

## The School Lunch Tray: January 22, 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

- Required Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website, February 6, 2025

### Need to Know

- Updates on USDA's "And Justice for All" (AJFA) Posters
- Updated USDA Foreign Translation Free and Reduced Applications
- Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Module 6 Meal Pattern Documentation Part B - Crediting Commercial Processed Foods and Module 11 Grains Component
- Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for the Preschool Meal Patterns
- Updated CSDE Crediting Handouts for K-12 and Preschool
- USDA Product Information Sheet and USDA Foods Database Survey: Deadline April 18, 2025
- Resource Roundup: Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes

### Good to Know

- USDA Team Nutrition Webinar: Reducing Sodium in School Meals, February 20, 2025
- 2025-26 Connecticut Farm to School Institute: Application Deadline is February 12, 2025
- March is National Nutrition Month
- New England Dairy Webinar: Dairy Allergy versus Lactose Intolerance Webinar, February 27, 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

#### **Required Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website, February 6, 2025**

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. Every NSLP sponsor is obligated to have someone attend.

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 second triennial assessment is due June 30, 2025, and is conducted using WellSAT.

This webinar will occur during the Table Talk time slot. 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,,920756855# United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 920 756 855#

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

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

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## Need to Know

### Updates on USDA's "And Justice for All" (AJFA) Posters

The guidance below summarizes important updates regarding the USDA's AJFA posters. School food authorities (SFAs) may download the posters at the link below. The posters are currently unavailable for order. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will notify state agencies when the posters are ready to be distributed to SFAs.

#### 1. Acceptable Posters and Where to Obtain

State and local agencies may continue to display the 2019 *And Justice for All* (AJFA) poster or the current AJFA posters for "All Other Nutrition Assistance Programs" (AD-475-A Green). The current posters are available on the FNS [And Justice for All Posters \(Guidance and Translations\)](#) website.

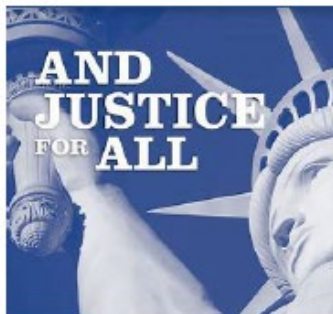
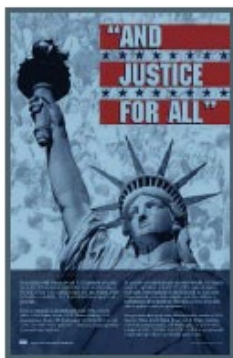


#### All Other FNS Nutrition Assistance Programs (AD-475A)

This is the Special Nutrition and Safety (SNAS) and Child Nutrition (CN) Programs version that should be used in offices, schools, and other sites that administer Special Nutrition Programs (including WIC).

#### 2. Posters that are Not Acceptable/Out of Compliance

- A state or local agency that displays a AJFA poster with the Statue of Liberty (see images below) will have a noncompliance finding during an Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs,
- These AJFA posters should not be printed from other sites or images available on the Internet.



#### 3. Other Updates

- AJFA poster printing is pending USDA clearance.
- State agencies will be notified when FNS is ready to begin ordering new posters and the process.
- SFAs should contact their [CSDE school nutrition team member](#) with any questions.

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- AJFA posters are currently not available for order through FNS. Guidance will be provided when the posters are available.
- The CSDE's stock of AJFA posters is currently depleted.

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### Updated USDA Foreign Translation Free and Reduced Applications

The USDA FNS announced that the following translations for the School Meals Application Prototype and Instructions are now available in the languages below.

