

The School Lunch Tray: February 25, 2026

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. 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: Deadline to Place USDA Foods Order for School Year 2026-27 is March 11, 2026
- USDA Foods Office Hours Rescheduled to Monday March 2, 2026
- Reminder Farm to School – Live! and Compass Office Hours 📣

Need to Know

- CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program and Federal LFSIP Redistribution 📣

Good to Know

- None

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Action Items

Reminder: Deadline to Place USDA Foods Order for School Year 2026-27 is March 11, 2026

The Connecticut Food Distribution Program's (FDP) catalog for USDA Foods for school year (SY) 2026-27 is currently open in the Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) online system. Refer to the [February 11, 2026, School Lunch Tray](#) for ordering links and details. The deadline to place orders is **Wednesday, March 11, 2026**. For questions, please contact the [FDP staff](#).

USDA Foods Office Hours Rescheduled to Monday March 2, 2026

Due to the blizzard conditions resulting in school closures, the USDA Foods Office Hours on Monday, February 23, 2026, were cancelled. They are rescheduled to Monday, March 2, 2026.

- Monday March 2, 2026: [9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.](#)
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Reminder Farm to School – Live! and Compass Office Hours



Regional Farm to School Coordinators are hosting multiple opportunities to connect before the end of the month.

Farm to School – Live! Meetings

Happening this week and next week, this month's topic is using local foods in School Breakfast Programs. Attend to share or collect ideas and inspiration from peer directors. Check emails from RCs for timing and meeting information for Farm to School – Live!

CT Fresh Ed Compass Office Hours

Join RCs and the CSDE on March 2, 2026, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. for an informal opportunity to ask questions about the CT Fresh Ed Compass. This is the first of five Compass Office Hours being hosted before the deadline of June 1, 2026.

Compass Office Hours Meeting information:

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/26554009515031?p=33ktSreBNomZzYLCBb>

Meeting ID: 265 540 095 150 31

Passcode: yH6tQ2zn

[Need help?](#) | [System reference](#)

Dial in by phone

+1 475-282-1761,,178898482# United States, Bridgeport

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 178 898 482#

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Need to Know

CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program and Federal LFSIP Redistribution



The CSDE has received numerous inquiries from school food authorities (SFAs) seeking clarification regarding the CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program and the Federal LFSIP Redistribution. The descriptions below outline each incentive program with information on where to access additional details and guidance.

- **CT Fresh Ed Buy Local Program:** This is the Connecticut State funded incentive program. SFAs will receive an email indicating that they are approved after the authorized signer has successfully completed the application. Any SFA who has not received an email should check with their authorized signer and make sure the [application](#) is completed immediately. Each SFA's allocation amounts are listed in the CSDE's document, [CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program School Year 2025-26 Allocations National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#). This is a 50 percent reimbursement for CT Grown items (33 percent for New England and NY). These funds must be spent by September 30, 2026. Submit for reimbursement using the [CT Buy Local Program Payment Request Form](#).
- **Federal LFSIP Reallocation:** SFAs who received an email confirming approval for redistributed Federal LFSIP funds have been provided an additional \$2,415 to be spent and [submitted](#) by May 15, 2026. A list of approved SFAs can be found on the CSDE's document, [Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Redistribution Allocation](#). This is a 100 percent reimbursement for minimally processed food sourced within 400 miles of the school. The application period for these funds has closed.

Questions may be directed to each SFA's individual [Regional Coordinator](#).

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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/2026/slt_02_25_2026.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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