

The School Lunch Tray: March 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

- CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 05-2025, Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Annual Notification Requirement for all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) Due April 7, 2025
- CSDE Summer Meals Training on March 27, 2025: Summer Meal Programs Outreach

Need to Know

- Save the Dates for CSDE Office Hours: Triennial Assessment using the WellSAT Website
- Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Module 13 Ounce Equivalents
- Updated CSDE Resource: Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules
- Resource Roundup: Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs, Effective July 1, 2025

Good to Know

- CT Grown for CT Kids Culturally Appropriate Culinary Training: April 3, 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.

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Action Items

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 05-2025, Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Annual Notification Requirement for all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) Due April 7, 2025.

The steps for collecting data to update the annual Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) notification lists are outlined in [Operational Memorandum No. 05-2025, Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\) Annual Notification Requirement for all Local Educational Agencies \(LEAs\) Participating in the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and/or the School Breakfast Program \(SBP\) Due April 7, 2025](#). This memo is available on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

All NSLP and SBP sponsors must submit school-level CEP eligibility data to the CSDE no later than **April 7, 2025** (regardless of participation or intent to participate in the CEP). For information on how to access the CNP Application and Claiming System to enter notification data, refer to the CSDE's document, [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\) Data Collection Guidance for School-level Eligibility Information](#). Information regarding the CEP application process for SY 2025-26 will be issued in a few weeks.

Please note that Residential Child Care Institutions and Special Milk Program sponsors are not eligible to participate in the CEP and are exempt from this requirement.

CSDE Summer Meals Training on March 27, 2025: Summer Meal Programs Outreach

In partnership with CT Foodshare, the CSDE is conducting an annual training session on Summer Meal Programs Outreach for sponsors of the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This training will be held on Thursday, March 27, 2025, from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Registration is not required. Join the Teams trainings using the link below:

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 254 450 786 428

Passcode: WD7Yc9s8

Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075,,682347798#](#) United States, Hartford

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 682 347 798#

For questions about Summer Meal Programs training, please contact caroline.cooke@ct.gov.

Need to Know

Save the Dates for CSDE Office Hours: Triennial Assessment using the WellSAT website

The CSDE is offering a series of office hours on conducting the school wellness policy Triennial Assessment using the WellSAT website. Save the dates below and bring your questions. Links to join the office hours will be sent in advance of each session.

- Monday, March 31, 2025, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Monday, April 28, 2025, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Monday, May 12, 2025, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

As a reminder, the USDA's final rule, [Local School Wellness Policy \(LSWP\) Implementation Under the HHSFKA of 2010](#), requires that each local educational agency (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.

Visit the "[Triennial Assessments](#)" section of the CSDE's School Wellness Policies webpage for many resources to assist Connecticut sponsors with navigating the Local School Wellness Policy and Triennial Assessment requirements. For questions, please contact Fionnula Brown at fionnuala.brown@ct.gov.

Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Module 13 Ounce Equivalents

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. Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents is now available on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

This module reviews the weekly WGR requirement and the WGR criteria for the grains component. Topics include the required ounce equivalents (oz eq) for the grains component, the USDA's oz eq chart for nine different grain groups (groups A-I), Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs, the required quantities for each grain group to provide 1 oz eq, considerations for crediting sliced breads, how to determine the oz eq contribution of a commercial grain food or standardized recipe using the two allowable methods (Exhibit A and creditable grains), choosing a calculation method, rounding rules for oz eq calculations, when method 2 (creditable grains) is required for commercial grain products, examples of how to use methods 1 and 2, and resources for guidance and training on grain oz eq.

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 Resource: Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

The CSDE's resource, [Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules](#), is updated to reflect the total training hours for the revised 2024-25 What's in a Meal modules. The CSDE's What's in a Meal training program is a series of recorded modules that provide comprehensive guidance on complying with the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP.

Completing all 16 What's in a Meal modules provides **15.25 training hours** toward the annual training requirements of the USDA's Professional Standards and meets the USDA's Professional Standards training topics below for the key areas of 1000 Nutrition and 2000 Operations.

- 1100 MENU PLANNING: 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements, 1120 Cycle Menus, 1140 Standardized Recipes, and 1160 Special Diets, including Food Allergies
- 2100 FOOD PRODUCTION: 2110 Standardized Recipes, 2120 Food Production Records, and 2150 CN Labeling and Crediting
- 2200 SERVING FOOD: 2220 Offer versus Serve and 2240 Serving Lines
- 2300 CASHIER AND POINT OF SERVICE: 2310 Reimbursable Meals

This training program is intended for school food service professionals in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, including food service directors, managers, and staff.

Resource Roundup: Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs, Effective July 1, 2025

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 meal patterns for the school nutrition programs effective July 1, 2025. These changes apply to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool, effective July 1, 2025. A summary of the changes for each school nutrition program is available in the CSDE's resource, [Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#). 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.

Good to Know

CT Grown for CT Kids Culturally Appropriate Culinary Training: April 3, 2025

Join chefs from Brigaid to explore using seasonal ingredients to adapt recipes that reflect various culinary traditions. Food service directors and staff are welcome. Sponsored by UConn Extension's Put Local on Your Tray and the CT Department of Agriculture's CT Grown for CT Kids Grant program. The event will take place in Middletown Public Schools.

- **Date and time:** April 3, 2025, 3:00-5:30 p.m.
 - **Registration:** [Culturally Appropriate Culinary Training 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/2025/slt_03_26_2025.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

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