

## The School Lunch Tray: June 5, 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**

- Final Reminder: 2024-25 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement Due July 1, 2024
- Reminder: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2024-25 Due July 1, 2024 (Full Service) or August 30, 2024 (Vended)
- Reminder: USDA Foods Update on Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) Login Transition to Login.gov
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of May 2024 Purchases due June 17, 2024

### **Need to Know**

- CSDE Summer Meals Training on June 6, 2024: Summer Meals Outreach
- Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) Launches in Late June
- Summer EBT Customer Service: 1-844-503-6871
- Important Information about Summer EBT for CEP Schools
- USDA Memo SP 18-2024, CACFP 06-2024, and SFSP 11-2024: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs
- USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- USDA Memo SP 22-2024, CACFP 08-2024, and SFSP 13-2024: Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- USDA Webinar on June 20, 2024: Expanded Geographic Preference Option in the Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Summer EBT Customer Service: 1-844-503-6871
- Reminder: Requirements for Water Sold in Schools (Plain Water, Sparkling Water, and Seltzer)
- Resource Roundup: New CSDE Resource: Recipes Using USDA Foods

### **Good to Know**

- Team Nutrition's School Meals Grab n' Go newsletter: May 2024
- Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) is Seeking School Meal Standards Resources
- FRAC Webinar on June 27, 2024: Gearing Up for Back to School with Afterschool Suppers and Snacks
- ICN Webinar Recording Available: Food Allergies: Ask Me Anything Webinar

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

#### Final Reminder: 2024-25 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement Due July 1, 2024

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, 2024**.

- Review the CSDE's [Instructions for Submitting Connecticut's Healthy Food Certification Statement for School Year 2024-25](#) 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 2024-25 before one of the two **authorized signers** can complete the HFC application.
- The HFC application requirements are summarized in [Operational Memorandum No. 07-24: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\) Statement for School Year 2024-25](#). 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](mailto:susan.fiore@ct.gov).

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### Reminder: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2024-25 Due July 1, 2024 (Full Service) or August 30, 2024 (Vended)

Sponsors that sell USDA meals or Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) snacks to another district or school during school year 2024-25 must complete and submit an interschool agreement to the CSDE.

- **Full-service Interschool Agreement form:** Due **July 1, 2024**.
- **Recipient Site Vended Interschool Agreements:** Due at least two weeks before the start of the school year, but no later than **August 30, 2024**.

The interschool agreement forms are available under “I” on the CSDE’s [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For more information, refer to [Operational Memorandum No. 06-24: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2024-24](#).

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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.

Transition to Login.gov is strongly recommended before closing 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](#).

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### Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of May 2024 Purchases due June 17, 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 May 2024 must submit the [Monthly Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reporting Form - Phase 1](#). Purchases made in May 2024 should be reported on the form by **Friday, June 17, 2024**.

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## Need to Know

### CSDE Summer Meals Training on June 6, 2024: Summer Meals Outreach

The CSDE strongly encourages SSO sponsors to attend the next session of the CSDE's annual Summer Meal Programs training on June 6, 2024.

- **Training:** Summer Meals Outreach
- **Date and time:** Thursday, June 6, 2024, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Registration is not required. Join the Teams trainings using the regular SLT Table Talk link below: The recorded webinar will be available for sponsors who cannot attend live. For questions about Summer Meal training, please contact [caroline.cooke@ct.gov](mailto:caroline.cooke@ct.gov).

#### Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 257 292 443 91

Passcode: Yizq7A

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

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075](tel:+18608402075), [834102498#](tel:+1834102498) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 834 102 498#

Phone Conference ID: 920 756 855#

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### Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) Launches in Late June

The Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) program will launch in late June with the first set of benefits reaching more than 270,000 children in Connecticut. The student level data that local educational agencies (LEAs) submit to the CSDE's Public Student Information System (PSIS) is what the CSDE and DSS will use to automatically issue benefits to eligible students. Although the CSDE conducts mailing address collections two times per year (fall and spring), there are students without addresses in PSIS that will still need to receive their entitled S-EBT benefits.

When the student does not have an address in the PSIS or on file with the Department of Social Services, the S-EBT card will be mailed to the student's latest school **district's central office address** in the student's name. When an LEA receives students' cards, the LEA must notify the households and coordinate with the households to retrieve their cards. The CSDE recommends that the LEA maintains a log documenting the following: when the card was received at the **central office**, when the LEA notified the parent or guardian that the S-EBT card arrived at the **central office**, who picks-up the card on behalf of the household along with the date and time. For additional information about S-EBT, please visit the [Summer EBT - S-EBT](#) webpage.

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### **Summer EBT Customer Service: 1-844-503-6871**

The Connecticut State Department of Social Services (DSS), in partnership with the CSDE, is administering the Summer Electronic Benefits (S-EBT) program starting in summer 2024. While most of the benefits will be issued in late June, families may have started asking questions now. For any inquiries, please direct families to call the toll-free hotline at Summer EBT Customer Service, 1-844-503-6871, or visit [Summer EBT - SEBT](#) where information will be made available on an ongoing basis.

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### **Important Information about Summer EBT for CEP Schools**

Sponsors of CEP schools are reminded to check the direct certification case management system weekly and conduct all matches accordingly. This is vital for ensuring that eligible students receive their Summer EBT benefits. It also helps reduce inquiries from parents and guardians to the district about why their child did not receive their benefits.

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### **USDA Memo SP 18-2024, CACFP 06-2024, and SFSP 11-2024: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs**

On May 14, 2024, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released [USDA Memo SP 18-2024, CACFP 06-2024, and SFSP 11-2024: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs](#). This memo provides notice to Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators regarding Sections 739, 747, 748, 769, and 770 of Division B of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42) (the Appropriations Act), enacted on March 9, 2024. This memorandum applies to local organizations operating the federal CNPs.

