

## The School Lunch Tray: June 4, 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 Summer Meals Office Hours on June 5, 2025
- Connecticut Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (CT LFSIP) and Carryover of Funds
- Reminder: Save the Date for the *How to Complete the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Summary* Webinar: June 12, 2025
- USDA Foods Reminder
- Request Alternate Lunch Time Outside the Timeframes of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Due July 1, 2025

### Need to Know

- School Year (SY) 2025-26 Meal Application forms
- Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) Program Contact Resources for Schools
- Resource Roundup: Changes to Authorized Signers

### Good to Know

- Farm to School Field Trip at Veggiestock: June 7, 2025
- USDA Foods Update for SY 2025 - 2026



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.

## The School Lunch Tray: June 4, 2025

### Action Items

#### CSDE Summer Meals Office Hours on June 5, 2025

The final live webinar installment of the CSDE annual Summer Meal Programs training series is an open office hour on Thursday, June 5, 2025, from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. This is an optional Summer Meal Program discussion for all SSO and SFSP sponsors. There will not be a presentation. Sponsors may ask anything about topics related to Summer Meals, except for when applications will be approved.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 263 466 062 871

Passcode: g9iT2c5n

Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075, 130837925#](#) United States, Hartford

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 130 837 925#

For questions about Summer Meal Programs training, please contact [caroline.cooke@ct.gov](mailto:caroline.cooke@ct.gov).

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#### Connecticut Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (CT LFSIP) and Carryover of Funds

This notice is in follow up to the email sent on May 13 from the CT Dept of Agriculture to school districts participating in the Connecticut Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (CT LFSIP). Currently, there is no guarantee that the remaining program funds for this fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2025, will carry over into the next fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2025.

Therefore, the CSDE encourages schools to do the following to retain access to your allocated funds:

1. Establish a [Forward Contract](#) with farmer(s) and/or supplier(s) of local and/or regionally grown products.
2. Make a payment in full to the farmer(s) and/or supplier(s) of local and/or regionally grown products before June 12, 2025. For example, if working with a CT farmer (50% reimbursement) and there's \$3,000 remaining in your allocation, you would need to show a payment of \$6,000 to the farmer which includes your \$3,000 reimbursement from CT LFSIP.
3. Submit a claim as soon as possible but no later than **June 12, 2025**. Materials to be submitted include a copy of the executed agreement(s) and proof of payment(s) to the farmer and/or supplier of regionally grown products. The claim should be submitted through this form: <https://www.cognitofrms.com/CTDoAg/ConnecticutLocalFoodsForSchoolsIncentiveProgramCTLFSIPQuarterlyReportingForm>. Claims submitted after June 12, 2025, cannot be guaranteed for processing and payment.

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School food authorities (SFAs) must maintain documentation per the [Record Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs](#).

As always, if you need assistance identifying farmers and/or suppliers of regional products, please contact your [CSDE Regional Farm to School Coordinator](#). Questions regarding the claim submission process should be directed to Hannah Carty at CT DoAg, [Hannah.Carty@ct.gov](mailto:Hannah.Carty@ct.gov).

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### **Reminder: Save the Date for the How to Complete the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Summary Webinar - June 12, 2025**

Join the CSDE and the UConn Rudd Center for an informative training session designed to guide school staff through the process of completing the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Summary. The topic of the webinar is: *How to Complete the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Summary* and will take place Wednesday, June 12, 2025, from 2:00 – 3:00 pm.

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 Wellness School Assessment Tool (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 Fionnuala Brown at [fionnuala.brown@ct.gov](mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov).

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### **USDA Foods Reminder**

As the school year comes to an end, please remember to take delivery of all remaining USDA Foods from the HPC warehouse. For those lucky enough to have the summer off, please remember to pay all final HPC invoices and receipt all DoD deliveries before leaving for the summer.

