

# The School Lunch Tray: October 16, 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

- National Farm to School Month Continues: October 2024
- Updated CSDE Resource: Sample Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs
- Reminder: Authorized Signers for Medical Statements
- Mark Your Calendars! Schedule for Upcoming CSDE Office Hours
- Reminder: CSDE Procurement 101 Webinar Series: October 23 and 24, 2024
- Resource Roundup: CT Grown for CT Kids Week Tasting Market Farmer & Recipe Guide

## Good to Know

- Positions Available for Regional Farm to School Coordinators
- CT Grown for CT Kids Week Celebrations

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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## Need to Know

### National Farm to School Month Continues: October 2024

October is National Farm to School Month. Districts offering local foods are encouraged to highlight and celebrate all month long! Let the Farm to School Collaborative know about the great events planned throughout the month. Remember to send pictures and videos to [connecticutfarmtoschool@gmail.com](mailto:connecticutfarmtoschool@gmail.com) to share the wonderful food being served to students.

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### Updated CSDE Resource: Sample Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

The CSDE's resource, [Sample Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs](#), is updated to include language on fluid milk substitutes. The revised version is dated October 2024. This document provides a modifiable template that LEAs can use to establish a standardized process for meal modifications for disability or non-disability reasons in the school nutrition programs. Developing and implementing SOPs help ensure that all students with dietary restrictions receive reasonable modifications in accordance with the USDA regulations and federal nondiscrimination laws. For detailed guidance on meal modification policies and SOPs, refer to section 4 of the CSDE's [Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the "[What's Next](#)" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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### Reminder: Authorized Signers for Medical Statements

The USDA requires that medical statements must be signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. These are the only individuals authorized to sign a participant's medical statement for meal modifications. SFAs cannot accept medical statements signed by any other individuals.

**Note:** Effective July 1, 2024, the final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), **allows** SFAs to accept medical statements signed by registered dietitians to request meal modifications for participants whose disability restricts their diet, and **requires** that SFAs **must** accept medical statements from registered dietitians by July 1, 2025.

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### Mark Your Calendars! Schedule for Upcoming CSDE Office Hours

This is a reminder that the CSDE will be holding office hours to give SFAs the opportunity to ask questions about different areas relating to the school nutrition programs. Office hours will be held most **Mondays from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Please see the schedule and Teams link below:

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Date	Topic of the week
October 21	Certification and Benefit Issuance and Verification
October 28	Meal Counting and Claiming
November 4	Meal Components and Quantities, Offer versus Serve
November 18	On-site Monitoring, On-site Checklist
November 25	Civil Rights, Professional Standards, Local School Wellness Policy, Smart Snacks, School Breakfast Program, and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Outreach
December 2	Food Safety, Storage, Buy American
December 9	Preschool Meals, Meals in the Classroom
December 16	Afterschool Snack Program, Summer Meals Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

The Teams Meeting information is below. The same link will be used each week.

### Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 243 727 249 519

Passcode: vB3Kzq

### Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075, 42858510#](#) United States, Hartford

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 428 585 10#

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## The School Lunch Tray: October 16, 2024

### Reminder: CSDE Procurement 101 Webinar Series: October 23 and 24, 2024

The CSDE is pleased to present Procurement 101 Training. This virtual training will provide a comprehensive overview of the procurement requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. All school personnel with procurement responsibilities associated with the child nutrition programs are now required to attend annual procurement training per 7 CFR 210.21(h). The training will be conducted over two days on October 23 and 24, 2024 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. each day. Attendance at both sessions is required to complete the training.

**Registration:** **Registration is required.** Use the [CSDE Procurement 101 Training Registration Link](#) or QR code below to register by **Friday, October 18, 2024.**



**Questions:** Contact Andy Paul at [andrew.paul@ct.gov](mailto:andrew.paul@ct.gov) or Monica Pacheco at [monica.pacheco@ct.gov](mailto:monica.pacheco@ct.gov).

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### Resource Roundup: CT Grown for CT Kids Week Tasting Market Farmer & Recipe Guide

Middletown Public Schools, in conjunction with FoodCorps CT, and local farmers, celebrated CT Grown for CT Kids Week by hosting a kickoff event on October 7, 2024, at Beman Middle School in Middletown. The [Tasting Market Farmer & Recipe Guide](#) highlights of local farmers and recipes using locally grown produce. Thank you to FoodCorps CT and Middletown's food service department for sharing this great resource.

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## Positions available for Regional Farm to School Coordinators

Please see the attached document listing six openings for Regional Farm to School coordinators.

## CT Grown for CT Kids Week Celebrations

The CSDE greatly appreciates all the districts that celebrated Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week 2024. The pictures below are from Norwalk's celebration, which is one of the many events that took place throughout the state last week. The week kicked off with a press conference, local harvest lunch, and farmers market tasting at Beman Middle School in Middletown. Norwalk, Coventry, Stamford, Plainville, Danbury, East Hampton, Groton, and Vernon were just a few of the districts that held events; engaging with students, families, farmers, legislators, and the press. Students are enjoying local, nutritious, and delicious food and learning more about where their food comes from due to these efforts! Thanks to all the school food service directors, staff, and farm to school supporters who put in countless hours preparing, serving, and sharing these events in their communities.



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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's [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\\_10\\_16\\_2024.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2024/slt_10_16_2024.pdf).

