

The School Lunch Tray: April 15, 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: Steps to Take Now for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27, Due July 1, 2026
- Reminder: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 (Full Service) or August 30, 2026 (Vended)
- USDA Foods Orders for School Year 2026-27
- USDA Foods Direct Delivery Inventory at HPC
- Payment Requests for Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Funds Due May 8, 2026 
- CSDE Summer Meal Program Interest Survey Due April 29, 2026
- CT Fresh Ed Compass Office Hours, April 20, 2026
- Save the Date: 2026 CT Farm to School Conference, May 13, 2026 

Need to Know

- The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program
- No Table Talk on April 16, 2026

Good to Know

- Reminder: Serving Up Local Foods In School Meals webinar is Today, April 15, 2026, at 3:30 pm 

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Reminder: Steps to Take Now for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27, Due July 1, 2026

All public school sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must submit the 2026-27 HFC Statement and upload their final board-approved minutes by July 1, 2026. [Operational Memorandum No. 03-26: Requirements for Submitting the HFC Statement for School Year 2026-27](#) provides the required motion language and summarizes the **steps that districts must take now** to ensure the accurate and timely submission of the 2026-27 HFC Statement by the **July 1** deadline.

All Board of Education's (BOEs) **must** vote on whether to participate in the healthy food option of HFC.

- If the BOE votes "yes" to the healthy food option, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is **required**. The BOE may choose to vote on whether to allow beverage exemptions.
- if the BOE votes "no" to the healthy food option, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is **not** required. The BOE may choose to vote on whether to allow beverage exemptions.

The "[Annual HFC Application](#)" section of the CSDE's HFC webpage provides information on the required steps for submitting the annual HFC Statement. The CSDE's 21-minute video, [Completing the Application Process for HFC](#), provides detailed guidance on the HFC application process.

Note: Sponsors do not submit the HFC Statement and final BOE-approved minutes until requested by the CSDE. The CSDE's Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System) will be open to submit the annual HFC Statement in April 2026.

Reminder: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 (Full Service) or August 30, 2026 (Vended)

[Operational Memorandum No. 04-26 Interschool Agreements for School Year 2026-27](#) provides guidance on the requirements and deadlines for submitting interschool agreements to the CSDE. Sponsors that vend or satellite meals to another district are required to submit and receive approval of an annual interschool agreement to the CSDE. This form must be signed by the authorized representative for the providing sponsor and the recipient site.

- 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, 2026**.
- Recipient Site Vended Interschool Agreements must be submitted to the CSDE at least two weeks before the start of the school year and no later than **August 31, 2026**.

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The interschool agreement forms are available under “I” on the CSDE’s [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Operational Memorandum No. 04-26 is available on the CSDE’s [School Nutrition Operational Memos 2026](#) webpage.

USDA Foods Orders for School Year 2026-27

Now that all recipient agencies (RAs) have placed their orders for next school year, the Food Distribution Program (FDP) team has almost completed organizing the orders into full truckloads or finding nearby states to share trucks. RAs may get automated email notifications from WBSCM about changes in the amount of food (i.e., cases or pounds) or cancellations. Please remember that all orders can change until they are purchased.

Direct delivery orders for Connecticut should be finished by the end of April. Processing orders should be completed before the new school year starts. For planning, RAs should begin running monthly Requisition Status Reports for next school year starting May 1. It is important to review these reports regularly to keep track of any order changes. WBSCM updates the purchase price of items regularly. This can change until the item is fully purchased and moved to the "purchased" status. While the order is still in progress, RAs may notice changes in their entitlement due to cancellations, adjustments in the amounts ordered, or changes in pricing. The entitlement will keep changing until all items are purchased.

RAs are responsible for ordering at least 95 percent of their available entitlement when placing orders, but changes are expected. Please continue to monitor USDA Foods for next year and contact the [FDP team](#) with any questions.

USDA Foods Direct Delivery Inventory at HPC

Only three deliveries remain for the current school year. RAs that have not taken delivery of at least 60 percent of their inventory at this time may have product swept from their account. All inventory must be taken by June deliveries. Please contact the [FDP team](#) with any questions.

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Payment Requests for Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Funds Due May 8, 2026



The deadline for school food authorities (SFAs) to submit requests for payments under LFSIP has changed from May 15, 2026, to May 8, 2026. **The due date for expenditure of LFSIP redistributed funds remains April 30, as originally stated.** SFAs must ensure that all requests for payment are submitted through the updated [Federal LFSIP Payment Request Form](#), along with all required supporting documentation, no later than May 8, 2026.

Any money not spent by April 30, 2026, and not submitted for payment by May 8, 2026, will be forfeited and may be reallocated at the CSDE's discretion. If any SFAs think the shortened deadline will hinder their ability to request payment, please reach out to dawn.crayco@uconn.edu by April 30, 2026.