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### Request Alternate Lunch Time Outside the Timeframes of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Due July 1, 2025

SFAs are reminded that schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must offer lunch not earlier than 10:00 a.m. and not later than 2:00 p.m., including on planned half-days and early dismissal days, unless the NSLP sponsor has requested and been authorized by the CSDE to serve lunch outside of these regulatory timeframes. To request an alternate lunch time outside the timeframe of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for either a regular school day or planned half day, NSLP sponsors must submit a waiver request to the CSDE. The CSDE must evaluate the circumstances of each request to determine whether it meets one of the two USDA criteria for an exemption from the specified timeframe for lunch:

1. The CSDE may grant reasonable variances from the meal service time requirements to accommodate special circumstances encountered in schools operating for traditional students at traditional times. For example, if a school has a condensed schedule on a planned half day, the school may need to serve lunch prior to 10 a.m. due to capacity and may therefore request an exception from the CSDE to serve outside of the 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. timeframe.
2. The CSDE may grant reasonable variances from the meal service time requirements if the school operates for traditional students but at a nontraditional time. For example, a school may need to provide lunch service from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to accommodate a work study program that allows high school students to work in the morning and attend high school classes in the later afternoon or evening. For this specific circumstance, the CSDE will grant a meal service time variance only if: a) these alternative programs provide high school grade students an opportunity to obtain the minimum requirements for graduation at a nontraditional time; and b) it is not possible to serve lunch during the 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. timeframe.

The written request for a variance in lunch service times must be submitted to the CSDE by one of the designated authorized signers for the local educational agency and must include a description of the special circumstances at the school that make it necessary for the school to serve lunch outside of the required NSLP service times. The CSDE may grant variances from lunch meal service times only if one of the two criteria specified above are met. Variances from the required lunch service timeframe will not be approved for routine scheduling choices, such as block schedules.

Requests for variances in NSLP meal service times must be submitted via email to the SFA's [CSDE school nutrition team member](#) by **July 1** of each school year. For more information, refer to [Operational Memorandum No. 02-23](#). National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Requirements for Regular and Shortened School Days.

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## Need to Know

### School Year (SY) 2025-26 Meal Application Forms

The SY 2025-26 Meal Application forms will not be released until later this summer. This delay is due to potential state legislation that could affect student meal prices for next school year, necessitating updates to the language included in some of the CSDE templates. Sponsors will be notified when the templates are available.

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### Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) Program Contact Resources for Schools

The CSDE's [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(S-EBT\) Program Contact Resources for Schools](#) contains contact information for schools to use in reference to any questions received from households or students regarding the S-EBT program. The document contains contact information for the Connecticut Department of Social Services relating to S-EBT/EBT cards, as well as S-EBT Customer Service for questions relating to eligibility and benefit status. Please feel free to share this information as needed.

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### Resource Roundup: Changes to Authorized Signers

The CSDE reminds districts that if one of their authorized signers changes, they must notify their state CNP technical support person. Refer to the CSDE's [Authorized Signature Change Form and Instructions](#) for guidance on assigning a new authorized signer for the Child Nutrition Programs.

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## The School Lunch Tray: June 4, 2025

### Good to Know

#### Farm to School Field Trip at Veggiestock – June 7, 2025

Join the Windham Community Food Network on June 7, 2025 for [Veggiestock](#), for the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Food Garden Fest taking place at Lauter Park, 626 Jackson Street, Willimantic, CT from 10:00 to 2:00 pm. There is no entry fee and there will be a special CT Farm to School Collaborative Field Trip to Grow Windham Gardens from 11:30 to 1:00 pm to learn about their Youth Core program. To register for the field trip go to: [CT Farm To School Collaborative Field Trip: Veggiestock 2025](#).

Bring your families for a day of community food and fun – all are welcome! For questions regarding the field trip, reach out to Melanie at [Connecticutfarmtoschool@gmail.com](mailto:Connecticutfarmtoschool@gmail.com).

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#### USDA Foods Update for SY 2025 - 2026

The USDA recently informed the Food Distribution Program that all orders for Material Code 100225, Turkey Roasts, are canceled next year due to vendor capacity. There will not be another chance to order this item next school year. Therefore, please take appropriate steps to prepare for your Thanksgiving menus. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

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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\\_06\\_04\\_2025.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2025/slt_06_04_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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