024: Meal Claim Validation in the Summer Food Service Program**

The USDA's final rule, [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#), amended SFSP regulations to strengthen SFSP integrity by clarifying, simplifying, and streamlining SFSP administration to facilitate compliance with SFSP requirements. This final rule established a process that state agencies must follow to validate SFSP sponsor meal claims during the sponsor review. The meal claim validation process utilizes a streamlined record review process outlined at [7 CFR 225.7\(e\)\(6\)\(i\)](#). The recently released [USDA Memo SFSP 09-2024: Meal Claim Validation in the Summer Food Service Program](#) provides an overview and step-by-step process for how to complete the meal claim validation process. This memorandum includes two attachments. Attachment 1 provides a flow chart on conducting a meal claim validation. Attachment 2 provides an example to complement Attachment 1.

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April 17, 2024

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## Summer 2024 SFSP Application Due May 15, 2024

The Summer 2024 SFSP application process is now open. The submission deadline is **May 15, 2024**. Applicants needing additional time to complete their application packet should contact the CSDE's [Summer Meals staff](#) to discuss an extension in advance of the deadline.

The documents below provide guidance on meeting the Summer 2024 SFSP application requirements. Review these documents carefully to ensure that the application packet submitted in the [Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs \(CNP System\)](#) is complete and accurate. Incomplete application packets will be returned, which delays the approval process.

- [Application Package for the SFSP](#): Describes the SFSP application process to participate for summer 2024.
- [2024 SFSP Application Components for Sponsors](#): Describes the required forms and materials for SFSP applications.
- [Management Plan for the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\): Program Year 2024](#): New required form for documenting sponsor compliance with the USDA's new viability, capability, and accountability (VCA) performance standards (refer to "New Required Form: Management Plan for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): Program Year 2024" below).

The [User Manual for Connecticut Sponsors of the Summer Food Service Program](#) provides guidance on submitting the 2024 SFSP application in the CNP System. Additional resources are available in the "[CNP System for the SFSP](#)" section of the CSDE's CNP System webpage. CSDE templates for various application components are available in the "[Apply](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

Applicants with access to the CNP System through previous work with the SFSP or through participation in other CNPs (National School Lunch Program or Child and Adult Care Food Program) will use their current user ID and password. Applicants who do not currently have access to the CNP System and will be contributing to the application process on behalf of their organization should contact the CSDE's [Summer Meals Staff](#).

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### **Performance Standards for the SFSP: Financial Viability, Administrative Capability, and Program Accountability (VCA)**

The USDA final rule published on September 19, 2022, [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#), made changes to the SFSP regulations. Section 7 CFR 225.6(d) of the SFSP regulations clarified existing SFSP requirements and provided support and guidance to state agencies when evaluating sponsor applications. The changes to [7 CFR 225.6\(d\)](#) include the addition of VCA performance standards for the SFSP.

- Performance Standard 1 – Financial Viability and Management
- Performance Standard 2 – Administrative Capability
- Performance Standard 3 – Internal Controls for Program Accountability

As part of their application, sponsors must demonstrate compliance with the performance standards in their management plan. Section 7 CFR 225.6(d) defines and explains the requirements for the three standards. A summary of the requirements is available under “Clarifying Performance Standards for Evaluating Sponsor Viability, Capability, and Accountability” in the USDA’s [Streamlining Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP Final Rule - Comparison Table](#). For additional guidance, refer to the resources below.

- USDA Memo SFSP 03-2023: [Guidance on Performance Standards, Budgets, and Management Plans in the Summer Food Service Program](#)
- USDA Webinar (April 4, 2023): [Performance Standards in the SFSP](#)

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### **New Required Form: Management Plan for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): Program Year 2024**

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service’s (FNS) final rule, [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#), requires that SFSP sponsors, as part of their application, must demonstrate compliance with the VCA performance standards in their management plan and as part of their administrative budget. The CSDE’s new form, [Management Plan for the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\): Program Year 2024](#), obtains the VCA performance standards compliance information required by the final rule. Applicants must submit this form to the CSDE’s CNP System with their Summer 2024 SFSP application materials.

