

The School Lunch Tray: March 31, 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.

- Operational Memorandum No. 04-21: Annual Notification Requirement for all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP): Due June 15, 2021: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
- CSDE's Updated School Wellness Policies Webpage: Steps and Resources for Completing the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment
- CSDE's LSWP Triennial Assessment Webinars: April 20, 2021, and April 27, 2021
- Revised CSDE Resources: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools
- CSDE Child Nutrition Unit's School Lunch Tray Table Talk Webinars for April 2021
- Team Nutrition's New Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition
- New Slide Presentations Highlighting Team Nutrition Resources
- New Report Features Connecticut's Attendance Data for School Year 2020-21: Chronic Absence Rates Alarming High
- Grant Opportunities from Albertsons Companies Foundation: Nourishing Neighbors Program to Support the Child Nutrition Programs (Due April 12, 2021)
- Grant Opportunities from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA): Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (Due May 4, 2021)
- Resource Roundup: CEP Data Collection Guidance for School-level Eligibility

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



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Operational Memorandum No. 04-21: Annual Notification Requirement for all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP): Due June 15, 2021: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

[CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 04-21](#) outlines the steps for collecting timely, school-specific data to inform the development of the 2021-22 CEP eligibility lists. All NSLP and SBP sponsors (regardless of participation or intent to participate in the CEP) **must submit** school-level CEP eligibility data to the CSDE no later than **June 15, 2021**. This annual notification requirement does not apply to residential child care institutions (RCCIs) or sponsors of the Special Milk Program (SMP).

CSDE's Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) Triennial Assessment Webinars: April 20, 2021, and April 27, 2021,

As a reminder, each local education agency (LEA) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must complete the first assessment of their local school wellness policy (LSWP) by **June 30, 2021**. The LEA's assessment must indicate: the extent to which schools are in compliance with the district policy; the extent to which the local wellness policy compares to model local school wellness policies; and the progress made in attaining the goals of the local wellness policy.

The CSDE and University of Connecticut (UConn) Rudd Center are offering a **LSWP triennial assessment training webinar**. This webinar is available on two different dates:

- April 20, 2021, from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
- April 27, 2021, from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

To register, e-mail your preferred date to Glenda Stuckey at glenda.stuckey@ct.gov. If you are unable to attend either webinar, please visit the [Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessments](#) section of the CSDE's School Wellness Policies webpage.

For questions, please contact Fionnuala Brown at fionnuala.brown@ct.gov or 860-807-2129.

CSDE's Updated School Wellness Policies Webpage: Steps and Resources for Completing the LSWP Triennial Assessment

The CSDE recently updated the [School Wellness Policies](#) webpage to include a new section on [Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessments](#). This section provides guidance for LEAs on the requirements, steps, and resources for completing the LSWP triennial assessment. The resources include LSWP worksheets and videos, which were developed through a partnership between the CSDE and the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity.

Revised CSDE Resources: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools

As a reminder, the federal and state laws for competitive foods in Connecticut public schools are **still in effect** during the current COVID-19 public health emergency. “Competitive foods” are all foods and beverages available for sale to students on school premises, other than reimbursable meals served through the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). Under Section 10-215b-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, competitive foods also include certain foods and beverages that are given to students while CNPs are operating.

The federal and state laws for competitive foods apply differently to public schools that choose the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under C.G.S. Section 10-215f (HFC public schools) and public schools that do not choose this option (non-HFC public schools). Some of the federal requirements supersede the state requirements, and some of the state requirements supersede the federal requirements. Some requirements apply during the school day, while others apply at all times or while CNPs are operating. The CSDE’s guides and resources for competitive foods explain when the federal and state laws supersede each other, and how they apply to common sources of competitive foods in HFC and non-HFC schools, such as cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, culinary programs, and other sources.

The chart below summarizes the CSDE’s recently updated resources for competitive foods in HFC public schools and non-HFC public schools. If you are currently using any documents dated prior to **March 2021**, please discard and replace with the updated versions.

The CSDE encourages school food authorities (SFAs) to share these resources with other school staff who are responsible for sales of competitive foods to students on school premises, such as vending machine operators, school store operators, fundraiser coordinators, and culinary staff.