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### **USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans**

On May 14, 2024, the USDA FNS released [USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, and SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). This memo addresses the April 25, 2024, final rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans ([89 FR 31962](#)). It includes a chart with an overview of the current requirements, the changes in the final rule, which programs they impact, and the implementation dates.

This final rule finalizes practical, science-based, long-term school nutrition requirements based on the goals of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 (Dietary Guidelines), extensive stakeholder input, and lessons learned from prior rulemakings. This rule also includes minor updates to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to better align Child Nutrition Program (CNP) requirements. These updates represent continued progress toward supporting the nutritional quality of school meals, strengthening the CNPs, and advancing USDA's commitment to nutrition security.

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### **USDA Memo SP 22-2024, CACFP 08-2024, and SFSP 13-2024: Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans**

On Wednesday, May 22, 2024, the USDA FNS released [USDA Memo SP 22-2024, CACFP 08-2024, and SFSP 13-2024](#), *Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The Final Rule covers a broad range of Child Nutrition Programs provisions, including, but not limited to, the expansion of the geographic preference option. This memorandum explains the expanded geographic preference option, including the allowance of local as a specification. This guidance applies to schools, sponsors, and institutions participating in any Child Nutrition Program, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO).

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### **USDA Webinar on June 20, 2024: Expanded Geographic Preference Option in the Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans**

On Thursday, June 20, 2024, the USDA FNS Patrick Leahy Farm to School Team (USDA Farm to School Team) will host a webinar for farm to school partners, including Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators, on the expanded geographic preference option in the final rule. The final rule includes a small yet significant expansion of the geographic preference provision. Beginning July 1, 2024, the provision will permit CNP operators to use local as a specification when procuring unprocessed agricultural products. The USDA Farm to School Team will provide an overview to help farm to school partners share and learn about the expanded geographic preference option.

- **Date and time:** Thursday, June 20, 2024, from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- **Registration link:** [https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_qHI2cl11THCBXLblzVc0iA](https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_qHI2cl11THCBXLblzVc0iA)

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### **Reminder: Requirements for Water Sold in Schools**

Water sold in schools must meet the requirements of the [state beverage statute](#) and the USDA's [Smart Snacks nutrition standards](#), which are summarized below. There are different requirements for plain and flavored water (e.g., flavored sparkling water and flavored seltzer).

- **Plain water** (with or without carbonation) such as unflavored bottled water, unflavored sparkling water, and unflavored seltzer, may be sold to all grade levels in any portion size.
- **Flavored water** (with or without carbonation) belongs in the Smart Snacks category of “calorie-free, flavored water, with or without carbonation (no more than 20 fluid ounces)” [7 CFR 210.11(m)(3)(vi)] and must meet the restrictions below.

- **Elementary and middle schools:** Flavored water cannot be sold during the school day. Flavored water may be sold after the school day if it does not contain added sugars, sweeteners (including nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners), artificial sweeteners, or caffeine.
- **High schools:** Flavored water may be sold if it does not contain added sugars, sweeteners (including nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners), artificial sweeteners, or caffeine. The portion size limit is 20 fluid ounces.

For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools](#) and the [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

**Note:** Products that meet the state and federal requirements are on [List 21](#) of the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#). The "Notes" column of List 21 contains the following statement in red for all flavored waters: "Allowed for high schools only."

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### Resource Roundup: New CSDE Resource: Recipes Using USDA Foods

A new CSDE resource for USDA Foods is available, [Recipes Using USDA Foods](#). This document includes ideas to help menu planners use USDA Foods in recipes for the school nutrition programs.

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## Good to Know

### Team Nutrition's School Meals Grab n' Go newsletter: May 2024

The [May 2024 edition of Team Nutrition's School Meals Grab n' Go newsletter](#) features quick tips to deliver consistent nutrition education messages to children and their families through cafeteria, classroom, community, and home connections. Use these tips to help promote healthy eating and to qualify for a Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Recognition Award.

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### Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) is Seeking School Meal Standards Resources

The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) recently announced that their Child Nutrition Sharing Site (CNSS) is gathering submissions for a new section highlighting resources that support [USDA's updated school meal standards](#). State agencies, local Child Nutrition Programs, allied organizations, and CNP stakeholders may submit resources that support the updated meal standards. Just follow the quick and simple process outlined in the [CNSS Resource Submission Guide](#) to get started.

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### FRAC Webinar on June 27, 2024: Gearing Up for Back to School with Afterschool Suppers and Snacks

The Afterschool Nutrition Programs are important resources for helping to fill the nutrition gap that may exist for millions of children when the school day ends. As schools and community partners start to plan for back to school, afterschool suppers and snacks should be part of the conversation. Join FRAC for a refresher on the available program options, tips for getting started, partnership ideas, and strategies for increasing participation at existing afterschool meal sites.

- **Date and time:** Thursday, June 27, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
- **Registration link:** [https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_qHI2cl11THCBXLblzVc0iA](https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_qHI2cl11THCBXLblzVc0iA)

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### ICN Webinar Recording Available: Food Allergies: Ask Me Anything Webinar

The recorded version of the ICN's May 2024 webinar, [Food Allergy: Ask Me Anything!](#) is now available. In this webinar, panelists from FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education) and the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) address food allergy questions and concerns, and provide information about managing allergies, creating safe meals, and accommodating students.



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\\_06\\_05\\_2024.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SLT/2024/SLT_06_05_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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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