

The School Lunch Tray: April 9, 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

- Reminder: Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of March 2025 Purchases Due April 18, 2025
- Attend the Connecticut Farm to School Conference on May 7, 2025
- Save the Date for CSDE Training Session: Overview of the Final Rule Meal Pattern Changes for the School Nutrition Programs, May 1, 2025
- Save the Date for CSDE Training Session: Meal Pattern and Implementation Updates for the Afterschool Snack Program for School Year 2025-26, May 15, 2025
- Reminder: University of Connecticut Rudd Center Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Academy, May 21, 2025: Registration Deadline is April 30, 2025
- Save the Date: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Sponsor Online Application Training, June 3, 2025

Need to Know

- Operational Memorandum No. 06-25: State Severe Need School Breakfast Program Grant for School Year 2024-25
- USDA Foods Direct Delivery Inventory at HPC
- USDA Foods Orders for School Year 2025-26
- Resource Roundup: Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Good to Know

- Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) STAR Webinar: Strategies for Navigating Bids and Vendor Selections in School Nutrition: April 24, 2025
- ICN Recorded Webinar: STAR: Strategies for Incorporating Plant-Based, Minimally Processed Standardized Recipes for All Students
- ICN iBites Podcast
- ICN iBites Digest

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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

Reminder: Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of March 2025 Purchases Due April 18, 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 March 2025 must submit the [Federal Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reimbursement Request Form \(Phase 1&2\)](#). Purchases made in March 2025 must be reported on the form by Friday, April 18, 2025.

Attend the Connecticut Farm to School Conference on May 7, 2025

Join the CSDE and UConn Extension's Put Local on Your Tray for a Farm to School Conference, May 7, 2025. Increase farm to school programming in your cafeteria and learn about best practices in local procurement and network with farmers and food hub operators. This event will count toward professional standards requirements.

- **Location:** Auer Farm, 158 Auer Farm Road, Bloomfield, CT from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- **Cost:** \$20 (lunch is included)
- **Registration:** [registration link](#)

Refer to the attached flier for more information.



Save the Date for CSDE Training Session: Overview of the Final Rule Meal Pattern Changes for the School Nutrition Programs, May 1, 2025

The USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), required changes to the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs (grades K-12 and preschool) beginning July 1, 2024. Additional changes are effective with school year 2025-26, beginning July 1, 2025. This session will discuss the current and upcoming meal pattern changes for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns for grades K-12, and the NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) preschool meal patterns. Resources to assist SFAs with implementation will also be identified.

- **Date and time:** Thursday, May 1, 2025, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Registration is not required. Use the Teams link below to attend.

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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Save the Date for CSDE Training Session: Meal Pattern and Implementation Updates for the Afterschool Snack Program for School Year 2025-26, May 15, 2025

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), makes significant changes to the current ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 by aligning it with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack meal pattern for children. The first part of this session will review the new ASP meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 and highlight resources to assist SFAs with implementation. The second part of this session will discuss the USDA's operational requirements for the ASP.

- **Date and time:** Thursday, May 15, 2025, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration is not required. Use the Teams link below to attend.

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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Reminder: University of Connecticut Rudd Center Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Academy, May 21, 2025: Registration Deadline is April 30, 2025

Are you part of a district wellness team in Connecticut? Join the Rudd Center for the third annual WSCC Academy, a day of free professional development to be held on May 21, 2025, at UConn Hartford. Select one of two professional learning tracks to meet your team's needs:

- Track A: Finalizing Triennial Wellness Assessments is designed for teams who have started their [LSWP triennial assessment](#) and want support generating their results.
- Track B: High-Quality Wellness Action Planning is designed for teams who have completed their LSWP triennial assessment and want support using their results to create high-quality action plans to strengthen the school health environment.

The WSCC Academy is hosted by the CT WSCC Partnership. Visit the [WSCC Academy website](#) for more information. [Registration](#) is open until April 30, 2025.

Save the Date: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Sponsor Online Application Training, June 3, 2025

Get ready for school year 2025-26! The CSDE will be conducting the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Sponsor Online Application Training on June 3, 2025, from 1:00- 3:00 p.m. This training is required for all sponsors of the NSLP. The CSDE will send the attendance link closer to the training date.

