

## The School Lunch Tray: March 12, 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: Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Training Survey: Due March 14, 2025
- Reminder: Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of February 2025 Purchases Due March 14, 2025
- CSDE Office Hours on the Triennial Assessment using the Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website: Monday, March 17, 2025

### **Need to Know**

- Termination Notice for Agreement No. AM25CPLFS000C010 for the Project Titled, Local Food for Schools and Child Care Cooperative Agreement (LFSCC)
- USDA Memo SP 09-2025: Buy American Accommodation Process for School Year 2025-2026
- Schedule of Program Year 2025 Summer Meal Programs Trainings
- Registration for Program Year 2025 Summer Meal Program Trainings
- How to Check Funding Status of Federal and State Reimbursements
- Resource Roundup: Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

### **Good to Know**

- Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: A Deep Dive into the Community Eligibility Provision: March 20, 2025
- ICN STAR Webinar Recording: Mastering Scratch Cooking in Schools



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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

#### **Final Reminder: Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Training Survey: Due March 14, 2025**

Please complete the [Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Training survey](#) by **Friday, March 14, 2025**. This survey will take less than 3 minutes and will help the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs determine if this training will be offered this summer. Note that this training was previously referred to as the “new director’s training.”

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#### **Reminder: Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of February 2025 Purchases Due March 14, 2025**

Districts that would like to receive reimbursement from their LFSIP funds allocation for purchases of locally grown or produced foods for the month of February 2025 must submit the [Federal Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reimbursement Request Form \(Phase 1&2\)](#). Purchases made in February 2025 must be reported on the form by **Friday, March 14, 2025**. As a reminder, the following items are not allowed for reimbursement: fluid milk; baked goods including bread and rolls; or items that cannot be attributed to a specific farm or producer.

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#### **CSDE Office Hours on the Triennial Assessment using the Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website: Monday, March 17, 2025**

Join the CSDE on Monday, March 17, 2025, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. for office hours on the Triennial Assessment using the WellSAT website. 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.

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

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 222 070 124 511

Passcode: pb2Hd7sL

#### **Dial in by phone**

[+1 860-840-2075](#), [675401239#](#) United States, Hartford

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Phone conference ID: 675 401 239#

For organizers: [Meeting options](#) | [Reset dial-in PIN](#)

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### Need to Know

#### **Termination Notice for Agreement No. AM25CPLFS000C010 for the Project Titled, Local Food for Schools and Child Care Cooperative Agreement (LFSCC)**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) received notification from US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service on March 7, 2025, that the upcoming Local Food for Schools and Child Care Cooperative Agreement (LFSCC) opportunity has been cancelled due to changes in USDA priorities. That opportunity was planned to go into effect later in 2025.

This change in LFSCC does **not** affect the current federal Local Food for School Incentive Program (LFSIP) Phase 1 and 2 funding in place and continuing until April 30, 2025. However, programs should utilize their allotted funds as soon as possible by April 30, 2025.

The Connecticut LFSIP is state funded, and, therefore, not impacted by the termination of the federal LFSCC program.

The CSDE's [Regional Farm to School Coordinators](#) stand ready to support all SFAs with navigating the federal LFSIP and Connecticut LFSIP. For questions, please contact Monica Pacheco at [monica.pacheco@ct.gov](mailto:monica.pacheco@ct.gov), Fionnuala Brown at [fionnuala.brown@ct.gov](mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov), or Jen Bove at [jennifer.bove@ct.gov](mailto:jennifer.bove@ct.gov).

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#### **USDA Memo SP 09-2025: Buy American Accommodation Process for School Year 2025-2026**

[USDA Memo SP 09-2025](#) provides guidance on the accommodation process in [7 CFR 210.21\(d\)\(8\)](#) and [7 CFR 220.16\(d\)\(8\)](#). This memorandum provides the state agency the ability to approve temporary relief for school food authorities (SFAs) that demonstrate they cannot meet the thresholds for non-domestic food purchases established in regulations 7 CFR 210.21(d)(5) and 7 CFR 220.16(d)(5) for school year 2025-2026.

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#### **Schedule of Program Year 2025 Summer Meal Programs Trainings**

The table below includes the 10 webinars comprising the CSDE Summer Meal Programs Annual Training. Not all sessions are required for all potential Summer Meal Programs sponsors. Half of the sessions are for **all** potential sponsors and half are **specific** to either SSO or SFSP potential

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sponsors. To avoid confusion and ensure compliance with federal regulations, the CSDE strongly encourages potential sponsors to:

- clearly specify the program they intend to operate in Program Year 2025;
- attend all general sessions; and
- only participate in the topic-specific sessions related to the Summer Meal Program their organization plans to operate.

Live participation is the best learning opportunity and strongly encouraged by the CSDE. All webinars will be recorded and posted to the “[Annual Training](#)” section of the CSDE’s SFSP webpage to accommodate true unavoidable scheduling conflicts. The SFSP Meal Patterns webinar is pre-recorded and may be completed at the sponsor’s convenience, prior to May 1, 2025, in preparation for the SFSP application.

