

## The School Lunch Tray: February 26, 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

- Final Reminder: Required Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website, February 27, 2025 - *USDA Triennial Assessment due June 30, 2025*
- Reminder: USDA Foods for School Year 2025-26: Orders due March 7, 2025; New Office Hours Session on March 5, 2025
- Operational Memorandum No. 03-25: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2025-26
- New Federal LFSIP Reimbursement Request Form (Phase 1 and/or Phase 2)

### Need to Know

- Operational Memorandum No. 03-25: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2025-26
- USDA Memo SP 07-2025 and CACFP 07-2025: Requirement to Accept Medical Statements from Registered Dietitians for Schools and Child and Adult Care Institutions and Facilities
- Updated "Medical Statements" Section of CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs Webpage
- Data on HFC Participation for SY 2024-25
- Updated CSDE Webpage: Competitive Foods in Schools
- Updated CSDE Resources on State and Federal Laws for Competitive Foods
- Resource Roundup: Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools

### Good to Know

- None



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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

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#### **Final Reminder: Required Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website, February 27, 2025 - USDA Triennial Assessment due June 30, 2025**

On February 27, 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 HHFKA 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

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#### **Or call in (audio only)**

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Phone Conference ID: 920 756 855#

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### **Reminder: USDA Foods for School Year 2025-26: Orders due March 7, 2025; New Office Hours Session on March 5, 2025**

The Connecticut Food Distribution Program's (FDP) catalog for USDA Foods for school year (SY) 2025-26 opened on **Friday, February 14, 2025**, in Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM). The deadline to place orders in WBSCM is **Friday, March 7, 2025**. Recipient Agencies (RAs) that miss the ordering deadline will not receive USDA Foods.

Please carefully review and follow the CSDE's [Instructions for Ordering USDA Foods for School Year 2025-26](#). This document and the [USDA Foods Ordering Worksheets for School Year 2025-26](#) are available in the "[WBSCM](#)" section of the CSDE's FDP webpage. For questions, please contact the [FDP staff](#).

The FDP will conduct an additional [USDA Foods office hours session](#) on **Wednesday, March 5, 2025**, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please come prepared with questions about your USDA Foods order.

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### **Operational Memorandum No. 03-25: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2025-26**

Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that every year, each local board of education or governing authority (BOE) for all public schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must certify whether all food items sold to students will or will not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. This includes all public schools, regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS), charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, and endowed academies.

[Operational Memorandum No. 03-25: Requirements for Submitting the HFC Statement for School Year 2025-26](#), provides the required motion language and summarizes the **steps that districts must take now** to ensure the accurate and timely submission of the 2025-26 HFC Statement by the deadline of **July 1, 2025**.

All BOEs **must** vote on whether to participate in the healthy food option of HFC.

- If the BOE votes "yes" to the healthy food option, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is **required**. The BOE may choose to vote on whether to allow beverage exemptions.
- if the BOE votes "no" to the healthy food option, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is **not** required. The BOE may choose to vote on whether to allow beverage exemptions.

The "[Annual HFC Application](#)" section of the CSDE's HFC webpage provides information on the required steps for submitting the annual HFC Statement. The CSDE's 21-minute video, [Completing the Application Process for HFC](#), provides detailed guidance on the HFC application process.

### New Federal LFSIP Reimbursement Request Form (Phase 1 and/or Phase 2)

The CSDE has created a new Federal LFSIP Reimbursement Request Form to streamline the process for reimbursement and reporting allowable purchases. The current Phase 1 reporting form has been inactivated. The remainder of Phase 1 purchases should be entered into the new form.

School food authorities (SFAs) that are ready to request reimbursement for Phase 2 purchases will also utilize this new form. SFAs that submitted Phase 2 purchases on the old reporting form, will need to resubmit those purchases into the new form to receive reimbursement. All Phase 2 purchases must target socially disadvantaged and/or small business farmers, producers, growers, and ranchers.

- **Form:** [Federal LFSIP Reimbursement Request Form \(Phase 1 and/or Phase 2\)](#)

**“Local and regional food”** is defined as food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates and the point of sale to the end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same state or territory. Schools are strongly encouraged to purchase Connecticut grown food when possible.

**“Small business”** is defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration as a business that is a for-profit business of any legal structure; independently owned and operated, not nationally dominant in its field and physically located and operated in the U.S. or its territories.

**“Socially disadvantaged”** is defined by USDA as a member of a socially disadvantaged group (SDG), whose members have been subject to discrimination on basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, gender identity, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program.