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### **Recording Available for Summer Meals Training from April 11, 2024: SFSP Application Process and SFSP Administrative Review Process**

The recording of the CSDE's April 11 webinar, [SFSP Application Process and SFSP Administrative Review Process](#), is now available. This is the second of the seven webinars for the CSDE's annual Summer Meals training for SFSP sponsors. All webinar recordings and training slides are the "[SFSP Annual Sponsor Training 2024](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

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April 10, 2024

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## CSDE Launches Summer Meals Updates

Welcome to the first edition of Summer Meals Updates, the CSDE's new email notification for sponsors of the SFSP and SSO. This e-newsletter provides important guidance and resources for complying with the federal requirements, identifies deadlines for completing required activities and reports, and provides links to relevant resources and training.

Summer Meals Updates will be issued on Wednesdays. Through June 2024, the schedule will be weekly. For July, August, and September, the schedule will be monthly, with additional issues as needed, based on relevant updates and deadlines.

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. Previous versions will be available in the "[Summer Meals Updates](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

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## Reminder: Annual Summer Meals Training 2024

The CSDE's annual Summer Meals training for SFSP sponsors consists of seven one-hour webinars held on Thursdays from 2:00-3:00 p.m. during March through June. Sponsors are strongly encouraged to participate live, which allows the opportunity to ask questions and learn from other sponsors. Recorded webinars will be available for sponsors with a scheduling conflict.

At least one individual from each SFSP sponsoring organization must register to attend either live or by recording. Attendance must be documented and submitted to the CSDE at a later date.

- March 28, 2024: USDA Updates, Rural Non-congregate Meal Service: Access the webinar recording and training slides in the "[SFSP Annual Sponsor Training 2024](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.
- April 11, 2024: SFSP Application Process & SFSP Administrative Review Process
- May 9, 2024: SFSP Regulations
- May 16, 2024: Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program
- May 23, 2024: Local Foods. USDA Foods, Food Safety
- June 6, 2024: Outreach
- June 20, 2024: Summer 2024 Kick-off

Join the Teams trainings using the links below.

## Summer Meals Updates 2024

### Microsoft Teams meeting for all dates except May 16, 2024

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 257 292 443 91

Passcode: Yizq7A

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075,,834102498#](#) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 834 102 498#

### Microsoft Teams meeting for May 16, 2024

Microsoft Teams meeting for May 16, 2024

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 225 336 668 44

Passcode: muTuBy

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075,,920756855#](#) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 920 756 855#

For questions about Summer Meals training, please contact [caroline.cooke@ct.gov](mailto:caroline.cooke@ct.gov).

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## Summer Meals Updates 2024

### Rebranded USDA Summer Programs: SUN Programs – USDA’s Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recently announced the [rebranded USDA summer programs](#). Moving forward, the suite of newly developed and previously established programs that help fill the summertime hunger gap will be called **SUN Programs: USDA’s Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids**. This incorporates:

- **SUN Meals:** In-person summer meal sites; group summer meal service
- **SUN Meals To-Go:** To-go or home-delivered meals in certain rural areas

The SUN name – derived from the words Summer and Nutrition – reflects the broader, brighter impact USDA’s Summer Nutrition Programs will have on kids across the nation, helping them thrive during summer and beyond.



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### USDA Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP

Effective October 1, 2022, the USDA final rule, [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#), made changes to the SFSP regulations ([7 CFR 225](#)). These changes simplify SFSP program requirements, improve the customer experience for participating children and families, and strengthen the integrity of the SFSP. Many provisions codified through this final rule were previously allowed as program flexibilities and are demonstrated to facilitate program administration and service delivery for children and their families.

The USDA’s [Streamlining Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP Final Rule - Comparison Table](#) compares the previous and current SFSP regulations. An overview of the final rule is available in the USDA’s webinar, [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP](#). For additional guidance and resources, visit the USDA’s [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP](#) webpage.

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### **Bookmark the CSDE's Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs Webpage**

The CSDE's [Program Guidance for the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage includes an alphabetical listing of links to information on federal and state requirements, guidance, and resources for the SFSP. This webpage page is the go-to resource for easy access to all topics related to the SFSP. Make sure to bookmark this webpage for future reference.

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## Summer Meals Updates 2024

For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Summer Meals Updates](#) section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage, or contact the [SFSP 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/sfsp/summermealsupdates/summer\\_meals\\_updates\\_2024.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/summermealsupdates/summer_meals_updates_2024.pdf).



## Summer Meals Updates 2024

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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, audiotope, 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)

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