

The School Lunch Tray: March 10, 2021

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

The School Lunch Tray contains the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly e-mail notifications for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. This week's topics are listed below.

- USDA Extends Free Meals to Children through Summer 2021 due to Pandemic
- Distribution of Meals during Extended School Breaks
- Operational Memorandum No. 02-21: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2021-22
- Operational Memorandum No. 03-21: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2021-22
- Final Reminder: USDA Foods Ordering Deadline is March 12, 2021
- Excess USDA Foods for March 2021
- March's List of Available USDA Foods: Orders due Wednesday, March 17, 2021
- New Resource from the Connecticut WIC Program: Maximizing Your WIC and SNAP Benefits
- National Nutrition Month: March 2021
- Hunger Free America's Summer Associate Program 2021
- Resource Roundup: Considerations for Providing Meal Components in Bulk Sizes at Non-congregate Meal Service Sites

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. Thank you.



USDA Extends Free Meals to Children through Summer 2021 due to Pandemic

On March 9, 2021, the USDA Food and Nutrition Services released the extensions of needed flexibilities for summer 2021 operations for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. These flexibilities remain necessary to operate these programs this summer, given the ongoing public health and economic crisis. The current waivers are in effect through June 30, 2021, and the waivers listed below are effective beginning **July 1, 2021**.

- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #73](#): Child Nutrition Waiver Update
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #74](#): Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibilities for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 4
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #75](#): Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-Congregate Feeding for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 6
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #76](#): Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 6
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #77](#): Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility Waivers for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 4
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #78](#): Nationwide Waiver of Meal Service Time Restrictions for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 3
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #79](#): Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities in the Summer Food Service Program for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 3
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #80](#): Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 3
- [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #81](#): Nationwide Waiver to Waive First Week Site Visits in the Summer Food Service Program for Summer 2021 Operations – EXTENSION 3

Effective July 1, 2021, the regular SFSP meal pattern requirements will be in place for the SFSP. While the current SFSP meal pattern waiver will remain in place until June 30, 2021 to provide time to transition, operators should strive to meet the standards as soon as possible. FNS will continue to offer a NSLP meal pattern waiver for summer 2021, and this flexibility will also continue to apply to SSO operations for summer 2021.

Distribution of Meals during Extended School Breaks

The CSDE received USDA authorization to approve Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sponsors and sponsors of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) operating during school year 2020-21 to distribute more than one week's worth of meals at once during extended school breaks, such as spring break. Sponsors interested in this option **must receive prior written approval** from the CSDE.

This flexibility does **not** apply to sponsors operating the NSLP and/or School Breakfast Program. Regular school operations cannot be authorized to distribute more than one week's worth of meals at once during extended school breaks.

Important Considerations

SFSP and SSO sponsors that receive approval from the CSDE to distribute more than one week's worth of meals at once during extended school breaks must:

- consider the expected duration of the school break (when schools are closed and virtual instruction is not occurring) and the sponsor's capacity to effectively execute this approach, including meeting state or local food safety requirements. During extended breaks, sponsors are still required to meet the criteria outlined in question #18 (providing meals in bulk) in [USDA Memo SP 13-2020, CACFP 07-2020, SFSP 06-2020: Child Nutrition Program Nationwide Waivers: Questions and Answers](#).
- consider food safety concerns and households' access to refrigeration, stoves, microwaves, etc., when providing food that requires refrigeration/storage or further preparation, such as reheating. All sponsors implementing the USDA non-congregate feeding waiver and distributing meals for consumption at home **must** provide instructions to help students and parents/guardians identify which foods require refrigeration, cooking, or heating for food safety. For more information, refer to the [School Lunch Tray from January 25, 2021](#), and review the CSDE's new resource, [Food Safety Guidelines for Distribution Meals for students' Consumption at Home](#).
- ensure program integrity and that meals are being served in the appropriate quantity to eligible children. For additional guidance, please review the CSDE's resource, [Considerations for Providing Meal Components in Bulk Sizes at Non-congregate Meal Service Sites](#).
- inform households of the availability and location of free meals for children. At a minimum, information available to the public should include the following components:
 - site name;
 - site address;
 - start and end dates of service (if serving over spring break, provide the dates of spring break);
 - days meals are distributed (this may include Saturday and Sunday for the SFSP and SSO);

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- type of meals served (breakfast, lunch, snack, supper);
- number of meals distributed at one time (e.g., a site distributes breakfast and lunch (two meals) for Monday and Tuesday (two days) on Monday, for a total of four meals); and
- times of meal distribution.

