

The School Lunch Tray: June 7, 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.

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- Table Talk is Taking a Summer Vacation
- Operational Memorandum No. 12-23: State Severe Need School Breakfast Program Grant for School Year 2022-23
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Good to Know

- Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Summer Learning Hub
- USDA Research Report: Child Nutrition Program Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic, March Through September 2020
- New Discover MyPlate: Nutrition Education for Kindergarten Videos

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

Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Sponsors Encouraged to Attend Annual Summer Meals Training Webinars

SSO sponsors are strongly encouraged to attend the CSDE's annual Summer Meal Programs training. This training will be held as a series of webinars on Thursdays from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Recorded webinars will be available for those that cannot attend live.

- **June 8, 2023:** Summer Meals Outreach
- **June 22, 2023:** Hold in event of USDA Updates

Registration is not required for SSO sponsors. To attend each training, use the TEAMS link below.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 273 960 499 287

Passcode: tK8s2c

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

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075,,128618960#](#) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 128 618 960#

For questions about Summer Meal Programs training, please contact caroline.cooke@ct.gov.

Request to Extend the NSLP and/or SBP into the Summer Months (July and August): Due June 10, 2023

Local educational agencies (LEAs) may serve reimbursable lunches and/or breakfasts through an extension of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) during the summer months (beyond June 30, 2023) if one of the following two criteria apply: 1) the school year is extended; or 2) an official required academic summer school program is in place.

LEAs requesting an extension of the NSLP and/or SBP during summer 2023 must consider the following:

- only students enrolled in the academic summer school program can receive meals;
- for students not directly certified, free and reduced-price meal applications must be approved to determine student eligibility;
- meals are claimed as free, reduced-price, or paid based on student eligibility;
- meals must be charged at the correct price (reduced price \$.30 breakfast or \$.40 lunch, district established paid lunch price);
- multiple meal distribution and non-congregate meals are **not** allowed;
- proper point-of-service meal counts are required (based on student eligibility);

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- sites approved to operate the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) are eligible to request an extension and can utilize their approved claiming percentages to claim meals; and
- School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds expire on June 30, 2023.

To be eligible to serve and claim reimbursable meals during summer due to an extension of the school year or a required academic summer school, **interested LEAs must submit an email requesting an extension of their NSLP and/or SBP** to Susan Alston at susan.alston@ct.gov by **June 10, 2023**. The e-mail must include: 1) the schools requesting the extension; 2) the reason for the extension, e.g., academic summer school; and 3) the start and end date of the program.

Note: To submit July and/or August claims for reimbursement for the approved sites and dates, the LEA must first have an **approved** school year (SY) 2023-24 Sponsor Agreement. The CSDE will be providing a future e-mail with instructions on updating the SY 2023-24 Sponsor Agreement. **The LEA must submit the online agreement for CSDE approval by July 30, 2023, to submit the July claim for reimbursement.**

Questions may be directed to your [CSDE school team member](#).

Final Reminder: 2023-24 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement Due July 1, 2023

All public schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must submit the annual HFC Statement in the CSDE's Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System) by **July 1, 2023**.

- Review the CSDE's [Instructions for Submitting Connecticut's Healthy Food Certification Statement for School Year 2023-24](#) for important information and specific steps for completing the 2023-24 HFC Statement in the CNP System. **Note:** The **claims preparer** must first enroll the district in the school nutrition programs for school year 2023-24 before one of the two **authorized signers** can complete the HFC application.
- The HFC application requirements are summarized in [Operational Memorandum No. 08-23: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\) Statement for School Year 2023-24](#). Guidance is available in the CSDE's recorded training module, [Completing the Application Process for Healthy Food Certification](#).

For additional information, visit the "[Apply](#)" section of the HFC webpage or contact Susan Fiore at susan.fiore@ct.gov.

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Final Reminder: 2023-24 Full-service Interschool Agreement Due July 1, 2023

Sponsors that sell USDA meals or Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) snacks to another district or school during school year 2023-24 must complete and submit an interschool agreement to the CSDE. These requirements are summarized in [Operational Memorandum No. 07-23: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2023-24](#).

- The **Full-service Interschool Agreement form** must be submitted to the CSDE by **July 1, 2023**.
- The **Recipient Site Vended Interschool Agreements** must be submitted to the CSDE at least two weeks before the start of the school year, but no later than **August 30, 2023**.

The interschool agreement forms are available under “I” on the CSDE’s [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant Opportunity: Due July 28, 2023

The CSDE is now accepting proposals for the **USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grants Request for Proposals (RFP)**. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 117-103) provided funds to state agencies to competitively award equipment assistance grants to eligible school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the NSLP. These funds will allow SFAs to purchase equipment to serve healthier meals that meet the updated meal patterns, improve food safety, and expand access. Total funds available are \$692,832. The CSDE will award grants of up to \$50,000 per SFA.

For this grant, the previous free or reduced-price meals percentage eligibility requirement has been eliminated. *All* SFAs participating in the NSLP are eligible to apply. Priority is given to schools that did not receive previous equipment grant funding under earlier USDA NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants.