For additional guidance and resources, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage. For questions regarding the requirements for competitive foods, please contact Susan Fiore at susan.fiore@ct.gov.

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CSDE's Resources for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools		
Topic and Description	HFC Public Schools ¹	Non-HFC Public Schools ²
<p>Competitive foods guide Provides comprehensive guidance on complying with the federal and state laws for competitive foods. Identifies how the laws apply to a variety of settings, such as afterschool program and activities, cafeterias, concession stands, culinary arts programs, family and consumer sciences classes, fundraisers, meetings, summer school programs, school stores, vending machines, and other sources of competitive foods in schools. Includes charts summarizing how the federal and state requirements apply to selling and giving specific types of foods and beverages.</p>	<p>Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools</p>	<p>Guide to Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools</p>
<p>Sections 10-215b-1 and 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Provides guidance on complying with Sections 10-215b-1 and 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, which address restrictions for selling and dispensing (giving) candy, coffee, tea, and soft drinks to students on school premises; and the accrual of income from sales of foods and beverages to students on school premises.</p>	<p>Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations</p>	<p>Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations</p>
<p>Resource list Provides a list of webpages and resources to assist schools with meeting the federal and state requirements for competitive foods in schools.</p>	<p>Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools</p>	<p>Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools</p>
<p>Requirements for competitive foods Provides an overview of the federal and state requirements for selling and giving competitive foods to students in public schools.</p>	<p>Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools</p>	<p>Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools</p>

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CSDE’s Resources for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools		
Topic and Description	HFC Public Schools ¹	Non-HFC Public Schools ²
<p>Summary chart Provides charts that summarize when the federal and state requirements for competitive foods apply, which foods and beverages they restrict, whether they apply to selling or giving foods and beverages to students, and how they apply to different sources of competitive foods.</p>	<p>Summary Chart: State and Federal Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools</p>	<p>Summary Chart: State and Federal Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools</p>
<p>Culinary programs Summarizes the federal and state requirements for selling and giving foods and beverages to students from culinary programs in Connecticut public schools that participate in the NSLP.</p>	<p>Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in HFC Public Schools</p>	<p>Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in Non-HFC Public Schools</p>
<p>Fundraisers Summarizes the federal and state requirements for selling and giving foods and beverages to students from fundraisers in Connecticut public schools that participate in the NSLP.</p>	<p>Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in HFC Public Schools</p>	<p>Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Non-HFC Public Schools</p>
<p>School stores Summarizes the federal and state requirements for selling and giving foods and beverages to students from school stores, kiosks, and other school-based enterprises in Connecticut public schools that participate in the NSLP.</p>	<p>Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in HFC Public Schools</p>	<p>Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Non-HFC Public Schools</p>
<p>Vending machines Summarizes the federal and state requirements for selling and giving foods and beverages to students from vending machines in Connecticut public schools that participate in the NSLP.</p>	<p>Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in HFC Public Schools</p>	<p>Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in Non-HFC Public Schools</p>
<p>¹ All resources for HFC public schools are available in the “Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s HFC webpage.</p> <p>² All resources for non-HFC public schools are available in the “Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Competitive Foods in Schools webpage</p>		

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CSDE Child Nutrition Unit's School Lunch Tray Table Talk for April 2021

Join the CSDE Child Nutrition Unit for the April series of the "School Lunch Tray Table Talk" webinars on **Thursdays from 2:00-3:00 p.m.**

- Thursday, April 1, 2021 from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. EST
- Thursday, April 8, 2021 from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. EST
- Thursday, April 15, 2021, and April 22, 2021: *No Table Talk during spring breaks*
- Thursday, April 29, 2021 from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. EST

Table Talk takes a deeper dive into the weekly topics of the School Lunch Tray, highlights the weekly Resource Roundup, and serves as the CSDE's "office hours" for your questions about school nutrition programs. Participants may ask questions about the SLT topics or any other topics. To submit questions in advance, visit https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezIN3YJJqjkPGND.

Registration for the April Table Talk series is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7940814127249762576>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Team Nutrition Launches New Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition

Team Nutrition recently launched the [Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition \(CICN\)](#), a new division of the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) that provides school nutrition professionals with in-depth, hands-on culinary training and resources that are foundational for scratch-based cooking and the creation of culinary-inspired school meals that are healthy, flavorful, and student-approved. The CICN's current culinary resources and events are listed below.

