

The School Lunch Tray: May 29, 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

- Reminder: Operational Memorandum No. 10-24: New Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Allowances for School Year (SY) 2023-24 Only – Offsetting Unpaid School Meal Charges
- Reminder: Operational Memorandum No. 11-24: Annual Application Process for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
- Reminder: 2024-25 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Grant Announcement: Applications due June 7, 2024
- Reminder: USDA Foods Update on Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) Login Transition to Login.gov

Need to Know

- Table Talk Tomorrow: Thursday, May 30, 2024
- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Information Session, Tuesday June 4, 2024, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Reminder: New Connecticut Local Food for School Incentive Program
- Resource Roundup: Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs

Good to Know

- None

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

Reminder: Operational Memorandum No. 10-24: New Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Allowances for School Year (SY) 2023-24 Only – Offsetting Unpaid School Meal Charges

[Operational Memorandum No. 10-24](#) was issued via email on Friday, May 17, 2024. This memo provides guidance for SY 2023-24 only allowing school food authorities (SFAs) that have an excess balance in the nonprofit school food service account to use those excess funds to eliminate the SFA's balance of unpaid school meal charges prior to June 30, 2024. For SFAs to participate in this opportunity, a PLE Exemption Request for Unpaid Meal Charges must be completed no later than **May 31, 2024**. Refer to [Operational Memorandum No. 10-24](#) for more information and the link to the exemption request.

Reminder: Operational Memorandum No. 11-24: Annual Application Process for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

[Operational Memorandum No. 11-24](#) outlines the annual application process for the CEP. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are eligible to participate in the CEP if the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) for the entire district, groups of schools, or an individual school meets or exceeds 25 percent.

The SY 2024-25 lists of eligible and near-eligible LEAs and schools are available on the [Eligibility](#) section of the CSDE's [CEP](#) webpage.

- [List of Eligible and Near-eligible Connecticut LEAs \(Districts\)](#)
- [List of Eligible and Near-eligible Connecticut Schools](#)

LEAs must formally apply for the CEP for school year (SY) 2024-25 if they are interested in participating in the CEP for SY 2024-25 and if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- LEAs/schools electing CEP participation for the first time;
- LEAs/schools in the mid-cycle of CEP participation that are requesting changes to their currently approved ISP;
- LEAs/schools that are currently in the fourth year of CEP participation with an ISP greater than or equal to 25 percent, and would like to start a new four-year cycle; and
- LEAs/schools currently in the fourth year of CEP participation with a new, calculated ISP greater than or equal to 15 percent, but less than 25 percent (eligible for one "grace" year based on the ISP as of April 1, 2024 of the current four-year cycle).

Note: LEAs and schools **must notify the CSDE no later than June 1, 2024**, if they intend to:

- formally apply for the CEP for the next school year;
- continue with their current ISP (for mid-cycle CEP participating LEAs and schools);
- recalculate their ISP;
- withdraw from the CEP and revert to the regular meal counting and claiming process; or

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- continue participating in CEP for one grace year (a fifth year) because the calculated ISP from April 1, 2024, is at least 15 percent, but less than 25 percent.

To notify the CSDE about the LEA/school's CEP decisions above, complete the [CEP in SY 2024-25 survey](#).

Reminder: 2024-25 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Grant Announcement: Applications due June 7, 2024

The CSDE's [FFVP Grant Announcement](#) provides information regarding the 2024-25 FFVP grant opportunity. The FFVP provides funding to serve a variety of free fresh fruit and vegetable snacks to all children in participating schools. **This grant funded program is different from the USDA Foods DOD program.**

The CSDE will accept completed applications online until close of business on **June 7, 2024**. For questions, please contact Andy Paul at andrew.paul@ct.gov or 860-807-2048, or Jen Bove at jennifer.bove@ct.gov or 860-807-2044.

Information Session: The CSDE held a [one-hour information session on the FFVP application process](#) via Teams on Friday, May 17, 2024. All potential applicants must have either attended or viewed this informational session as we addressed the definition of **elementary school** used for the FFVP.

Submission Process: The 2024-25 FFVP Applications must be completed and submitted in the Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs ([CNP System](#)). Applicants must have a user ID and password to access the system or connect with a district staff member who has current access. The [Instructions for Submitting the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program \(FFVP\) Grant Application](#) describes how to enter and submit the completed application.

- **Applicants must complete and upload the [Application Certification form](#).**
- Schools must be **elementary** schools to apply, which are defined as schools inclusive of any grade between kindergarten and grade 6 (e.g., Pre-K-6, K-12, and 5-8) where at least **50 percent** of the children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.
- The [FFVP Area Eligibility List](#) and [FFVP Site Eligibility List](#) are specific to the FFVP grant only, and will assist school food authorities in determining which schools are potentially eligible to participate in the FFVP.

For information on the FFVP, visit the CSDE's [FFVP](#) webpage. Applicants must review the USDA's [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Handbook](#) prior to completing the online application to ensure it meets the federal guidelines.

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Reminder: USDA Foods Update on Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) Login Transition to Login.gov

Registered WBSCM users have received emails regarding the upcoming transition from the WBSCM login to the Login.gov login. The eAuthentication (eAuth) Phase 1 transition to Login.gov went live as of September 12, 2023, which introduced the [new USDA eAuthentication Login page](#) and the new logon options using Login.gov credentials and multi-factor authentication (MFA) methods.

It is strongly recommended that you transition to Login.gov before you close your offices for summer break. All WBSCM customers and business partners with existing eAuth accounts have been prompted to switch to a Login.gov account every time they log in. These changes are being implemented to prepare users to fully transition by September 2024. At that time, Login.gov will be required to access USDA resources; users will not be able to access WBSCM using their current eAuth credentials.

More information on this transition is available on [the eAuth website](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) webpage](#)

Need to Know

Table Talk Tomorrow: Thursday, May 30, 2024

Join the CSDE's school nutrition programs staff tomorrow, Thursday, May 30, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. for this week's Table Talk. To submit questions in advance, visit <https://forms.office.com/g/GWS7DCbbg0>.

Registration is not required. Please use the link below to join Table Talk on Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams meeting

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, 327687577#](tel:+18608402075327687577) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 327 687 577#

[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

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Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Information Session, Tuesday June 4, 2024, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

This information session is for School Food Authorities interested in applying for CEP in SY 2024-25 and will answer general questions about CEP and review the CEP application process for school year 2024-25 as outlined in [CSDE Operational Memorandum 11-24](#). Registration is not required. Use the link below to join Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams meeting options:

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 247 653 331 926

Passcode: 23Tpn8

Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075,,581606343#](#) United States, Hartford

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 581 606 343#

Reminder: New Connecticut Local Food for School Incentive Program

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT COAG) continues to offer [The Connecticut Local Food for Schools Incentive Program](#) to provide reimbursement payments to eligible boards of education for the purchase of **locally sourced food** and **regionally sourced food** to be used in an eligible meal program. This program can be used for the Summer Food Service Program and the Seamless Summer Option as well as the upcoming 2024-25 school year.

Any eligible board of education interested in participating in the program must complete the [CT DOAG Microsoft Office form](#).

For questions and assistance, please contact the CT DOAG staff below.

- Hannah Carty at Hannah.Carty@ct.gov or 860-471-1620
- Cyrena Thibodeau at Cyrena.Thibodeau@ct.gov or 860-895-3094

Resource Roundup: Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs

Looking for menu planning resources? Visit the CSDE's [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. More links to websites and online resources for menu planning and food production are available in the CSDE's [Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs](#).

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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, 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_05_29_2024.pdf.

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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

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