

The School Lunch Tray: October 8, 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: Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance due October 15, 2025
- CSDE Virtual Office Hour on October 21, 2025: How to Complete and Submit the Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance
- Reminder: Submit Photos for the CT Fresh Great Plates Contest by October 20, 2025 📷
- CSDE Procurement 101 Webinar Series: November 12 and 13, 2025, Register by Friday, October 31, 2025

Need to Know

- Summer EBT (S-EBT) Expungement Period Begins in Late October
- Resource Roundup: Recalls and Public Health Alerts

Good to Know

- School to Farm Field Trips in October 📷



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: Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance due October 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 with an operating balance in excess of 3 months' average expenditures (exceeds three months' average expenditures as indicated on the Financial Report, Due Date September 15, 2025) must submit a [Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance for School Nutrition Programs](#) by October 15, 2025.

For any equipment or services with a unit cost of \$5,000 or greater that is not included on the [Capital Expenditure Approved List for School Food Authority Equipment Purchases](#), SFA's must submit a [Capital Expenditure Request Form](#) in the CNP system.

For any expenditure that benefits other programs (such as cafeteria furniture, lunch aides, and utilities), a Cost Allocation Plan must be submitted to the CSDE in the CNP System

CSDE Virtual Office Hour on October 21, 2025: How to Complete and Submit the Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance on October 21, 2025

The CSDE will conduct a virtual Teams office hour on October 21, 2025, from 10:00-11:00 a.m. for SFAs with an excess operating balance (exceeds three months' average expenditures as indicated on the Financial Report). This session will answer questions on completing and submitting the [Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance for School Nutrition Programs](#), which is due October 15, 2025.

Use the Teams link below to access the office hour.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 211 945 437 970 7

Passcode: fS2DW94D

Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075,,208027172#](#) United States, Hartford

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 208 027 172#

Reminder: Submit Photos for the CT Fresh Great Plates Contest by October 20, 2025



CT Grown for CT Kids Week is the perfect time to snap a photo of the local items on school menus and submit it to the CT Fresh Great Plates Contest.

Remember to keep it "LOCAL" with these tips:

- **L = Lighting:** Look for natural lighting and avoid shadows.
- **O = Observe:** Observe the food on the tray and rearrange to highlight color, texture, and variety.
- **C = Clean:** Remove any food spills, crumbs, or visual distractions from the frame for a clean and professional appearance.
- **A = Angles:** Try different angles. Take a photo from above or from the student's eye level. Find the meal's most visually appealing angle.
- **L = Location:** Stick to a neutral background or get creative and add stickers or student artwork. Make it a school food photo shoot.

For more information and instructions visit the [CT Great Plates Contest](#). Each SFA's [Regional Farm to School Coordinator](#) can assist with tips and assistance to capture that perfect picture.

CSDE Virtual Procurement 101 Training (November 12 and 13, 2025): Register by Friday, October 31, 2025

The CSDE's virtual two-day Procurement 101 Training provides a comprehensive overview of the procurement requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Section 7 CFR 210.21(h) of the NSLP regulations requires that all school personnel with procurement responsibilities associated with the Child Nutrition Programs must attend annual procurement training. Attendance at both sessions is required to complete the training. Registration is required.

- **Required attendance:** All school personnel with procurement responsibilities associated with the Child Nutrition Programs
- **Dates and times:** November 12 and 13, 2025, from 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. each day
- **Registration:** Register by Friday, October 31, 2025, at [CSDE Procurement 101 Training Registration Link](#) or use the QR code below.



- **Questions:** Contact Andy Paul andrew.paul@ct.gov or Monica Pacheco monica.pacheco@ct.gov.

Need to Know

Summer EBT (S-EBT) Expungement Period Begins in Late October

The Summer EBT (S-EBT) benefits issued to eligible children requires that the funds be spent within 122 days from issuance. The funds are a one-time issuance of \$120 per eligible child. If the funds are not fully spent by the end of eligible period, they will be expunged from the children's account and returned to the Federal treasury. Households have begun to receive notifications letting them know that they have unspent funds and to be aware that they will expire after 122 days if unused. If households reach out to SFAs with any questions, please refer them to the S-EBT hotline, [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(S-EBT\) Program](#).

For questions about the S-EBT program please contact David Donovan at David.donovan@ct.gov, or call 860-807-2013. For more information on Summer EBT, refer to the CSDE's [S-EBT Information Session 2025](#).

Resource Roundup: Recalls and Public Health Alerts

The webpages below provide information about recalls for food products and other safety alerts and links to signups for recall alerts.

- [USDA Recalls & Public Health Alerts](#) for recalls of meat, poultry, and egg products.
 - [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) Recalls, Market Withdrawals, & Safety Alerts](#) for all other foods.
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Good to Know

School to Farm Field Trips in October



The CT Fresh Ed Team is offering school to farm field trips that provide opportunities for SFAs and school nutrition staff to visit a farm and learn more about their growing, operations, and processes for selling to schools. A school to farm field trip is planned for every CT Fresh Ed region, but SFAs may attend any convenient date. Join Regional Farm to School Coordinators and peers for a fun fall afternoon on the farm.

Registration: [CT Fresh ED - School to Farm Field Trips 2025](#)

Locations and Dates

Cloverleigh Farm

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

448 Jonathan Trumbull Hwy. Columbia CT

Laurel Glen Farm

Thursday, October 16, 2025

2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

247 Waverly Rd, Shelton, CT 06484

Hungry Reaper Farm

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

122 Thomaston Rd. Morris CT

Ceccarelli Farm at Harrison Hill

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

186 Old Post Rd, Northford, CT 06472

Stone Acres Farm

Thursday, October 23, 2025

2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

393 North Main St. Stonington CT

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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_10_08_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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