

The School Lunch Tray: January 15, 2025

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

- Onsite Monitoring for School Year 2024-25 Must be Completed by February 1, 2025

Need to Know

- Direct Certification Web Application is Not Operating
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Phase 2
- Save the Date: Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website
- Updated CSDE Webpage: Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs
- Updated CSDE Webpages: Claim Submission Schedule, Income Guidelines, and Reimbursement Rates
- Resource Roundup: CSDE's Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs webpage

Good to Know

- USDA Webinar: Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting
- Chill Out with Cold Milk Cooler Giveaway Deadline: February 28, 2025

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

Onsite Monitoring for School Year 2024-25 Must be Completed by February 1, 2025

The onsite monitoring requirements for school year 2024-25 for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), and Food Service Management Company (FSMC) operations must be completed by **February 1, 2025**. All monitoring forms are available under "[Monitoring Forms](#)" on the CSDE's Forms for School Nutrition Programs webpage, and the applicable sections of each webpage indicated below.

Onsite Monitoring of the NSLP and SBP

Section 7 CFR 210.8(a)(1) requires that each school food authority (SFA) with more than one school must perform no less than one on-site review of the NSLP's and SBP's counting and claiming system, including the general areas of review for each school under its jurisdiction. While all schools participating in the NSLP must be reviewed annually, a minimum of 50 percent of schools operating the SBP must be monitored annually, with every SBP school monitored at least once every two years.

All sites being claimed for federal reimbursement must be included in the onsite review process (i.e., schools that participate via an interschool agreement with another SFA). The annual on-site reviews must take place **prior to February 1** of each school year. If the review discloses problems with a school's meal counting and claiming procedures or general review areas, the SFA must ensure that the school implements corrective action, which includes conducting a follow-up on-site review within 45 days of the original review, to determine that the corrective action resolved the problems.

Onsite monitoring forms for the NSLP ([On-site School Review Checklist for the NSLP](#)) and SBP ([On-site School Review Checklist for the SBP](#)) are available in the "[Monitoring Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs website.

Onsite Monitoring of the ASP

Sponsors that participate in the ASP must review each ASP a minimum of two times each year. The reviews must assess each site's compliance with the appropriate USDA meal pattern (grades K-12 and preschoolers) and counting and claiming procedures.

- **First review:** The SFA must complete the first review within the first four weeks of ASP program operation each school year.
- **Second review:** The SFA must complete a second review sometime during the remainder of the time that the ASP is in operation.

The SFA must keep signed and dated copies of the completed on-site monitoring forms on file, including detailed findings and corrective action. If problems are found during the reviews, the SFA must assign corrective action and conduct at least one follow-up review to ensure that corrective

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action has been implemented. The CSDE's [ASP Onsite Monitoring Form](#) is available in the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's [ASP](#) webpage.

Onsite Monitoring of FSMC Operations

Section 7 CFR 210.16(a)(3) requires sponsors that contract with a FSMC to monitor the food service operation through periodic on-site visits. SFAs must monitor each site at least twice per school year. The monitoring process must include completing the CSDE's monitoring form, or a form approved by CSDE. This requirement is in addition to the SBP/NSLP on-site monitoring requirement (mentioned above) which must be completed prior to February 1. SFAs may choose to complete one FSMC monitoring visit at the same time as the NSLP visit. Both FSMC on-site monitoring visits must be completed prior to the end of the school year. Completing the monitoring visits and forms are the SFA's responsibility.

For audit purposes, the SFA must keep signed and dated copies of the completed on-site monitoring forms on file, including detailed findings and corrective action. This document will be requested by the CSDE during a FSMC Monitoring Review or full Procurement Review. The CSDE's [School Food Authority/Food Service Management Company Monitoring Form](#) is available under "[Monitoring](#)" in the "Contracts in School Nutrition Programs" section of the CSDE's FSMC webpage.

Need to Know

Direct Certification Web Application is Not Operating

The direct certification web application is experiencing technical difficulties and the match for this week was not successful. The CSDE IT department hopes to have the web application operating for next week.

Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Phase 2

The CSDE is pleased to announce [LFSIP Phase 2 reimbursement allocations](#) for school food authorities (SFAs) that elected to participate. The goal of Phase 2 is to engage with socially disadvantaged or small business producers to establish a sustainable, long-term procurement relationship. Phase 2 participants will receive personalized support, training, and guidance from the newly launched Regional Farm to School Coordinators as well as the consultants at CSDE, and staff at the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, and the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension. A Regional Farm to School Coordinator will reach out to you in the next few weeks to provide technical assistance and support.

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Save the Date: Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website

On February 6, 2025, from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., the University of Connecticut Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health will conduct a webinar on their new WellSAT website. More details are coming soon.

As a reminder, the USDA's final rule, [Local School Wellness Policy \(LSWP\) Implementation Under the HHSFKA of 2010](#), requires that each local LEA must complete an assessment of their LSWP at least once every three years. The first LSWP assessment in CT was required by June 30, 2022. The second triennial assessment is due June 30, 2025. The LSWP Triennial Assessments are completed on the Rudd Center's WellSAT webpage.

Updated CSDE Webpage: Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

The CSDE's [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage has been updated for easier access to relevant information. In addition to the Overview and Contact sections, the left navigation bar topics now include Food Allergies, Milk Substitutes, Guidance for Special Diets, Medical Statements, Policy for Meal Modifications, and Laws/Regulations. The CSDE's meal modifications resources (guide, handouts, and forms) found on these pages are also revised (dated January 2025) to include the new links.

Updated CSDE Webpages: Claim Submission Schedule, Income Guidelines, and Reimbursement Rates

The CSDE's webpages below have been updated to include separate navigation sections for the different Child Nutrition Program, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), CACFP, school nutrition programs, and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

- [Claim Submission Schedule for Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Reimbursement Rates for Child Nutrition Programs](#)

Updates on these webpages also include additional guidance and resources.

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Resource Roundup: CSDE's Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs webpage

The CSDE's [Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage is the go-to resource for finding links to state and federal laws and regulations that govern the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, competitive foods in schools, and nutrition-related requirements. This webpage navigation is newly updated to make it easier to find key topics, including State Statutes and Regulations for Foods and Beverages, USDA Legislation and Regulations, and the USDA final rules for each Child Nutrition Program (CACFP, school nutrition programs, and SFSP).

Good to Know

USDA Webinar: Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is hosting a webinar to provide an overview of the recent request for information regarding grain-based desserts and high-protein yogurt crediting. (For more information, refer to the [School Lunch Tray from December 23, 2024](#).)

Date and time: Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 3:00 to 3:45 p.m.

Register in advance: [ZOOM REGISTRATION LINK](#)

FNS plans to share webinar recordings in the future for those unable to attend the live sessions.

Chill Out with Cold Milk Cooler Giveaway Deadline: February 28, 2025

Ensure students have the best tasting milk possible by submitting a [Chill Out with Cold Milk temperature survey](#) for a chance to win a free milk cooler. Each participating school that submits a survey will also receive two "Grab a Milk!" magnets for their school milk coolers. Surveys can be submitted online or emailed to info@newenglanddairy.com by 11:59 p.m. on February 28, 2025. Full details and official contest rules are available on New England Dairy's [Chill Out with Cold Milk](#) webpage. Funding for this program provided by Connecticut Milk Promotion Board and New England Dairy.

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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/2025/slt_01_15_2025.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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