SFSP and SSO sponsors interested in providing more than one week's worth of meals over an extended school break **must e-mail their CSDE contact person** for further instructions.

SSO sponsors should contact their [CSDE county consultant](#). SFSP sponsors should contact [Caroline Cooke](#) and [Terese Maineri](#).

Operational Memorandum No. 02-21: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2021-22

[Operational Memorandum No. 02-21: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2021-22](#) is now available on the CSDE's [School Nutrition Operational Memos 2021](#) webpage. Sponsors that sell USDA meals or snacks to another district or school during school year 2021-22 must complete and submit an interschool agreement to the CSDE. The **Full-service Interschool Agreement form** must be submitted to the CSDE by **July 1, 2021**. The **Recipient Site Vended Interschool Agreements** must be submitted to the CSDE at least two weeks before the start of the school year, but no later than **August 30, 2021**. The interschool agreement forms are available under "I" on the CSDE's [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Operational Memorandum No. 03-21: Process for Submitting the HFC Statement for School Year 2021-22

Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that each local board of education or governing authority for all Connecticut public school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must take action annually to certify whether all food items sold to students will or will not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. This includes all public schools, regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical High School System, charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, and endowed academies.

[Operational Memorandum No. 03-21: Requirements for Submitting the HFC Statement for School Year 2021-22](#) is now available on the CSDE's [School Nutrition Operational Memos 2021](#) webpage. This memo provides the required motion language and summarizes the **steps that districts must take now** to ensure the accurate and timely submission of the 2021-22 HFC Statement by the deadline of **July 1, 2021**.

- All BOEs for public schools participating in the NSLP must vote on the **healthy food option** using the exact language contained in Operational Memorandum No. 03-21.
- BOEs that vote “yes” for the healthy food option must also vote on **food exemptions** using the exact language contained in Operational Memorandum No. 03-21.
- All BOEs may choose to vote on **beverage exemptions** using the exact language contained Operational Memorandum No. 03-21.

Districts must schedule the required votes at a meeting of the board of education or governing authority that occurs **before June 30, 2021**, so the district can submit the HFC Statement and board-approved meeting minutes to the CSDE by **July 1, 2021**.

Final Reminder: USDA Foods Ordering Deadline is March 12, 2021

Please remember that all USDA Foods orders must be placed in WBSCM by **March 12, 2021**. Refer to the School Lunch Tray from [February 10, 2021](#), for the details and necessary links for ordering USDA Foods. Contact the [FDP team](#) with any questions.

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Excess USDA Foods for March 2021

For the remainder of this school year, the Food Distribution Program (FDP) will accept Recipient Agency (RA) requests on a monthly basis to order excess USDA Foods. RAs will submit orders using the [Request to Order USDA Foods Form](#). **Note:** This form lists all USDA Foods in Connecticut, but not all foods will be available to order every month.

- On the second Wednesday of every month, the School Lunch Tray will contain a list of all available USDA Foods material codes and descriptions that can be ordered for that month. Please do **not** submit orders for foods that are not listed.
- There is a 12-case minimum for each request. Cases can include different material codes. For example, a RA could order four cases of cheese and eight cases of applesauce (12 cases total).
- RAs have one week to submit orders, which are due by the end of business on the third Wednesday of every month.
- The FDP will not process orders of less than 12 cases; orders of material codes that are not available for the month; and orders received after the third Wednesday of the month.
- If orders exceed the available product, the FDP will randomize the orders. RAs might receive all, some, or none of their order based on availability and order randomization. The FDP will notify RAs by e-mail if any requests cannot be filled.
- A receipt will be provided for products received. The receipt will indicate the total number of cases being transferred into the RA's account, and the average value per case of received items. These items will be entitlement free, but the HPC delivery fee of \$4.50 per case still applies. These transfers should show up on the RA's HPC allocation reports within one month.
- **Orders placed the prior month that were not filled fully or partially will rollover. Please do not send in a duplicate order.** You may send in an order for additional items. This will be added to your original order if there are any items remaining from the prior month.
- Note: If even **one** item from your order is filled, the remainder of the order will NOT rollover. Please place a new order if you have received any part of your requested order, and you wish to receive any further excess USDA Foods.

Note: RAs must have a current Direct Delivery account with HPC in order to submit a request. A USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable account is not the same as a Direct Delivery account. If you do not have a Direct Delivery account with HPC but would like to order some of the available USDA Foods, please contact the [FDP staff](#) for assistance.

