

The School Lunch Tray: October 5, 2022

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

The School Lunch Tray contains the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly email notifications for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. This week's topics are listed below.

Action Items

- School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART Funds) Claiming for August and September 2022
- Verification Must Be Completed by November 15

Need to Know

- Revised Addendum C: Information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: School Year 2022-23 Version
- Updated Production Record Forms for School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2022-23
- Fiscal Year 2023 CACFP and SFSP Area Eligibility Data Now Available
- Official Release of the USDA Foods Database: Nutrition, Allergen, and Ingredient Information for USDA Foods in Schools
- USDA Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements, and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- USDA Correction: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium (Final Rule 87 FR 52329)
- Distribution of Pandemic EBT Food Benefits
- New Fruit Yield Data Added to the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-Based Tool
- Resource Roundup: School Nutrition Programs User IDs and Passwords for Accessing Connecticut's Online Application and Claiming System

Good to Know

- Four Ways to Nourish More Children through School Meals
- Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month: September 25 through October 15, 2022
- Free Milk Posters for Schools
- Ending Hunger, Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity, and Reducing Diet-Related Diseases and Disparities
- FDA Proposes to Update Definition for "Healthy" Claim on Food Labels
- Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) Webinar: Understanding Cultural Foodways in School Communities, October 6, 2022
- Team Nutrition Webinar: Meal Talk: Taste-Test Events: October 12, 2022
- FRAC Webinar: Serving Meals on Weekends and Holidays through the Afterschool Meal Program: October 13, 2022

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. For previous versions of the School Lunch Tray, visit the CSDE's [School Lunch Tray and Table Talk](#) webpage.



Action Items

School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART Funds) Claiming for August and September 2022

School food authorities (SFAs) should review the important points below about SMART funds.

1. While all students will be receiving breakfast and lunch meals at no cost, **meals must be claimed based on a student's approved eligibility (free, reduced, or paid)**. All meals cannot be entered and claimed as free unless the school is participating in the Community Eligibility Provision.
2. **Sponsors do *not* need to enter any additional claim data to receive the September SMART Funds payment.**

Payments: Each SFA's formula-calculated allocation will be loaded into the CSDE's Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System) upcoming Distribution of Funds (DOF) module as a starting balance. After the CSDE processes the monthly claims for reimbursement, a report of the number of meals eligible for SMART funds will be generated to determine each SFA's SMART funds monthly reimbursement payment. The SFA's SMART funds reimbursement payment will be paid utilizing the same process already in place to pay the SFA's monthly claims for reimbursement. Once the SMART funds payment is made, the amount will be deducted from the SFA's SMART funds balance in the DOF module. The DOF module will allow each SFA to see their full allocation amount and monitor their fund balance in real time in the CNP System. This functionality will assist SFAs with determining how long the allocation will last for each of their eligible sites based on their own student population and participation.

3. The Distribution of Funds (DOF) Module is **not** live. Once the module becomes available information will be sent out to sponsors.

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Resources

- [Operational Memorandum No. 14-22: SMART Funds](#) provides important information about this grant. The Operational Memorandum includes the three attachments below.
 1. [Attachment 1: Questions and Answers: School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition funds for School Year 2022-23](#)
 2. [Attachment 2: School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition Funds List of Eligible School Food Authorities for School Year 2022-23](#)
 3. [Attachment 3: School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition Funds Attestation Statement](#)
- [List of School Food Authorities Receiving School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition \(SMART\) Funds: School Year 2022-23](#)
- [List of School Food Authorities Receiving SMART Funds Final Allocations for School Year 2022-23](#)
- [SMART Funds Second Question and Answers for School Food Authorities](#)
- SMART Funds Information Session (August 4, 2022)
 - [Webinar Recording](#)
 - [Webinar Slides](#)
 - [Webinar Transcript](#)
- [SMART Funds Estimator](#) helps schools determine how long SMART funds may last. **Note:** This resource is not a guarantee that the SMART funds will last for the full length projected using the Estimator.

All resources are available in the “[How To](#)” section of the CSDE’s Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 webpage.

Verification Must Be Completed by November 15

This is a reminder that the verification process began October 1 and **must** be completed by **November 15**. The CSDE conducted a verification webinar, *Building Success: What You Need to Know About Verification*, on September 27, 2022. The recorded webinar, PowerPoint handout, and related handouts are available in the “[Related Resources](#)” section of the CSDE’s Verification Procedures for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Information regarding verification is available on the CSDE’s [Verification Procedures for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. The verification forms are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section.

