

The School Lunch Tray: February 15, 2023

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

- Instructions for Ordering USDA Foods for School Year 2023-24: Orders due March 10, 2023

Need to Know

- Governor Lamont Signs Legislation Extending Free School Meals and Protecting Connecticut's Fiscal Guardrails
- Charging of Meals and A la Carte by Adults is Not Acceptable
- Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12
- Resource Roundup: Signage Requirement for School Meals

Good to Know

- School Nutrition Foundation (SNF) Equipment Grant Applications: Due March 31, 2023
- New Resources from the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN)

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.



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Action Items

Instructions for Ordering USDA Foods for School Year 2023-24: Orders due March 10, 2023

The Connecticut Food Distribution Program's (FDP) catalog for USDA Foods for school year (SY) 2023-24 opens on **Thursday, February 16, 2023**, in Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM). The deadline to place orders in WBSCM is **March 10, 2023**. Recipient Agencies (RAs) that miss the ordering deadline will not receive USDA Foods in SY 2023-24.

Please carefully review and follow the CSDE's [Instructions for Ordering USDA Foods for School Year 2023-24](#). This document and the [USDA Foods Ordering Worksheets for School Year 2023-24](#) are available in the "[WBSCM](#)" section of the CSDE's FDP webpage. For questions, please contact the [FDP staff](#).

Need to Know

Governor Lamont Signs Legislation Extending Free School Meals and Protecting Connecticut's Fiscal Guardrails

Late yesterday afternoon (February 14, 2023), the Governor's office issued the press release below regarding the extension of free school meals for the remainder of this school year. The CSDE is working to issue guidance to school food authorities (SFAs) as soon as possible.

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Ned Lamont today posted the following video onto his social media channels (including [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)) announcing that he has signed legislation extending the free school meals program for the remainder of this school year and protecting the state's fiscal guardrails for the next several years:



The legislation is [House Bill 6671](#).

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Charging of Meals and A la Carte by Adults is Not Acceptable

The CSDE reminds SFAs that if the school food authority has the capacity to provide food service accounts for adults, adults are allowed to add money to their account. However, allowing adults to charge meals or a la carte foods and beverages without having money in their food service account to cover the cost of the food at the point of sale is not an acceptable use of the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) funds or school nutrition resources. Questions may be directed to your [school nutrition team member](#).

Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12

The CSDE recently updated the [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) to include links to the applicable modules of the CSDE's [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), revised USDA links, and content updates. Please discard any previous versions dated prior to February 2023 and replace with the updated versions.

Resource Roundup: Signage Requirement for School Meals

The CSDE reminds SFAs that each cafeteria serving line must have clear signage posted in a visible area that shows students how to select a reimbursable meal. Signage for schools that implement offer versus serve (OVS) must also indicate that students are required to take at least ½ cup of a fruit or vegetable (or combination) for a reimbursable meal. Signage must be posted near or at the beginning of the serving line, prior to the point-of-service, and located at all applicable points in the serving line where the food components are available.

Examples of signage are available in the “[Signage for OVS](#)” section of the CSDE’s OVS webpage. For additional guidance, refer to “Meal identification signage” in section 1 of the CSDE’s [Offer versus Serve for School Meals](#).

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Good to Know

School Nutrition Foundation (SNF) Equipment Grant Applications: Due March 31, 2023

The SNF has teamed up with industry partners to provide new kitchen equipment to deserving districts. Apply now for one (or more) of the five available grants through the [2023 SNF Equipment Grant Program](#).

- The [Winston Foodservice Equipment Grant](#) program will award up to 10 pieces of equipment, valued up to \$100,000, to one school district in need of improving its school meal kitchen facilities.
- The recipient of [Vulcan Equipment Grant](#) from ITW/FWE will be awarded up to \$50,000 worth of Vulcan equipment that suits a school district's needs.
- The [Hobart Equipment Grant](#), also from ITW/FWE, awards up to \$35,000 worth of Hobart equipment for a school district.
- The [Food Warming Equipment \(FWE\) Equipment Grant](#) awards the winning school district with multiple pieces of equipment, valued at up to \$25,000.
- The [Collection Equipment Grant](#) brings together Cambro Manufacturing, Innoseal Systems, Sterling Manufacturing and Sterno Delivery to help upgrade school kitchens with [multiple pieces of new equipment](#).

The deadline for all five grant applications is March 31, 2023.

Application link: <https://schoolnutritionfoundation.org/equipment-grants/>

New Resources from the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN)

Team Nutrition, in partnership with the CICN, recently announced several new culinary resources and events. The CICN is the division of the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) that provides school nutrition professionals with in-depth, hands-on culinary training and resources that are foundational for scratch-based cooking and the creation of culinary-inspired school meals that are healthy, flavorful, and student-approved.

- **Culinary Quick Bites:** Culinary Quick Bites is a short-format (15-minute) training series intended to be facilitated on-site by school nutrition professionals overseeing food production. Each lesson focuses on a specific culinary-related training topic and includes the lesson objective, a facilitation guide, an instructional video demonstrating the skill or task (with an ICN chef as the subject matter expert in the video), and an activity to help staff practice their culinary skills. Check out the new [Knife Skills Culinary Quick Bites](#) series on the CICN website.
- **Menus of Flavor:** The CICN recently released three new hands-on culinary trainings called Menus of Flavor. The [Menus of Flavor training series](#) is intended to teach foundational culinary skills to school nutrition professionals with a focus on flavor profiles of global

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cuisines. The three regions covered include Mediterranean Cuisine, Latin Flavors, and East and Southeast Asian Fusion.

- **Recipe Standardization Guide:** The USDA [Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](#) is a “how-to” guide on recipe standardization for school nutrition recipe developers. The guide is designed to be a complete source of information on recipe standardization from conception to implementation of a recipe.
 - **Grab & Go Recipes:** The CICN launched a series of twenty [Grab & Go recipe cards](#) featuring portable and appealing menu items that are simple to prepare and utilize a variety of USDA Foods. Each recipe card features standardized recipes in 50 and 100 serving quantities as well as visual step-by-step instructions for production of the recipe.
 - **CICN Culinary Webinar Series:** On March 2, 2023, the CICN will host their monthly webinar, *Culinary Quick Bites: Short-Format Culinary Trainings for School Nutrition Professionals*. This month’s webinar will focus on strategies for carving out training time with school nutrition staff and introduce the CICN's newest training resource, Culinary Quick Bites. Sign-up information will be available soon on the [CICN’s website](#).
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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/2023/SLT_02_15_2023.pdf.

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