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March's List of Available USDA Foods: Orders due Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Please submit orders by end of business on **Wednesday, March 17, 2021**. The next order date will be Wednesday, April 14, 2021. Please contact the [FDP staff](#) with questions.

Dairy
100002 - Shredded White Cheddar Cheese Bag-6/5 LB
100034 - Lite Shredded Mozzarella Cheese FRZ Box-30 LB
100022 - Part Skim Mozzarella Cheese FRZ LVS-8/6 LB
100019 - White Cheese Slices LVS-6/5 LB
Nuts and Seeds
100935 - Sunflower Seed Butter 6-5#s
Fruits and Juices
100242 - Wild Frozen Blueberries CTN-8/3 LB
110723 - Dried Cranberries PKG-300/1.16 OZ
110859 - Mixed Berry Frozen Cup-96/4 OZ
110651 - Orange Juice Cup FRZ-96/4 OZ
100238 - Freestone Peach Slices FRZ CTN-12/2 LB
110860 - Strawberry Slices UNSWT IQF-CTN-6/5 LB
Meat
110346 - 100% Beef Patty (90/10) FRZ 2.0 MMA CTN-40 LB
100134 - Beef Crumbles W/SPP PKG-4/10 LB
100158 - Fine Ground Beef FRZ CTN-40 LB
110711 - Beef Patty CKD FRZ 2.0 MMA CTN-40 LB
110348 - Soy Beef Patty 85/15 FRZ 2.0 MMA CTN-40 LB
Pork
110730 - Pulled Pork CKD PKG-8/5 LB
Poultry
100098 - Cut-Up Frozen Chicken CTN-40 LB
100101 - Diced Chicken CTN-40 LB
110921 - Unbreaded Chicken Fillets FRZ CTN-30 LB
110931 - Round Egg Patty FRZ CTN-25 LB
100121 - Frozen Deli Turkey Breast CTN-40 LB
110554 - Sliced Deli Turkey Breast FRZ PKG-8/5 LB
Vegetables
100357 - Oven Fry Potatoes PKG-6/5 LB

New Resource from the Connecticut WIC Program: Maximizing Your WIC and SNAP Benefits

This handout summarizes the benefits and requirements of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

National Nutrition Month: March 2021

March is **National Nutrition Month 2021** with the theme “Personalize Your Plate.” Celebrate the dedication and commitment of school foodservice professionals as they provide healthy, nutritious meals to the children in their communities. School foodservice professionals provide the variety and options for children to personalize their meals every day. This past year has shown the community how school foodservice professionals provide a vital service in ensuring children are well nourished and ready to learn.

This week is **National School Breakfast Week**. It’s not too late to celebrate the great breakfasts that schools serve! Let students know a school breakfast provides a great start to the day.

Additionally, today (March 10) is **Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) Day**. Thank you to all the RDNs who work in the school nutrition field advocating for the great meals schools provide their students!



Hunger Free America's Summer Associate Program 2021

Hunger Free America is recruiting sites to host 10-week AmeriCorps VISTA associates this summer for outreach and site work for summer meals programs, as well as other appropriate summer anti-hunger and anti-poverty activities. Eligible entities for hosting include nonprofit groups, tribal governments, state child nutrition agencies, and school districts. More information about the summer program is available at

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdxQoC38fwBORI6-rS-](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdxQoC38fwBORI6-rS-HwrynKSIEOKvgDYclt3QJLGGta8ctw/viewform)

[HwrynKSIEOKvgDYclt3QJLGGta8ctw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdxQoC38fwBORI6-rS-HwrynKSIEOKvgDYclt3QJLGGta8ctw/viewform). For questions, please contact Vicky Dumbuya, VISTA Director, at VDumbuya@hungerfreeamerica.org or 212-825-0028 x 219.

Resource Roundup: Considerations for Providing Meal Components in Bulk Sizes at Non-congregate Meal Service Sites

This week's Resource Roundup highlights information that sponsors of the Child Nutrition Programs must consider before choosing to distribute foods in bulk from approved non-congregate meal service sites during school year 2020-21. Join us for tomorrow's Table Talk (March 11, 2021, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.) as we review the CSDE's resource, [Considerations for Providing Meal Components in Bulk Sizes at Non-congregate Meal Service Sites](#).

Registration for the March Table Talk series is available at

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8533924782955650575>. To submit questions in advance, visit https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezIN3YJJqjkPGND.



For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray Table Talk](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT_03_10_2021.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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