- Turkish: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Turkish](#)
- Pashto: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Pashto](#)
- Hebrew: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Hebrew](#)
- Haitian Creole: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Haitian Creole](#)
- Farsi: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Farsi](#)
- Somali: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Somali](#)
- Japanese: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Japanese](#)
- Italian: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Italian](#)
- Amharic: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Amharic](#)
- Tagalog: [School Meals Model Application Materials in Tagalog](#)

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### Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Module 6 Meal Pattern Documentation Part B - Crediting Commercial Processed Foods and Module 11 Grains Component

The CSDE is in the process of updating [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) for school year 2024-25, to reflect the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), new content and resources, updated links, and the CSDE's new logo. The modules below are now available on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- **Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation, Part B - Crediting Commercial Processed Foods:** This module reviews the documentation requirements for crediting commercial processed products in the NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool, including an introduction to crediting foods, crediting documentation for commercial processed foods, i.e., Child Nutrition (CN) labels and product formulation statements (PFS), key resources for guidance and training on crediting documentation, and a knowledge check on how to review the creditable ingredients in a PFS.

**Note:** Unlike the other What's in a Meal Modules (which apply only to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12), module 6 parts A and B apply to the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal

patterns for grades K-12 and preschool. The menu documentation requirements are the same for all grades and all school nutrition programs.

- **Module 11: Grains Component:** This module reviews the requirements and crediting information for the grains component for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 including the required daily and weekly servings, allowable grains and grain products, creditable grain ingredients, how to identify whole and enriched grains, the crediting requirements for different types of grains (breakfast cereals, commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, and grain foods made from scratch), restrictions for crediting grain-based desserts, and key resources for guidance and training on the grains component.

The What's in a Meal updates are occurring in stages. The CSDE will notify SFAs as additional modules are released. All updated modules indicate "Updated for School Year 2024-25" in the description.

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### Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

The CSDE's [Menu Planning Guidance Series for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) is updated (January 2025) to reflect the new links to the CSDE's recently updated webpages.

- Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program
- Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Guide to Menu Documentation for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Guide to the Meal Service Requirements for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

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### Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for the Preschool Meal Patterns

The CSDE's [Menu Planning Guidance Series for the Preschool Meal Patterns](#) is updated (January 2025) to reflect the new links to the CSDE's recently updated webpages.

- Guide to Meeting the Preschool Meal Patterns and Crediting Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs
  - Guide to Meal Service Requirements for Preschoolers in the School Nutrition Programs
  - Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs
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### Updated CSDE Crediting Handouts for K-12 and Preschool

The CSDE's crediting handouts and resource for the school nutrition program (grades K-12 and preschool) are updated t (January 2025) to reflect the new links to the CSDE's recently updated webpages. These documents are available on the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage, under the applicable section for each meal component.

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### USDA Product Information Sheet and USDA Foods Database Survey: Deadline April 18, 2025

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is collecting voluntary feedback on their resources for USDA Foods in Schools products, including the [USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets](#) and [USDA Foods Database](#). FNS seeks to better understand how these resources are currently utilized and identify potential opportunities for improvement. Information from this survey will be used internally for general service improvement, to help determine the future of these two resources, and ensure USDA Foods product information is presented in a way that is most useful to recipients.

- **Survey link:** [Product Information Sheet and USDA Foods Database Survey](#).
- **Deadline:** April 18, 2025.

If multiple individuals use these resources, the SFA may submit more than one response. If the SFA contracts with a food service management company (FSMC), please forward to the FSMC to complete.

For questions, please contact [USDAFoods@usda.gov](mailto:USDAFoods@usda.gov).

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### Resource Roundup: Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes

Children younger than age 4 are at the highest risk of choking while eating. SFAs should consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what foods to offer in preschool menus and modify menus as appropriate. Avoid foods that are choking hazards (such as small marble-sized, sticky, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole). Prepare foods so they are easy for young children to chew and swallow (such as changing the shape, size, and texture of foods). For example, whole round or tube-shaped foods like hotdogs are a choking hazard and must be cut into short strips so they are easy for young children to chew and swallow. For guidance on reducing choking risk, refer to the USDA's resource, [Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes](#), and visit the "[Choking Prevention](#)" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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### Good to Know

#### **USDA Team Nutrition Webinar: Reducing Sodium in School Meals, February 20, 2025**

This Meal Talk webinar provides guidance on reducing sodium in school meals to meet the Final Rule, “Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.” Healthy Meals Incentives Lunch Trailblazer Awardees from Prescott School District 402-37 in Washington and Urbandale Community School District in Iowa will share innovative ideas and best practices in reducing sodium and engaging students in menu planning. In addition, participants will learn about USDA’s Team Nutrition resources, the Institute of Child Nutrition’s Shaking It Up! resources, and the Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards.