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

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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## SIX (6) POSITIONS ANNOUNCEMENT

*(Accepting applications until October 31st, 2024*

*Interviews will be held as early as 11/7/24!)*

Title: **Regional Farm to School Coordinators** (part-time, average 25-30 hours per week)

Location: Hybrid. Remote work and field work visiting school districts and farms, plus weekly in-person meetings at Tolland County Extension Center in Vernon. In-person meetings will be rotated to other County Extension Centers as needed.

Commitment: 780 hours over 6 months (avg 25-30 hours/week); The position begins ideally in December 2024 and is for 6 months. Contracts will be renewed every 6 months based on performance. Funding is in place for this position until early spring 2027.

**UConn Extension is seeking to hire SIX Regional Farm to School Coordinators to assist with outreach and technical assistance to school districts across the state.** This work falls within UConn Extension's ongoing farm to school activities through its [Put Local On Your Tray Program](#).

Program Overview: UConn Extension has been engaged by CT State Department of Education to increase farm to school programs and activities in Connecticut school districts.

Geographic Regions - Each position will be dedicated to a geographic region of the state and will be responsible for up to 25-30 public school district assignments. Note, there may be school district assignments that fall outside the geographic region depending on need and balancing the workload for all six regional coordinators. Successful candidates will ideally be based in the region they are assigned. Over 2.5 years, the strategy is to foster productive relationships between each regional coordinator and their assigned districts.

### Responsibilities:

- Support assigned school districts in completing a Connecticut Farm to School Assessment
- By spring 2025, provide 3 hours of technical assistance to each assigned school district focused on utilizing local food incentives from federal and state sources to purchase local and regionally grown food.
- Starting in fall 2025, provide more intensive technical assistance (up to 12 hours) to a sub-set of school districts that self-identify as ready to move forward with increasing and integrating farm to school activities in their district.
- Provide documentation on technical assistance delivery, including frequency, dates and times of technical assistance, and follow-up needed.

- Coordinate and host monthly check-in meetings with cohort of assigned districts. Create agendas, gather meeting minutes, maintain and submit meeting collateral to project director.
- Coordinate farm field trips for school food directors, staff, educators and administrators.
- Conducting pre- and post-evaluation of participants to demonstrate increased knowledge commitment and action toward increasing farm to school activities.
- Collaborating with other Regional Farm to School Coordinators to share best practices, learnings and support each other in the work.
- Coordinate with Project Director to engage and schedule external enrichment providers to deliver services and training events in assigned districts.
- Work with Project Director, communications staff, and external partners to strengthen the visibility of the project for stakeholders.

Supervision: The position will report to Jiff Martin, Project Director, who directs several outreach and education programs in the field of food systems. Other team members include Becca Toms (Communications Coordinator) and Shannon Raider Ginsburg (Agriculture Technical Assistance Coordinator). A Co-Director will be in place by early 2025.

Compensation - \$27.00/hour. Timesheets are submitted every two weeks. This is a temporary, project-based position without benefits. Renewal of position is based on need and performance. Funding is currently in place until early spring 2027.

#### Required Qualifications:

- Demonstrates understanding of the opportunity to grow farm to school in Connecticut.
- Knowledge of state and federal policies that impact farm to school efforts, including state incentives and grant programs.
- Experience working in a school setting and interacting with students, teachers, administrators, and/or cafeteria personnel.
- Experience organizing events – including scheduling speakers, monitoring participant needs, managing registrations, conducting post-evaluation, and follow up.
- Past work demonstrates high degree of reliability and excellent organization skills
- Past work demonstrates ability to work independently and as part of team
- Demonstrates commitment to racial equity through continuous development and modeling inclusive behaviors and proactively managing one's bias
- Demonstrates excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to listen, empathize, and collaborate in teams and work toward shared goals
- Comfortable and proficient with most digital platforms (Zoom, Slack, Webex, Microsoft Office Suite)
- Comfortable taking photos and video for communication needs
- Having own transportation means in order to travel across a region for in-person delivery of technical assistance.
- Willing and able to travel to UConn Extension office in Vernon and other county offices as needed.

#### Preferred:

- Bilingual Spanish a plus



- Bachelor's Degree in the field of nutrition, public health, education or related field
- Demonstrates understanding of K-12 education system and its challenges in Connecticut
- Experience with different types of school settings, such as large vs small districts
- Experience working in school cafeteria settings and/or classroom settings
- Familiarity with function and role of state agencies, including CT Department of Agriculture and CT State Department of Education
- Experience in small scale farming (this can be demonstrated by past apprenticeships or farm jobs, as well as growing up on a farm or coming from a farm family)
- Experience with program evaluation methodologies
- Competency with Qualtrics or other survey tools
- Competency with social media for purposes of a project, organization or initiative
- Training in photography and video production

**To Apply:**

Send a resume and cover letter to [jiff.martin@uconn.edu](mailto:jiff.martin@uconn.edu) by October 31st at 5:00 pm. Please specify in your letter which region(s) of the state you would be willing to serve (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, Central). In the subject line of your email, please use: **APPLICANT FOR REGIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL COORDINATOR**

*Our work is more innovative and responsive when our team represents a diversity of perspectives and life experiences. People of color, people with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ+, and members of traditionally underrepresented populations are strongly encouraged to apply. UConn provides reasonable accommodations to employees as required by law. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation at any point in the employment process. UConn Extension is an equal opportunity employer.*