

The School Lunch Tray: September 3, 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: Triennial Assessment (Due June 30, 2025) and Reporting Form Due September 15, 2025
- Reminder: Annual Financial Report for School Nutrition Programs Due September 15, 2025
- CSDE Virtual Office Hour: How to Complete and Submit the Annual Financial Report on September 9, 2025
- Submit a photo for the CT Fresh Great Plates Contest by October 20, 2025 📷
- Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAG) announces Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids (CTG4CTK) Grant Program

Need to Know

- Summer EBT (S-EBT) Application Period Concluded for Summer 2025
- Office Hour Addressing the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program: September 5, 2025
- USDA Foods Cancellations Update
- Reminder: Regional Farm to School Coordinators Available to Support Schools 📷
- Resource Roundup: The School Nutrition Association's 2025–2026 Celebration Calendar

Good to Know

- None



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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: Triennial Assessment (Due June 30, 2025) and Reporting Form Due September 15, 2025

As a reminder, all sponsors were federally required to complete the triennial assessment of their Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) by June 30, 2025, and to make the results publicly available. This includes posting the assessment summary on the organization's website or sharing it through other public channels.

In addition, the CSDE requires all sponsors to complete the [Triennial Assessment Reporting Form](#) by September 15, 2025. This reporting form allows the CSDE to track sponsor compliance with federal requirements related to the triennial assessment and public disclosure of LSWP implementation.

For guidance and resources related to the triennial assessment and local wellness policies, visit the "[Triennial Assessments](#)" section of the CSDE's School Wellness Policies webpage. For questions, email fionnuala.brown@ct.gov.

The CSDE thanks sponsors for their continued efforts to support student health and wellness in Connecticut schools.

Reminder: Annual Financial Report for School Nutrition Programs Due September 15, 2025

To maintain the school food authority's (SFA) nonprofit status, the NSLP regulations require that the fund balance (net cash resources [NCR]) of the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) cannot exceed three months' average expenditures at any time. SFAs must document compliance with the NCR requirement by submitting the annual Financial Report for School Nutrition Programs in the [Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs \(CNP System\)](#) by **September 15, 2025**. The CSDE's [Instructions for Submitting the Financial Report for School Nutrition Programs](#) provides step-by-step guidance on how to complete this report.

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CSDE Virtual Office Hour: How to Complete and Submit the Annual Financial Report on September 9, 2025

The CSDE will conduct a virtual Teams office hour for school food authorities (SFAs) on September 9, 2025, from 10:00-11:00 am. This session will answer questions on completing and submitting the Annual Financial Report for School Nutrition Programs, which is due September 15, 2025.

Use the Teams link below to access the office hour.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 266 176 566 326 1

Passcode: DD65Uk9A

Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075,,914341578#](#) United States, Hartford

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 914 341 578#

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

Submit a photo for the CT Fresh Great Plates Contest by October 20, 2025



In celebration of [CT Grown for CT Kids Week](#), the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) invites National School Lunch Program (NSLP) sponsors and (ECE) providers to enter the CT Great Plates Contest. This statewide photo contest for schools and early childcare centers celebrates CT-grown, minimally processed ingredients in delicious, balanced meals. For information about the submission requirements, visit [CT Great Plates Contest](#) webpage.

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Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAG) announces Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids (CTG4CTK) Grant Program

The CT DoAG invites district to apply for the CTG4CTK Grant Program, launched August 22, 2025.

About the Grant

The CTG4CTK Grant provides funding to strengthen farm to school programs across Connecticut. Schools, early childhood providers, farmers, and community partners are all eligible to apply. Awards are available through **four tracks**:

- **Track 1: Producer Capacity Building** – Microgrants to help farmers increase their ability to sell to schools and early care providers.
- **Track 2: Farm & Family Learning (ECE & Beyond)** – Support for childcare providers and networks to expand farm-to-ECE programs.
- **Track 3: Local Procurement Assistance** – Support for schools to expand local food purchasing and related activities.
- **Track 4: Experiential Learning, AgTech, and Innovation** – Hands-on learning such as school gardens, farm field trips, and nutrition education.

Key Dates

- **Applications Open:** August 22, 2025
- **Deadlines:**
 - Microgrant Applications (all tracks): September 18, 2025, 12:00 p.m.
 - Full Grant Applications – Track 2: October 24, 2025, 12:00 P p.m.
 - Full Grant Applications – Tracks 3 & 4: October 24, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

Support Resources

- **Informational Webinar and Q&A:** September 5, 2025, 2:00-3:30 p.m. (recorded and posted online). Refer to the [CT Grown for CT Kids Grant](#) overview page for the link to the webinar.
- **Virtual Office Hours & Coaching:** Details will be shared at the webinar and posted on the [CT Grown for CT Kids Grant](#) webpage.

CT DoAg encourages districts to submit application early to allow time for questions and to make sure the proposal is as competitive as possible. Visit the [CT Grown for CT Kids Grant](#) webpage for full guidance and application materials.

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Need to Know

Summer EBT (S-EBT) Application Period Concluded for Summer 2025

Benefit distributions for S-EBT have concluded for summer 2025. However, there may be additional distributions in the coming weeks to account for residual cases and applications that include the FE/RE benefits codes. Districts should continue to check the weekly Direct Certification S-EBT lists to ensure free or reduced-price benefits are issued for all eligible students.

Office Hour Addressing the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program: September 5, 2025

The CSDE will conduct a virtual Teams office hour on September 5, 2025, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. This session will address S-EBT updates and answer questions districts may have regarding S-EBT and student eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals. Please [submit S-EBT questions](#) prior to the office hours to help the CSDE make this the most useful time possible:

Use the Teams link below to access the office hour.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 283 310 192 903 4

Passcode: gY7GR72r

Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075, 741086290#](#) United States, Hartford

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 741 086 290#

USDA Foods Cancellations Update

The USDA has cancelled the items below.

- January orders of Strawberry cups, Material Code 100256: Cancelled due to vendor constraints. All orders for October have been purchased.
- Turkey Roasts, Material Code 100125, for October: Cancelled due to no bids received.

Please make other arrangements for these items. There will not be another opportunity to order them.

Reminder: Regional Farm to School Coordinators Available to Support Schools



Welcome back to school! Each school food authority's Regional Farm to School Coordinators is ready to support farm to school plans this busy season and throughout the school year. The team has been busy connecting with SFAs and kitchen staff across the state by leading professional development trainings, attending schoolwide events, and meeting with individual SFAs to identify their local foods procurement needs.

Reach out to your [Regional Farm to School Coordinator](#) for any farm to school needs including:

- assistance with funding opportunities like the [CT Grown for CT Kids Grants](#);
- consultation on [CT Grown for CT Kids Week](#) (October 6th-10th) events and activities;
- spending federal and state local food incentive funding; and
- supporting taste test demos and schoolwide events.



From left: Easy Food Prep professional development at Plymouth, Wellness Fair (before the rush) at Wolcott, Farmer's Market for Canton Staff, and Showcasing Local Food professional development at Greenwich.

Resource Roundup: The School Nutrition Association's 2025–2026 Celebration Calendar

The [School Nutrition Association's 2025–2026 Celebration Calendar](#) is packed with fun food holidays, national observances, and awareness weeks. This calendar can help sponsors bring creativity to their cafeteria every month. From National Pizza Week to World Kindness Day, this go-to tool helps build excitement around school meals. The calendar is:

- perfect for bulletin boards, menus, themed meals, and social media
- focused on including monthly, weekly, and daily observances, and
- designed to support participation and pride in school meal 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_09_03_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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