

The School Lunch Tray: June 11, 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: 2025-26 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement: Due July 1, 2025
- Reminder: Full-Service Interschool Agreements for School Year 2025-26: Due July 1, 2025
- Training on June 12, 2025: How to Complete the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Summary Webinar

Need to Know

- USDA Memo SP 11-2025, CACFP 09-2025, and SFSP 05-2025: Using Federal Funds to Purchase Local Foods
- USDA Memo SP 13-2025, CACFP 10-2025, SFSP 06-2025: Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs
- USDA Memo SP 14-2025: Enhancing Child Nutrition Program Meal Standards
- USDA Memo SP 15-2025: Enhancing Child Nutrition Program Meal Standards
- New CSDE Resource: Using Bulk Milk Dispensers in the School Nutrition Programs
- Resource Roundup: USDA's Team Nutrition School Lunch Materials Webpage

Good to Know

- None



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

Reminder: 2025-26 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement: Due July 1, 2025

All public school sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must submit the 2025-26 HFC Statement and upload their final board-approved minutes by July 1, 2025, in the CSDE's [Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CNP System). Please review the important information below.

- **Only authorized signers 1 or 2 can submit the HFC Statement:** The HFC Statement must be completed, certified, and submitted by the district's authorized signer 1 or 2. These are the only two individuals who can submit the HFC Statement.
- **Enroll district in the 2025-26 application process before beginning HFC Statement:** The district must enroll in the 2025-26 application process for the school nutrition programs before the 2025-26 HFC Statement can be accessed. For guidance on how to enroll the district, refer to the CSDE's [Instructions for Enrolling in the Annual Application Process for the School Nutrition Programs](#). If the authorized signer cannot access the HFC Statement in the CNP System, this means the district has not yet enrolled.
- **Instructions for submitting the HFC Statement:** Authorized signer 1 or 2 completes the HFC Statement in the CSDE's Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Please read the CSDE's [Instructions for Submitting Connecticut's Healthy Food Certification Statement for School Year 2025-26](#) before entering the CNP System.
- **Complete the HFC module only:** Do not begin the application process to participate in the school nutrition programs for school year 2025-26. The CSDE will notify sponsors when it is time to start the online application process for school nutrition programs.
- **Guidance on HFC application requirements:** The HFC application requirements are summarized in the "[Annual HFC Application](#)" section of the HFC webpage and CSDE [Operational Memorandum No. 03-25](#). For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's 21-minute training module, [Completing the Application Process for Healthy Food Certification](#).
- **Questions:** Contact Susan Fiore at susan.fiore@ct.gov.

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Reminder: Full-Service Interschool Agreements for School Year 2025-26: Due July 1, 2025

Sponsors that vend or satellite meals to another district are required to submit and receive approval of an annual interschool agreement to the CSDE. Full-service Interschool Agreements for schools that choose the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC) must be submitted to the CSDE by **July 1, 2025**, to be eligible for HFC for school year 2025-26. For guidance on submitting the interschool agreements, refer to [Operational Memorandum No. 07:25 Interschool Agreements for School Year 2025-26](#).

The interschool agreement forms are available under “I” on the CSDE’s [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. This form must be signed by the authorized representative for the providing sponsor and the recipient site.

Training on June 12, 2025: How to Complete the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Summary Webinar

Join the CSDE and the UConn Rudd Center on Thursday, June 12, 2025, from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. for *How to Complete the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Summary*. This informative training session is designed to guide school staff through the process of completing the LSWP Triennial Assessment Summary.

As a reminder, the USDA final rule, [Local School Wellness Policy \(LSWP\) Implementation Under the HFFKA 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 the 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 LSWP and Triennial Assessment requirements. For questions, please contact Fionnuala Brown at fionnuala.brown@ct.gov.

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Need to Know

USDA Memo SP 11-2025, CACFP 09-2025, and SFSP 05-2025: Using Federal Funds to Purchase Local Foods

[USDA Memo SP 11-2025, CACFP 09-2025, and SFSP 05-2025](#): reminds schools, sponsors, and institutions participating in any USDA Child Nutrition Program (CNP), including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Special Milk Program for Children (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), of the many ways they can purchase local foods to serve in program meals. Sourcing and serving locally grown foods, and other farm to school activities, such as taste testing, gardening, and agriculture education, can infuse new energy and vision into CNP operations, support community health, create new opportunities for American farmers, invest federal dollars in local economies, and strengthen strategies to encourage healthy choices.

USDA Memo SP 13-2025, CACFP 10-2025, SFSP 06-2025: Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs

[USDA Memo SP 13-2025, CACFP 10-2025, SFSP 06-2025](#) provides notice to child nutrition program operators regarding the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 ([PL 119-4](#)) (the 2025 Appropriations Act), March 15, 2025. This memo addresses the topics below.

- Crediting of Vegetables at Breakfast
 - Prohibition on the Use of Chicken and Seafood from China
 - Compliance with Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Requirements
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USDA Memo SP 14-2025: Enhancing Child Nutrition Program Meal Standards

[USDA Memo SP 14-2025](#) provides a reminder to school food authorities about the offer versus serve (OVS) flexibility and requirements. The USDA encourages schools to use the OVS flexibility at lunch and breakfast for all grade levels to reduce food waste and enhance student choices.

USDA Memo SP 15-2025: Enhancing Child Nutrition Program Meal Standards

[USDA Memo SP 15-2025](#) encourages states to implement stronger state-level standards and innovative ideas that support healthy choices and healthy outcomes for children.

New CSDE Resource: Using Bulk Milk Dispensers in the School Nutrition Programs

The CSDE's new resource, [*Using Bulk Milk Dispensers in the School Nutrition Programs*](#), provides guidance for SFAs on the requirements and considerations for using bulk milk dispensers as an alternative option to serving milk in disposable cartons or plastic bottles. This document is located in the "[Crediting Guidance](#)" section for the Milk Component on of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Resource Roundup: USDA's Team Nutrition School Lunch Materials Webpage

The USDA's [Team Nutrition School Lunch Materials](#) webpage has a variety of guide, handouts, and posters related to the school nutrition programs.

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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_11_2025.pdf.

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