

# The School Lunch Tray: November 6, 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

- Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of October 2024 Purchases Due November 18, 2024

## Need to Know

- USDA SP 01-2025: Fluid Milk Requirements for School Meals
- USDA SP 02-2025: Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit Flexibility in the School Breakfast Program: Q&As for Program Operators
- USDA SP 04-2025: Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs
- Student Confidentiality and Email
- Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated November 6, 2024
- List of Connecticut Sponsors of the NSLP and SBP for School Year 2024-25
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Civil Rights Division (CRD) Recorded Language Access Training: How to Bridge language and Cultural Barriers with FNS Support
- Resource Roundup: Operational Memorandum No. 02-25: Local Food for Schools Incentive Program: Phase 2

## Good to Know

- USDA Webinar: Kosher & Halal Foods in Child Nutrition Programs, November 14, 2024
- USDA Invests \$46M in Efforts to Address Food and Nutrition Security
- Reminder: UConn Sustainability Survey: Assessing School Nutrition Sustainability Efforts in CT Schools

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.



# The School Lunch Tray: November 6, 2024

## Action Items

### Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of October 2024 Purchases Due November 18, 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 October 2024 must submit the [Monthly Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reporting Form - Phase 1](#). Purchases made in October 2024 must be reported on the form by **Monday, November 18, 2024**.

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## Need to Know

### USDA SP 01-2025: Fluid Milk Requirements for School Meals

[USDA SP 01-2025](#) updates and clarifies current guidance for fluid milk requirements in school meal programs following publication of the 2024 final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (89 FR 31962). This memo supersedes USDA Memo SP 29-2011: *Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk*, issued April 14, 2011. This memo also rescinds the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Instruction Number 783-7 REV. 1 *Milk Requirement – Child Nutrition Programs*, released January 24, 1995, which is obsolete. This memo is available in the “[School Nutrition Memos 2025](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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### USDA SP 02-2025: Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit Flexibility in the School Breakfast Program: Q&As for Program Operators

The 2024 final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (89 FR 31962), included an optional provision that continues to allow the substitution of vegetables for fruits at breakfast and provides schools with greater menu planning flexibility at breakfast as compared to the previous regulations. Prior to the 2024 final rule, regulations at 7 CFR 220.8(c) and (c)(2)(ii) permitted schools participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) to substitute vegetables for fruits at breakfast, provided that the first two cups per week were from specific vegetable subgroups: dark green; red/orange; beans, peas, and lentils; or other.

[USDA Memo SP 02-2025](#) provides updated guidance on the substitution of vegetables for fruits in the SBP. This memorandum supersedes USDA SP 06-2020: *School Breakfast Program: Continuation of the Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit Flexibility*, issued January 22, 2020. This memo is available in the “[School Nutrition Memos 2025](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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### **USDA SP 04-2025: Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs**

[USDA SP 04-2025](#) clarifies policy related to fees associated with electronic (online) payments in the school meal programs and ensures students who are determined eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits receive the benefits they qualify for without having to pay additional fees. Effective school year (SY) 2027-28, families with students eligible for free or reduced-price meals must not be charged any fees along with the cost of a meal, including fees for using electronic payment services.

While this memorandum clarifies prior guidance on this topic by focusing on fees incurred with electronic payments, nothing in this memorandum should be construed to suggest other fees associated with school meals are acceptable. Moreover, school food authorities (SFAs) should not construe this memorandum to suggest that fees should be shifted to, or increased for, students paying the full price for meals. This memorandum supersedes USDA Memo SP 02-2015: *Online Fees in the School Meal Programs*.

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### **Student Confidentiality and Email**

Due to confidentiality concerns, the CSDE reminds school food authorities (SFAs) that a student's personal identification information (i.e., student name, date of birth, address, etc.) cannot be emailed to the sponsor's assigned school nutrition team member. Questions regarding a child's free, reduced-price, or paid eligibility status should be sent **without indicating any personal information**. If further clarification is needed, the district can call their assigned school nutrition team member directly. Please share this information with all determining officials, direct certification contacts, and any staff member who may seek guidance from the Bureau of Child Nutrition regarding a child's eligibility for school meals or free milk.

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### Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated November 6, 2024

Updated lists of foods that comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) and beverages that comply with the state beverage statute are now available on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

- **New products** on the lists are indicated by pink highlighting on the manufacturer and product name.
- Items that have been **added or deleted** since the last update are listed on the CSDE's [Summary of Updates to Approved Food and Beverages](#). **Note:** This summary includes only the changes since the last update; it is not a complete listing of all allowable products. For the complete list, visit the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

HFC schools must check that commercial foods and beverages are listed before they are sold to students. For additional guidance, refer to [How to Evaluate Commercial Food Products for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) and visit the "[How To Evaluate Foods for CNS Compliance](#)" section of the CSDE's CNS webpage.