For more information, please refer to the resources below.

- [Operational Memorandum No. 14-23](#): Local Food for Schools Incentive Program
  - [Allowable and Unallowable Costs for the LFSIP](#)
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### Need to Know

#### **USDA Memo SP 07-2025 and CACFP 07-2025: Requirement to Accept Medical Statements from Registered Dietitians for Schools and Child and Adult Care Institutions and Facilities**

On December 30, 2024, the USDA published [USDA Memo SP 07-2025 and CACFP 07-2025: Requirement to Accept Medical Statements from Registered Dietitians for Schools and Child and Adult Care Institutions and Facilities](#). This memo includes questions and answers and clarifies the updated regulatory requirement for school food authorities (SFAs) to accept medical statements from registered dietitians, based on the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). The change requiring SFAs to accept medical statements from registered dietitians must be implemented by **July 1, 2025**. SFAs may choose to accept medical statements from registered dietitians prior to this deadline.

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#### **Updated “Medical Statements” Section of CSDE’s Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs Webpage**

The CSDE updated the [Medical Statements](#) section of CSDE’s Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage to include guidance on the requirement for medical statements, based on [USDA Memo SP 07-2025 and CACFP 07-2025](#): This section provides information on when medical statements are required, the required information for medical statements, authorized signers for medical statements, and the CSDE’s medical statement forms.

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#### **Data on HFC Participation for SY 2024-25**

HFC is in its nineteenth year of implementation with SY 2024-25. The data below summarizes HFC participation for SY 2024-25.

- 182 school districts/schools (96.3% of eligible districts/schools)
- 1 new school
- 99.5% recertification rate
- 90% increase from the first year (2006-07) to the current school year

The CSDE’s document, [Healthy Food Certification Participation for School Year 2024-25](#), includes a list of participating districts and schools and a year-to-date summary. Additional information is available on the CSDE’s [Healthy Food Certification](#) webpage, including a [color-coded map](#) of the towns implementing HFC and a summary of the [Data on HFC Participation](#).

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### Updated CSDE Webpage: Competitive Foods in Schools

The CSDE's [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage has been updated for easier access to relevant information. In addition to the Overview, Contact, and Laws/Regulations, the left navigation bar topics now include separate sections for HFC Public Schools, Non-HFC Public Schools, and Private Schools and RCCIs. The Overview page contains links to resources that provide an overview of the state and federal requirements. The specific requirements and resources for each type of school are now available on their separate webpage.

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### Updated CSDE Resources on State and Federal Laws for Competitive Foods

All schools must comply with the applicable state and federal laws for selling and giving competitive foods to students. General guidance on the requirements for competitive foods is available in the updated resources below (dated February 2025).

- [Overview of Federal and State Laws for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools, Private Schools, and Residential Child Care Institutions](#)
- [Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations](#)

These laws apply differently to HFC public schools, non-HFC public schools, and private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs). The updated resources below (dated February 2025) provide guidance on how these laws apply to a variety of settings within each type of school (such as cafeterias, fundraisers, school stores, vending machines, and culinary arts programs) and indicate strategies to prevent common noncompliance issues. Please discard any previous documents and replace them with the updated versions.

### Competitive Foods Webpage Section: [HFC Public Schools](#)

- Overview of Requirements: [Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Cafeterias: [Requirements for Cafeteria A La Carte Foods and Beverages in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Culinary Programs: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Fundraisers: [Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in HFC Public Schools](#)
- School Stores: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Vending Machines: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Summary Chart: [Summary Chart: State and Federal Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)

### Competitive Foods Webpage Section: [Non-HFC Public Schools](#)

- Overview of Requirements: [Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Cafeterias: [Requirements for Cafeteria A La Carte Foods and Beverages in Non-HFC Public School](#)
- Culinary Programs: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Fundraisers: [Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- School Stores: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Vending Machines: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Summary Chart: [Summary Chart: State and Federal Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)

### Competitive Foods Webpage Section: [Private Schools and RCCIs](#)

- Overview of Requirements: [Requirements for Competitive Foods in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
- Cafeterias: [Requirements for Cafeteria A La Carte Foods and Beverages in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
- Culinary Programs: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
- Fundraisers: [Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
- School Stores: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
- Vending Machines: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
- Summary Chart: [Summary Chart: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)

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### Resource Roundup: Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools

The CSDE's resource list, [Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools](#), includes webpages and resources to assist schools with meeting the requirements of the federal and state laws for competitive foods in schools.

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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\\_02\\_26\\_2025.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2025/slt_02_26_2025.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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