On Thursday, February 20, USDA’s Team Nutrition Initiative will present a Meal Talk webinar on Reducing Sodium in School Meals to meet the Final Rule, “Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.”

- **Date and time:** Thursday, February 20, 2025, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- **Registration:** [Information and registration](#)
- **USDA Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs:** Key Area 1000: Nutrition and Training Topic 1100: Menu Planning.
- **Questions:** [TeamNutrition@USDA.gov](mailto:TeamNutrition@USDA.gov)
- **Learning Objectives:**
  1. Identify strategies to reduce sodium in school meals that reflect local food preparation practices and taste preferences.
  2. Summarize best practices for incorporating menu items to reduce sodium in school meals.
  3. Discuss how resources from Team Nutrition and the Institute of Child Nutrition can help improve the nutritional quality of school meals and meet sodium limits.

This webinar will be offered with closed captioning. Participants who require a different accessibility tool to participate in this webinar should mail [TeamNutrition@USDA.gov](mailto:TeamNutrition@USDA.gov) by February 6.

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### **2025-26 Connecticut Farm to School Institute: Application Deadline is February 12, 2025**

The Connecticut Farm to School Institute offers a comprehensive, year-long professional development opportunity for school or district teams in Connecticut. This program aims to foster collaboration, enhance skills, and develop a strategic Farm to School action plan. With the guidance of a dedicated coach, participating teams will implement their plans throughout the school year, strengthening their ability to drive meaningful and sustainable change in classrooms, cafeterias, and communities.

Since its inception in 2022, the Connecticut Farm to School Institute has successfully expanded, increasing the number of schools engaged in the program. Thanks to the generous funding provided by the USDA's 2024 Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Award, the institute is expanding to include six Connecticut teams in 2025-26.

**New this year:** Alumni teams are encouraged to apply. Schools or districts that participated in the Northeast Farm to School Institute prior to 2021 are eligible to apply for the 2025-26 Connecticut Farm to School Institute, especially those that have experienced changes in staff or leadership.

The 2025-26 Connecticut Farm to School Institute will commence with a two-day Summer Retreat at [Auerfarm](#) in Bloomfield on June 17-18, 2025. Full participation in both days of the retreat is required for all team members.

- Application: [CT FTS Institute](#)
- [Preview of Application Questions](#)
- Deadline: February 12, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.
- Video: [CT Farm to School Retreat 2023-24](#)
- Questions: [institute@ctfarmtoschool.org](mailto:institute@ctfarmtoschool.org)

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### **March is National Nutrition Month**

[National Nutrition Month®](#) is an annual campaign established in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND). This year's theme is "Food Connects Us." The AND offers [National Nutrition Month campaign resources](#) on their website.

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### **New England Dairy Webinar: Dairy Allergy versus Lactose Intolerance Webinar, February 27, 2025**

Lactose Intolerance and dairy allergies are different conditions that often get confused with each other. Lactose intolerance affects millions of people and is far more prevalent than dairy allergies. This webinar will explore the difference between the two and provide tips on creating lactose friendly menus for the school meal programs. All school nutrition professionals that register in CT, MA, NH, RI & VT will receive a free lactose intolerance toolkit for their cafeteria.

- Date and time: February 27, 2025, 2:00 to 2:30 pm
  - Registration: [Information and registration](#)
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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\\_01\\_22\\_2024.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2024/slt_01_22_2024.pdf).

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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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