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### List of Connecticut Sponsors of the NSLP and SBP for School Year 2024-25

The CSDE's list of [Connecticut Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#) for school year 2024-25 is now available. This document is available on the CSDE's [Contact Information for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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### USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Civil Rights Division (CRD) Recorded Language Access Training: How to Bridge language and Cultural Barriers with FNS Support

This 53-minute USDA [Language Access Training](#) from September 2024 is designed to guide FNS-funded programs in serving the needs of their communities by presenting strategies for overcoming language barriers, leveraging the FNS language access framework, and offering practical tips to help navigate common challenges in multilingual environments. This webinar has also been added to "[Limited English Proficiency](#)" under the "School Nutrition Programs Civil Rights Requirements" section of the CSDE's Civil Rights for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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### Resource Roundup: Operational Memorandum No. 02-25: Local Food for Schools Incentive Program: Phase 2

[Operational Memorandum No. 02-2025](#) is now posted in the “Federal LFSIP Resources” section of the CSDE’s [Farm to School](#) webpage. As a reminder, this memo outlines important information and the funding allocation for phase 2 of the federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP). The LFSIP Phase 2 Application is due Thursday, November 14, 2024.

[The Put Local on Your Tray](#) website has resources to find, market, and serve local foods. The [Farm Directory](#) shows farmers throughout the state with contact information and the products they sell. Many have products available year-round.

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### Good to Know

#### USDA Webinar: Kosher & Halal Foods in Child Nutrition Programs, November 14, 2024

Does your Child Nutrition Program serve participants who follow kosher and/or halal diets? Join USDA to learn more about how kosher and halal foods fit into Child Nutrition Program meal patterns and how USDA Foods can help. USDA will also highlight how non-congregate waivers for Ramadan 2025 can support participants’ access to meals throughout Ramadan.

- *Date and time:* Thursday, November 14, 1:00-2:00 p.m.
- *Registration:* [Register for the Zoom webinar](#)

The webinar will be offered with closed captioning. Participants who require a different accessibility tool to participate may contact Sheila Kopczynski, FNS-RAC, [sheila.kopczynski@usda.gov](mailto:sheila.kopczynski@usda.gov) or 208-202-2811.

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#### USDA Webinar: USDA Foods 101 - Why Does it Matter to Me? November 20, 2024

The American Commodity Distribution Association (ACDA) and the School Nutrition Association (SNA) are co-hosting a webinar, USDA Foods 101 - Why Does it Matter to Me? This webinar will:

- provide an insightful overview of the USDA Foods program, which is instrumental in supporting healthy school meal programs;
- offers an understanding of how the USDA Foods program contributes to providing nutritious meals while maintaining a balanced budget for schools; and
- cover the history of the USDA Foods program and demystify the various acronyms and terms commonly used.

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Presenters will explain how to order and utilize USDA Foods efficiently, ensuring that schools can maximize the program's benefits.

- *Date and time:* Wednesday, November 20, 3:00 p.m.
- *Registration:* [Registration link](#)
- *1.0 SNA CEU:* Key Area 2000: Operations, Key Topic 2400: Purchasing/Procurement, Sub Topic 2430: USDA Foods/DOD/Diverted Foods

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### USDA Invests \$46M in Efforts to Address Food and Nutrition Security

On October 18, 2024, the [USDA announced an investment of more than \\$46 million in projects aimed to tackle food and nutrition insecurity in under-served communities](#), as well as support healthy diets by providing access to fruits and vegetables for eligible families. These funds support efforts across the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) and Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP).

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### Reminder: UConn Sustainability Survey: Assessing School Nutrition Sustainability Efforts in CT Schools

Ellen Shanley, the Dietetics Director in the Department of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Connecticut, is working with UConn Graduate students to conduct a research study to determine how CT schools are improving their carbon footprint. UConn is asking food service directors to participate in this study by filling out the [Assessing School Nutrition Sustainability Efforts in CT Schools questionnaire](#). The questionnaire should take less than 30 minutes to complete. Please direct any questions to [ellen.shanley@uconn.edu](mailto:ellen.shanley@uconn.edu).

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### MyPlate's New Collection of Free Food Photography

The USDA's MyPlate has a new [Photo Gallery](#). This collection of free food photography features 100 high resolution images of MyPlate inspired meals representing African; Asian and Pacific Islander; Haitian and Jamaican; Latin American and Hispanic; Mediterranean; Middle Eastern; Native American and Alaskan Native; and Southern cuisines. These images are intended to be used in communicating nutrition education messages.

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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\\_11\\_06\\_2024.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2024/slt_11_06_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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