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Need to Know

Operational Memorandum No. 06-25: State Severe Need School Breakfast Program Grant for School Year 2024-25

The CSDE's [Operational Memorandum No. 06-25](#) outlines the criteria for payment of the State Severe Need School Breakfast Program Grant and includes the list of school food authorities (SFAs) with sites that qualify for this grant. SFAs will receive approximately \$2,789 per eligible site. For questions about this information, please contact Susan Alston at susan.alston@ct.gov.

USDA Foods Orders for School Year 2025-26

Now that all RAs have placed their orders for next school year, the FDP team is working on organizing the orders into full truckloads or finding nearby states to share trucks. During this time, RAs may get automated email notifications from WBSCM about changes in the amount of food (cases or pounds) or cancellations. Please remember that all orders can change until they are fully purchased.

Direct delivery orders for Connecticut should be finished by the end of April. Processing orders should be completed before the new school year starts. For planning, RAs should begin running monthly Requisition Status Reports for next school year starting May 1. It is important to review these reports regularly to keep track of any order changes.

WBSCM updates the purchase price of items regularly. This can change until the item is fully purchased and moved to the "purchased" status. While the order is still in progress, RAs may notice changes in their entitlement due to cancellations, adjustments in the amounts ordered, or changes in pricing. The entitlement will keep changing until all items are purchased. RAs are responsible for ordering at least 95 percent of their available entitlement when placing orders, but changes are expected. Please continue to monitor USDA Foods for next year and contact the FDP team with any questions.

USDA Foods Direct Delivery Inventory at HPC

Only three deliveries remain for the current school year. Recipient Agencies (RAs) that have not taken delivery of at least 60 percent of their inventory at this time may have product swept from their account. All inventory must be taken by June deliveries. Please contact the [Food Distribution Program \(FDP\) team](#) with any questions.

Resource Roundup: Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Meals served on field trips must meet specific requirements to be reimbursable. School food authorities (SFAs) must ensure that all school staff involved with field trips (including food service staff and non-food service staff such as teachers, teacher aides, and other applicable staff) understand and implement these requirements for off-site reimbursable meals. The CSDE's [Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#) provides guidance on allowable meal service methods for field trips and important tips for food safety and ensuring that meals are reimbursable, including point-of-service meal counts.

Good to Know

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) STAR Webinar: Strategies for Navigating Bids and Vendor Selections in School Nutrition: April 24, 2025

This webinar will equip school nutrition professionals with effective strategies for navigating the bid process and vendor selections. Join ICN to gain insights on securing high-quality food at competitive prices and to learn practical tips for successful procurement. The session will also cover best practices for creating clear bid specifications — ensuring compliance with procurement regulations — and assessing vendors, with a focus on maintaining effective communication, sustainability, and sourcing local fresh foods.

- Date and time: April 24, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
 - Information and registration: [registration link](#)
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ICN Recorded Webinar: STAR: Strategies for Incorporating Plant-Based, Minimally Processed Standardized Recipes for All Students

There is a growing focus on offering plant-based, minimally processed meal options that meet the meal pattern requirements for all students in school meal programs. The ICN's March 2025 webinar, [STAR: Strategies for Incorporating Plant-Based, Minimally Processed Standardized Recipes for All Students](#), highlights practical strategies for school nutrition professionals to incorporate plant-based, minimally processed standardized recipes that showcase a variety of flavors while aligning with USDA meal pattern requirements. This webinar is presented in collaboration with Friends of the Earth.

ICN iBites Podcast

The ICN's [iBites podcast](#) provides information about all aspects of Child Nutrition Programs. From research to resources, from oral histories to best practices, each iBites will feature a wealth of information to help promote the continuous improvement of Child Nutrition Programs.

ICN iBites Digest

The ICN's [iBites Digest](#) newsletter for child nutrition provides information on resources, training opportunities, webinars, and more. This newsletter shares ICN's progress and upcoming initiatives to continue strengthening their vital work in schools and communities nationwide.

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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_04_09_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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FARM TO SCHOOL CONFERENCE

MAY 7TH | AUER FARM | 11:00-4:00

COST: \$20 | 158 Auer Farm Road, Bloomfield, CT

Increase farm to school operations in your cafeteria! Learn about best practices in local procurement and network with farmers and food hub operators. This event will count toward professional standards requirements.

Lunch included in registration

REGISTER
s.uconn.edu/f2sconf