Two important documents that assist in the verification process include the CSDE’s *Calendar for Completing Verification* and *Important Points for Completing Verification*. Additionally, the USDA [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#), provides an overview of the verification process.

Need to Know

Revised Addendum C: Information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The CSDE has revised *Addendum C: Information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)* to include the updated income guidelines for SNAP. Please share this addendum with schools and households and update school websites accordingly. English and Spanish versions are available in the “[Addenda](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: School Year 2022-23 Version

The CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#) for school year 2022-23 is now available. This guide contains information and guidance on planning menus to meet the USDA’s meal patterns for preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. Please discard any versions downloaded prior to today and replace with the updated version dated October 2022. For additional resources on the preschool meal patterns and crediting foods, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Updated Production Record Forms for School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2022-23

The updated production records for school year 2022-23 are available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Production Records for School Nutrition Programs](#). These production records include a variety of forms for different grade configurations (including preschool and grades K-12) based on food items or food components. Updates reflect the meal pattern requirements for milk and grains, effective July 1, 2022, and include the revised USDA nondiscrimination statement and updated links. Please discard any versions prior to the October 2022 revision.

As a reminder, the USDA regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR 210.10\(a\)\(3\)](#)) and SBP ([7 CFR 220.8\(a\)\(3\)](#)) require that school food authorities (SFAs) **must maintain daily production records for all school meals**. The CSDE’s sample forms help SFAs provide the information required to comply with this requirement. The CSDE’s resource, [Requirements for Production Records in School Nutrition Programs](#), provides guidance on completing production records.

Fiscal Year 2023 CACFP and SFSP Area Eligibility Data Now Available

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) fiscal year 2023 Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) participant area eligibility data are now available. At the start of every fiscal year, FNS releases a special tabulation of data for the CACFP and SFSP provided by the Census Bureau that establishes area eligibility in CACFP and SFSP. These data are effective as of October 1, 2022.

The [FNS mapping tools](#) have also been updated to reflect the new data. The data set is also available for download on the FNS' [open data site](#). Please note that the map works best when opened in the following browsers: Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox.

To learn more about using census data for establishing area eligibility in the CACFP and SFSP, refer to [USDA policy memorandum SP 08-2017, CACFP 04-2017, and SFSP 03-2017, Area Eligibility in Child Nutrition Programs](#), issued December 1, 2016.

Official Release of the USDA Foods Database: Nutrition, Allergen, and Ingredient Information for USDA Foods in Schools

On September 30, 2022, the USDA released the USDA Foods Database. This database provides up-to-date, vendor-specific nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information for direct delivered USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA Foods Database is a non-editable Excel spreadsheet that allows users to search for USDA Foods by their 6-digit unique material code. The spreadsheet must be downloaded and saved to use. For more information, visit the [USDA Foods Database](#) webpage.

USDA Final Rule: Streamlining Program Requirements, and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

On September 19, 2022, the USDA published the final rule, [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP](#) (87 FR 57304). This final rule provides nationwide access to four operational flexibilities that were often requested by states and sponsors prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. These flexibilities are related to:

- oversight visits to summer sites;
- the times meals can be served;
- meal service options for school-based summer sites; and
- how eligibility is determined for sites that require enrollment.

The rule also includes updates that will offer better access to meal service and streamline the application process for organizations that are experienced in serving children through other USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, visit the USDA's [Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the SFSP](#) webpage.

USDA Correction: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium (Final Rule 87 FR 52329)

On August 25, 2022, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) issued a correction to the final rule that appeared in the Federal Register on February 7, 2022, and went into effect in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) on July 1, 2022. The rule established Child Nutrition Program transitional standards for milk, whole grains, and sodium for school years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

The final rule that appeared in the Federal Register on February 7, 2022, had several typographical errors included in both the NSLP and the SBP meal pattern charts that were corrected on August 3, 2022. The corrected breakfast meal pattern chart introduced one additional typographical error found at 7 CFR 220.8(c), in the row labeled, “Grains (oz eq)^d” under the heading, “Grades 9-12” where the *minimum per day* in parenthesis was printed as, “2” when it should have been printed as, “1.” The August 3, 2022, correction also inadvertently removed the heading from the table in the introductory text of paragraph in 7 CFR 210.10. The [final rule correction \(87 FR 52329\)](#) corrects both errors.

Distribution of Pandemic EBT Food Benefits

Special food assistance benefits under the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program were distributed last week to 27,900 school children who qualified for P-EBT benefits during school year 2021–22 and who did not receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), or certain Medicaid (Husky A) benefits from the Department of Social Services (DSS). This distribution included students who attended a school participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This single benefit deposit covers the entire 2021–22 school year. A separate benefit deposit covering the 2022 summer period is expected later this year. P-EBT benefit amounts are determined based on each student’s absences due to COVID-19 in each month of school year 2021-22 and will therefore differ among recipients. The Pandemic EBT benefits are administered in Connecticut by DSS, in cooperation with the CSDE. For more information, as well as a comprehensive list of FAQs, visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/p-ebt>.