Date	Time	Topic	Participants
February 20, 2025	2:00 pm	Area Eligibility	All potential Summer Meal Sponsors (SSO and SFSP)
February 20, 2025	3:00 pm	Rural Designation for Non-congregate Meal Service	Optional for all potential Summer Meal Sponsors (SSO and SFSP)
March 13, 2025	2:00 pm	SFSP Application Process	Potential SFSP Sponsors Only
March 27, 2025	2:00 pm	Summer Meal Programs Outreach	All potential Summer Meal Sponsors (SSO and SFSP)
April 3, 2025	2:00 pm	SSO Regulations	Potential SSO Sponsors Only (SLT Table Talk timeslot)
April 10, 2025	2:00 pm	SFSP Regulations	Potential SFSP Sponsors Only
By May 1, 2025*	Recorded training module	SFSP Meal Patterns	Potential SFSP Sponsors Only
May 8, 2025	2:00 pm	USDA Foods, Local Foods, Food Safety	All potential Summer Meal Sponsors (SSO and SFSP)
May 22, 2025	2:00 pm	SFSP Administrative Review Process	Potential SFSP Sponsors Only; required for sponsors due for SFSP AR in PY 2025, optional for all sponsors to review required annual SFSP documentation
June 5, 2025	2:00 pm	Summer Meal Programs Office Hours	Optional for all potential Summer Meal Sponsors (SSO and SFSP)

## Registration for Program Year 2025 Summer Meal Program Trainings

At least one individual from each SFSP sponsoring organization must register to attend. Attendance at every webinar, either live or by recording, must be documented and submitted to the CSDE at a later date. The TEAMS link for each webinar session is unique and will be sent out prior to that week's training.

- **Registration link:** <https://forms.office.com/g/ZfXisxC5hz>
- **Deadline:** Friday, March 14, 2025

## How to Check Funding Status of Federal and State Reimbursements

The CSDE's Grant Management system has a webpage that allows SFAs to check the status of their Child Nutrition Program funds. Information regarding this process may be found on page 20 of the CSDE's [Guide to Financial Management Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs](#), which contains information and resources to help SFAs comply with the federal and state regulations for financial management of the USDA's school nutrition programs. The figure below is a screenshot of the Grant Payment Report.

The screenshot displays the 'FY 2022 Grant Payment Report' web application. The header includes the CSDE logo, the title 'FY 2022 Grant Payment Report', the date 'data last updated: 4/13/2022', and a 'Main Page' link. A contact number 'Bonne Pathman (860) 713-6458' is also visible. The navigation bar contains links for 'SDE Home', 'Grants Home', 'Grant Reports', 'About', 'Query Formulation', and 'Send E-Mail'. The form is organized into several sections:   
 - **Section A: Select Year** with a dropdown menu set to '2021-2022'.   
 - **Section B: Report Type** with radio buttons for 'Detail' (selected), 'Summary', 'Statewide Summary', 'Statewide Vendor Summary', 'Statewide SPID Summary', 'SPID Detail by Vendor', 'SPID Summary by Vendor', 'Quarterly Grant Summary', 'Fund Summary by Vendor', 'Refunds Exceed Payments', 'Refunds NOT Included', and 'All Current Year Refunds'. A 'Pivot Reports' dropdown is set to 'Select Report From List Below'.   
 - **Section C: Vendor** with radio buttons for 'Towns, Regions, RESCs and Charters' (selected) and 'All Others'. Below are dropdowns for 'All Towns, Regions, RESCs and Charters' (set to '1-PK-12 Districts') and 'All Others'. A 'Vendor Name Contains' field with a 'get vendors' button is also present.   
 - **Section D: Grant Type** with radio buttons for 'Select Below' (selected), 'State and Federal Education Grants', 'State Special Ed', 'Child Care', 'School Lunch', 'Summer Food', 'School Construction', 'School Construction Progress Payments', and 'Bond Funds (excluding Schl Construction)'. A dropdown for 'All Grants' is shown.   
 - **Section E: Invoice #** with a dropdown for 'All Invoices (date #: invoice number)' and a note 'ONLY Item C applies.'. Below is an 'Invoice # Contains' field with a 'get invoices' button.   
 - A checkbox for 'Summary by Invoice Date:'.   
 - 'Submit' and 'Reset' buttons at the bottom.

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### Resource Roundup: Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

As a reminder, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), requires changes to the school meal patterns effective July 1, 2025, with some additional changes effective later. The CSDE's resource, [Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#), summarizes the meal patterns changes for each grade group (grades K-12 and preschool) and program (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool Snack Program) and their effective dates. For more information, visit the "[Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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### Good to Know

#### Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: A Deep Dive into the Community Eligibility Provision: March 20, 2025

Join FRAC for a deep dive into community eligibility, exploring CEP's history, regulations, and the benefits free school meals bring to students and schools.

- **Date and time:** March 20, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
  - **Registration:** [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)
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#### ICN STAR Webinar Recording: Mastering Scratch Cooking in Schools

The recording of the ICN's STAR webinar from February 2025, [Mastering Scratch Cooking in Schools](#), is now available. In this session, school nutrition experts share insights on incorporating scratch cooking in school meal programs. Learn tips to help schools overcome common challenges and adopt best practices for preparing foods from scratch. This session also highlights the benefits of scratch cooking and proven strategies to enhance meal quality and boost student satisfaction.

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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\\_03\\_12\\_2025.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2025/slt_03_12_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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