

The School Lunch Tray: July 1, 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.

Happy Fourth of July!



Action Items

- Registration Deadline Extended to July 7, 2026: Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Virtual Training, August 4, 11, and 18, 2026

Need to Know

- What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2026-27
- New Summer EBT (S-EBT) Eligibility Checker on Department of Social Services (DSS) Website

Good to Know

- None

The School Lunch Tray: July 1, 2026

Action Items

Registration Deadline Extended to July 7, 2026: Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Virtual Training, August 4, 11, and 18, 2026

The CSDE is hosting a great training opportunity for sponsors of the school nutrition programs on August 4, 11, and 18, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) [Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership](#) Lite, is a three-day **no cost** virtual training program planned specifically for new and aspiring directors of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. All school nutrition directors hired within the past year are **required** to attend this training program. **Food service directors who are retiring or leaving and are in the process of hiring a new director should consider reserving a slot to ensure that the new person can attend.**

School Nutrition Program Consultant, Lonnie Burt, will be back again this year to conduct the webinar. This training will provide an overview of the many responsibilities of the school nutrition director. The goal is to build the new director's knowledge base, provide multiple tools and resources, allow opportunities to network, and improve confidence in operating the school nutrition programs.

Space is limited to 40 participants, so register today to reserve a seat. Attendees must be able to download all training materials. No hard copies will be mailed.

The registration deadline has been extended to **July 7, 2026**. For more information refer to the attached flyer.

The School Lunch Tray: July 1, 2026

Need to Know

What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2026-27

The CSDE's training program, [What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#), is updated for school year 2026-27 to reflect the current meal pattern requirements and nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, including the updates required by the USDA final rules, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and [Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs](#).

What's in a Meal consists of 18 recorded modules that provide comprehensive guidance on complying with the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, ASP, and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP.

- Module 1: Introduction to Training
- Module 2: Introduction to School Meal Patterns
- Module 3: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern
- Module 4: School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Pattern
- Module 5: Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern (new)
- Module 6: Dietary Specifications
- Module 7: Meal Pattern Documentation for School Menus
- Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products
- Module 9: Milk Component
- Module 10: Meats/Meat Alternates Component
- Module 11: Fruits Component
- Module 12: Vegetables Component
- Module 13: Grains Component
- Module 14: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement
- Module 15: Grain Ounce Equivalents
- Module 16: Water Availability During Meal Service
- Module 17: Offer versus serve (OVS) in the NSLP
- Module 18: Offer versus serve (OVS) in the SBP

This training program applies to all sponsors of the school nutrition programs that serve meals and afterschool snacks to grades K-12, including public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs). The target audience includes food service directors, managers, and staff.

School nutrition personnel may use this training program to count toward the annual training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Professionals. For

The School Lunch Tray: July 1, 2026

more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules](#).

New Summer EBT (S-EBT) Eligibility Checker on Department of Social Services (DSS) Website

The DSS [S-EBT](#) website now includes an Eligibility Checker. This feature allows households to easily predetermine if they may be eligible for S-EBT benefits prior to submitting an application. Visit this website to access the Eligibility Checker and more information about S-EBT.

The School Lunch Tray: July 1, 2026

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_07_01_2026.pdf.



The School Lunch Tray: July 1, 2026

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL NUTRITION LEADERSHIP Lite



**Virtual Training Program: August 4, 11, and 18, 2026
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is hosting the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) [Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Lite](#). This three-day virtual training program is intended for new and aspiring school nutrition program directors. Lessons provide an overview of school nutrition programs, define the role and responsibilities of a director, and review the relationship between local policies and state/federal regulations. **This training is required for new school nutrition directors hired within the past year.**

Registration

Register by **June 26, 2026**, at [Registration for Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership](#). There is no cost to attend but preregistration is required. *Attendees must be able to download all training materials. No hard copies will be mailed.*

Additional Training Hours

The ICN strongly recommends that participants take an additional 17.5 hours of ICN iLearn online courses prior to the first training day. More information will be provided after participants register.

Professional Standards

Key Areas: 1: Nutrition; 2: Operations, 3: Administration, and 4: Communications and Marketing

Lesson Topics

- Program accountability, integrity, and the role of the director
- Reimbursable school meals
- Meal accommodations
- Food production and operation management
- Procurement and inventory management
- Customer experience, merchandising, and food presentation
- Human resource management
- Workplace safety
- Federal regulations
- Farm to School
- Effective goal setting using Smart Goals
- Marketing your school nutrition programs
- Essential Key Performance Indicators series
- Food Safety
- Designing an emergency preparedness plan

More Details

- **Training link:** Attendees will receive the training link and applicable materials after registering.
- **CEUs:** 24.0 CEU hours
- **Questions?** Contact Erica Covington-Ford, ICN Training Coordinator, at erica@theicn.org.



CONNECTICUT
Education

The Connecticut State Department of Education is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

Connecticut State Department of Education • May 2026