The system is currently open, and reimbursement requests may now be submitted through the [Federal LFSIP Payment Request Form](#).

CSDE Summer Meal Program Interest Survey Due April 29, 2026

The CSDE sent a link this week to program year 2026 sponsors of the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the National School Lunch Program regarding the Summer Meal Program Interest Survey. The purpose of the survey is to identify school districts interested in operating a Summer Meal Program in summer 2026.

Please notify the [Summer Meal Program Technical Assistance County Contact](#) immediately if the survey link was not received and the district is considering operating a Summer Meal Program in summer 2026. The survey and a spreadsheet of proposed Summer Meal sites must be submitted to the CSDE by April 29, 2026.

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CT Fresh Ed Compass Office Hours, April 20, 2026



Join UConn Extension and the CSDE on Monday April 20, 2026, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. for an informal opportunity to ask questions about the CT Fresh Ed Compass. This is the third 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](tel:+14752821761), [178898482#](tel:+178898482) United States, Bridgeport

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 178 898 482#

Save the Date: 2026 CT Farm to School Conference, May 13, 2026

Save the date for the 2026 CT Farm to School Conference on May 13, 2026. Gather for a day of learning, connection, and inspiration—all centered around Farm to School. This is a great opportunity to generate ideas, make plans, and hear from peers about how they are deepening their efforts across the cafeteria, classroom, and community. Workshops are designed for a range of school roles, including foodservice directors, business managers, teachers, and cafeteria managers.

This event will take place from 8:30 to 3:30 at the Environmental Learning Center of CT in Bristol. This event will count toward professional standards requirements. Morning refreshments and lunch are included with the registration.

More details and registration information are coming soon.

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Need to Know

The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program

The Summer EBT (S-EBT) program will be issuing benefits to eligible students for the summer of 2026. Most eligible students are automatically qualified for a one-time \$120 issuance through participation in state programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), and Husky A. However, there may be students that are eligible for S-EBT that do not qualify automatically and will need to fill out an S-EBT application. S-EBT applications are available to submit online or through a downloaded paper application. These applications are available on the CT DSS [S-EBT](#) website.

The attached flyers contain information for SFAs and families on accessing the program and how to submit S-EBT applications. Thank you for your support in communicating this information with your staff, students, and families.

For more information, contact David Donovan at David.donovan@ct.gov.

No Table Talk on April 16, 2026

Because many districts are on spring vacation this week, Table Talk will not be held on April 16, 2026.

Good to Know

Reminder: Serving Up Local Foods In School Meals webinar is Today, April 15, 2026, at 3:30 pm

Chef Maraiah Popeleski-Tilley, food service director for the Mansfield Public Schools and Region 19, will be moderating an expert panel of representatives from innovative organizations driving the scratch cook movement. The panelists will provide insight and resources on how you too can bring more scratch cooking to school districts.

Register in advance at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/KqnjJb0JSIq0FN4DdaBprg>. Registrants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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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_04_15_2026.pdf.



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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf> from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

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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SUMMER EBT IS BACK!

Summer EBT (S-EBT) provides a one-time payment of **\$120 of grocery benefits** to eligible children over the summer.

Most eligible children are automatically enrolled S-EBT, but some will need to apply.

Learn more about it today!



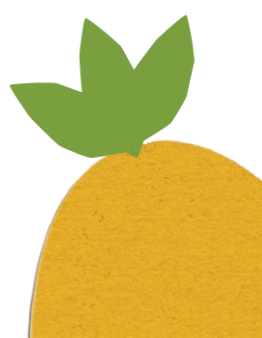

Visit portal.ct.gov/sebt

OR



Scan the QR code!

Have questions or need extra support?
Visit portal.ct.gov/sebt or call **1-844-503-6871**



Connecticut Summer EBT Outreach for Schools



**SUMMER EBT
IS BACK!**

Summer EBT (S-EBT) provides a one-time payment of \$120 in grocery benefits for each eligible child over the summer.

Most eligible children are automatically enrolled in the program, but some will need to apply.

Schools are crucial to ensuring no child goes hungry during summer break. Help families in your community understand, apply for, and use S-EBT by sharing information about this program during these pivotal times.

KEY MESSAGES TO SHARE WITH FAMILIES THIS YEAR



Spring Messaging
AFTER SPRING BREAK
See if you are eligible and apply for \$120 in grocery benefits over the summer!
Visit portal.ct.gov/sebt to find out more.



End of School Messaging
THE LAST MONTH OF SCHOOL
When school is out, Summer EBT is in!
S-EBT benefits are loaded onto your existing card or mailed to your address. If you haven't received S-EBT, you can still apply.



Over the Summer Messaging
A MONTH BEFORE DEADLINE
Don't miss out on S-EBT support! If you haven't received S-EBT yet, there's still time! The deadline to apply is August 31, 2026.

Have questions or need extra support?
Visit portal.ct.gov/sebt or call **1-844-503-6871**

