

The School Lunch Tray: January 31, 2024

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

- None

Need to Know

- 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
- Revised CSDE Resource: Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP
- USDA Webinar: Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meals Programs, February 13, 2024
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of January 2024 Purchases due February 16, 2024
- New Features and Food Yields in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based Tool
- Resource Roundup: Sample Letter to Request Food Safety Inspection

Good to Know

- USDA's Investing in America Signage Guidelines Toolkit
- New England Feeding New England Connecticut State Brief 2023

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.



Need to Know

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 03-2024 and SP 05-2024](#) provides guidance on the new regulatory requirements for non-congregate summer meal service in rural areas, as authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 ([PL 117-328](#)). This Act amended section 13 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 USC 1761, to include the authorization of a permanent, rural non-congregate meal service through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) which the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is extending to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO). Per the statutory requirement, on December 29, 2023, FNS published an interim final rule, [Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs](#). This rulemaking, effective December 29, 2023, codified the permanent rural non-congregate summer meal service for both SFSP and SSO, and created the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (summer EBT). While non-congregate summer meal service for rural areas was initially implemented through FNS guidance during summer 2023, that guidance is superseded by the interim final rule.

USDA Memo SFSP 04-2024 and SP 06-2024: Rural Designations in the Summer Meal Programs – Revised

[USDA Memo SFSP 04-2024 and SP 06-2024](#) provides revised guidance on rural designations in the SFSP and SSO. This memorandum is updated to include revisions to the definition of rural as provided in the interim final rule, [Establishing the Summer EBT Program and Rural Non-Congregate Option in the Summer Meal Programs](#). This memorandum supersedes SFSP policy memorandum SFSP 17-2015, Rural Designations in the Summer Food Service Program – Revised, April 21, 2017.

Revised CSDE Resource: Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP

A revised version (dated January 2024) of the CSDE's [Afterschool Snack Program Handbook](#) is available. This document has been updated to reflect additional guidance on co-mingled meal service and links to the CSDE's new [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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USDA Webinar: Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meals Programs, February 13, 2024

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Civil Rights Division will provide the training “Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meals Programs” on Tuesday February 13, 2024, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. This webinar will last approximately 1 hour and may include a Q&A opportunity at the conclusion of the training.

Registration is required for this event (at least 24 hours in advance): [Registration link](#)

Please log on at least 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the session as access to the training will be restricted 15 minutes into the session.

For questions regarding this webinar, please contact Regional Civil Rights Officer (RCRO) Stephen Miliano at 617-565-6424 or Stephen.Miliano@usda.gov, or Justice Parazo at 214-290-9837 or Justice.Parazo@usda.gov.

Automated Closed Captioning will be available during this meeting. Participants who require a different accessibility tool to participate in this meeting may contact FNS.HRD.ReasonableAccommodations@usda.gov for assistance at least 10 days prior to the training date.

Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of January 2024 Purchases due February 16, 2024

Districts that would like to receive reimbursement from their LFSIP funds allocation for purchases of locally grown or produced foods for the month of December 2023 must submit the [Monthly Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reporting Form - Phase 1](#). Purchases made in December 2023 should be reported on the form by Friday, February 16, 2024.

New Features and Food Yields in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based Tool

Two new features have been added to the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs \(FBG\)](#) Interactive Web-based Tool. Both features are available under the Tools menu on the toolbar.

- Interactive flow chart on using the preparation yield walks users through when to use the Preparation Yield factor in the Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW).
- An Ounces to Pounds Calculator allows users to easily convert ounces to pounds and pounds to ounces to make converting units simple.

New foods are available in the FBG: New additions consist of USDA Foods frozen mixed vegetables and a variety of meat items including 11-, 43-, and 48-ounce pouched tuna; boneless, skinless chicken thighs; ground mutton, mutton shoulder chops and stew meat; catfish fillets; and USDA Foods canned pork.

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Resource Roundup: Sample Letter to Request Food Safety Inspection

Section 9(h) of the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1758(h) requires that at least twice a year, schools must obtain a food safety inspection conducted by a state or local agency responsible for such inspections. When two health inspections are not conducted, the SFA is responsible for requesting the inspections and documenting these efforts (refer to the CSDE's [Sample Letter for Food Safety Health Inspection for the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#)). Retain a copy of the letter/email sent to the health department to document attempts to comply with this regulation.

Good to Know

USDA's Investing in America Signage Guidelines Toolkit

The USDA's [Investing in America Signage Guidelines](#) toolkit provides general guidelines for state partners to share with TEFAP Reach and Resiliency grantees and FY 2022 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance sub-grantees on how to display and use the Investing in America logo at sites and locations funded under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

New England Feeding New England Connecticut State Brief 2023

New England Feeding New England is a collaboration among New England state-level food system organizations. They are doing comprehensive work on identifying and addressing food insecurity by focusing on increasing local and regional production with a goal of 30 percent by 2023. Their recently released [New England Feeding New England Connecticut State Brief 2023](#) report provide information on food accessibility and insecurity.



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/2024/SLT_01_31_2024.pdf.

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3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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