New Fruit Yield Data Added to the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-Based Tool

New food yield data has been added to the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based (FBG) Tool and Mobile App. Now available are the following fruit yield data: purees (banana, blueberry, and strawberry), frozen mango, and frozen berry blend. This is a continuation of yield data from phase two of the FBG Yield Study, with the first set of data (sorghum) being released in July 2022. Additional yield data releases will be coming soon. The Food Buying for Child Nutrition Programs is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>.

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Celebrate National School Lunch Week (NSLW) 2022: October 10-14, 2022

President John F Kennedy created NSLW in 1962 by to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child's life and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom. This year's NSLW is celebrated October 10-14, with the theme of "Peace, Love, & School Lunch." For more information, visit the School Nutrition Association's [NSLW](#) webpage.

Resource Roundup: School Nutrition Programs User IDs and Passwords for Accessing Connecticut's Online Application and Claiming System

The CSDE's document, [School Nutrition Programs User IDs and Passwords for Accessing Connecticut's Online Application and Claiming System](#), outlines the procedures for sponsors of the school nutrition programs regarding access rights to the CSDE's Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Sponsors are reminded of important security measures that must be in place. These include not sharing login ID and passwords and the separation of duties.

Good to Know

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month: September 25 through October 15, 2022

Celebrate the contributions of the Hispanic culture with the [USDA's nutrition education resources](#) available in English and in Spanish. FNS works to ensure all Americans has access to the nutrition needed for optimal health and well-being.

Free Milk Posters for Schools

This fall, Connecticut Dairy and New England Dairy have three new posters available which highlight the benefits milk. Complete this brief [order form](#) by **October 31, 2022** to order your free posters. Orders will ship to schools in early November. Funding for this project was provided by the CT Milk Promotion Board and New England Dairy.

Ending Hunger, Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity, and Reducing Diet-Related Diseases and Disparities

On Wednesday, September 28, 2022, the Biden-Harris Administration hosted the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. The Administration released a [National Strategy](#) with actions the federal government will take to drive solutions to these challenges. Visit [White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#) for more details about the conference.

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FDA Proposes to Update Definition for “Healthy” Claim on Food Labels

On September 28, 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a [proposed rule](#) to update the definition of the nutrient content claim “healthy.” The “[healthy](#)” claim can act as a quick signal on food package labels to help empower consumers, including those with lower nutrition knowledge, with information to identify foods that will help them build healthy eating patterns. This action is just one part of the agency’s ongoing commitment to reduce diet-related chronic diseases and advance health equity. For more information, visit <https://www.fda.gov/food/cfsan-constituent-updates/fda-proposes-update-definition-healthy-claim-food-labels>.

Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) Webinar: Understanding Cultural Foodways in School Communities, October 6, 2022

School meal programs serve many diverse communities with a variety of dietary needs and preferences. The school menu is a great place for students and families to see themselves reflected when meals relevant to their culture are included. Offering culturally inclusive menu items is also a way for students to learn more about their peers. This webinar (part one of a two-part series) will provide a roadmap for community outreach and engagement around religious and cultural foodways.

- Date and time: October 6, 2022, from 3:00-4:00 p.m.
 - Registration: https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3rYt9plRTZS9xGAJBXL1w.
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Team Nutrition Webinar: Meal Talk: Taste-Test Events: October 12, 2022

In honor of National School Lunch Week, USDA’s Team Nutrition initiative will present a Meal Talk webinar on Taste-Test Events. Attendees will hear about new ideas and tools for conducting taste-test events as well as strategies for incorporating taste-test results into menu planning.

- Date and time: October 12, 2022, from 3:00-4:00 p.m.
 - Registration: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/meal-talk-webinar-series>.
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FRAC Webinar: Serving Meals on Weekends and Holidays through the Afterschool Meal Program: October 13, 2022

Serving meals on weekends and holidays provides an important opportunity to reduce hunger while also supporting programs with additional reimbursement. This webinar will provide an overview of available options for serving meals on weekends and holidays during the 2022-23 school year, along with best practices for implementation

- Date and time: October 13, 2022, from 3:00-4:00 p.m.
 - Registration: <https://frac.org/events>.
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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray and Table Talk](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SLT/2022/SLT_10_05_2022.pdf.

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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

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