The RFP document was attached to the CSDE’s e-mail from June 5, 2023 and is also available on the CSDE’s 2023 [Request for Proposals](#) webpage.

Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 28, 2023. Extensions will not be given. Submit the application **by e-mail** to Sean Fogarty at Sean.Fogarty@ct.gov.

For questions about the USDA NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants, please contact Sean Fogarty at 860-807-2103 or Sean.Fogarty@ct.gov.

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Need to Know

Table Talk is Taking a Summer Vacation

Table Talk will be taking a break during the summer months and will resume when schools are back in session. Have a safe and happy summer!

Operational Memorandum No. 12-23: State Severe Need School Breakfast Program Grant for School Year 2022-23

The CSDE's [Operational Memorandum No. 12-23](#) outlines the criteria for payment of the State Severe Need School Breakfast Program Grant and includes the list of school food authorities (SFAs) with sites that qualify for this grant. SFAs will receive approximately \$2,662 per eligible site. For questions about this information, please contact Susan Alston at susan.alston@ct.gov.

Summer Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

The CSDE and the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) are in the process of receiving approval to operate the Summer P-EBT in summer 2023. Please note that all NSLP participating schools must continue to accept NSLP applications after the end of the current school year through September 2, 2023. Households applying on or before June 30, 2023, must use the school year 2022-23 school meals applications and income eligibility guidelines when processing school meals applications for the purposes of P-EBT eligibility. Households applying on or after July 1, 2023, will use the SY 2023-24 school meals applications and income eligibility guidelines. The CSDE will be collecting the data in the fall for any students made newly eligible for Summer P-EBT between June 30, 2023, and September 2, 2023. Thank you for your continued commitment to your students.

Reminder: Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast

It is field trip season and SFAs are reminded that meals served on field trips must meet specific requirements to be reimbursable. SFAs must ensure that all school staff involved with field trips (including food service staff and non-food service staff such as teachers, teacher aides, and other applicable staff) understand and implement these requirements for offsite reimbursable meals. Refer to the CSDE's [Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#) for valuable information regarding allowable meal service methods and important tips for food safety and ensuring that meals are reimbursable, including point-of-service meal counts. **Note:** SFAs must have field trip standard operating procedures (SOPs) as part of the school's Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan.

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UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health Survey of Best Practices for Summer Meals Programs Outreach: Due June 22, 2023

The Rudd Center is conducting a [survey](#) on past and planned outreach efforts used to promote summer meals programs. The survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The Rudd Center will use this information to develop best practices for Summer Meals Program promotion. Please submit the survey by June 22, 2023.

Resource Roundup: CSDE's Training Program: What's in a Meal Module 10: Vegetables Component

This module is the tenth in the CSDE's *What's in a Meal* training program and reviews the requirements and crediting information for the vegetables component. Topics include the required daily and weekly servings, vegetable subgroups, juice limit, and the crediting requirements for different types of vegetables (vegetable juice, raw leafy greens, canned vegetables, hominy, dried vegetables, pureed vegetables, soups, mixed vegetables, vegetable and fruit mixtures, and vegetable flour pasta), and noncreditable vegetables. This module also describes resources for guidance and training on the vegetables component and includes a knowledge check on crediting vegetables. Access this module and the other What's in a Meal modules on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Good to Know

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Summer Learning Hub

The [CSDE Summer Learning Hub](#) is a place for K-12 students to find one or more adventures in the form of a challenge. These challenges give students engaging options and opportunities across many subjects and help sharpen knowledge important for academic success in the fall. Summer learning challenges are done in partnership with the local school district. The CSDE encourages students and families to check out all the Summer Learning Hub has to offer.

USDA Research Report: Child Nutrition Program Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic, March Through September 2020

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act gave the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) authority to issue nationwide waivers of Child Nutrition Programs requirements. This data collection fulfills states' reporting requirements and describes trends in program participation during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, March through September 2020. It is part of an ongoing study series examining CN program operations, repurposed to collect waiver reports from all states. For more information, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/pandemic-operations-march-sept-2020>.

New Discover MyPlate: Nutrition Education for Kindergarten Videos

The USDA's Team Nutrition initiative recently announced the addition of three videos to the Discover MyPlate: Nutrition Education for Kindergarten resource for teachers and families.

- **Discover MyPlate Training Video:** Learn about the *Discover MyPlate: Nutrition Education for Kindergarten* resource and its contents.
- **Discover MyPlate Reach for the Sky Music Video:** Dance along with this music video demonstrating movements to the *Reach for the Sky* song about the five food groups.
- **Discover MyPlate Look and Cook Recipes Video (English \ Spanish):** See how to prepare your favorite *Look and Cook* recipe, or check out all five!

More Discover MyPlate materials, including audio-described versions of these videos, are available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-nutrition-education-kindergarten>. For more information, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate>.



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, 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/SLT/2023/SLT_06_07_2023.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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