- **CICN Website:** The [CICN website](#) is an online information center that provides school nutrition program operators access to valuable culinary resources for their program operations. This website serves as a centralized place to store, organize, manage, and share culinary knowledge and tools developed by the CICN, state agencies, and allied organizations with school nutrition program operators.
- **i-Bites Recipe Videos:** The [i-Bites Recipe Videos](#) are a series of short culinary videos designed to provide school nutrition program operators with topic-based culinary information and resources.
- **CICN Culinary Webinar Series:** Starting April 1, 2021, the CICN will host a one-hour monthly culinary webinar series that occurs on the first Thursday of each month and focuses on culinary topics that enhance the overall cafeteria experience, including “Visually Marketing Foods,” “Scratch-made Salad Dressings and Condiments,” and “How and When to Use Fresh Herbs.” Register for the April 1 webinar at https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kF-dTlzpR76T1xfNLDLxmg.
- **The MixUp Podcast Series:** Chef Patrick Garmon, Associate Director of Culinary Education and Training at the CICN, interviews school nutrition program chefs from around the country to take a peek inside their kitchen operations and see how they are inspiring child nutrition. The MixUp Podcast series is available at theicn.org/podcast.
- **Coming Soon - Grab & Go Recipes:** The CICN will launch a series of scratch-based cooking recipes for grab & go meal service that can be easily produced in school nutrition program kitchens nationwide using minimal equipment and readily available foods. Each recipe card will feature standardized recipes in 50 and 100 serving quantities, as well as visual step-by-step instructions for production of the recipe.

New Slide Presentations Highlighting Team Nutrition Resources

The USDA's Team Nutrition initiative recently released [three new slide presentations](#) that highlight Team Nutrition resources. These ready-to-go presentations include speaker's notes and are designed to share Team Nutrition resource updates and releases with staff and local operators.

- Team Nutrition School Meals Resources
- Team Nutrition CACFP Resources
- Team Nutrition Summer Meals Resources

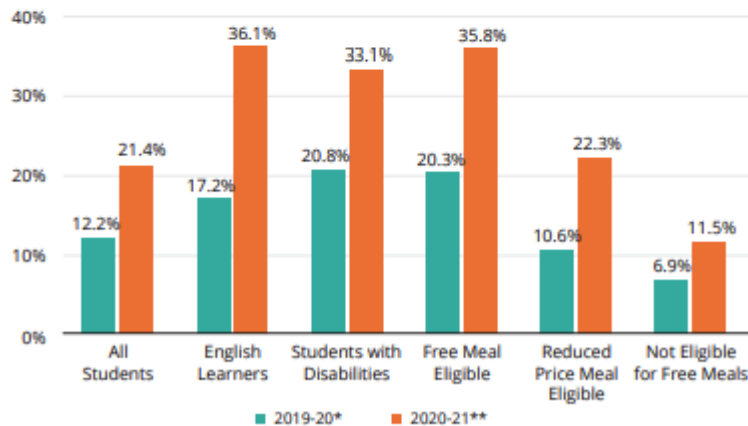
New National Report Features Connecticut’s Attendance Data for School Year 2020-21: Chronic Absence Rates Alarming High

A recent report by Attendance Works, [Using Chronic Absence to Map Interrupted Schooling, Instructional Loss and Educational Inequity: Insights from School Year 2017-18 Data](#), featured Connecticut as the first state to collect, analyze, and publish monthly attendance data for the current school year. Preliminary data from the State of Connecticut and a cross-section of school districts in California suggests that chronic absence rates during the 2020-21 school year will be alarmingly high, especially for the most vulnerable populations. Typically, states collect chronic absence data at the end of the school year and release it publicly in the fall or the winter of the subsequent year. As a result of challenges brought on by COVID-19, the CSDE took the unusual step of collecting monthly attendance data, and regularly releasing it to the public. Attendance Works believes this to be the first publicly available state data on chronic absence for 2020-21 school year. Connecticut’s preliminary data for the current school year is featured in the report’s *Appendix A: Estimating Chronic Absence for 2020-21 School Year*.

Connecticut’s chronic absence data, released for the first time in January, showed troubling increases, especially for English-learners, Students with Disabilities, and Students in Poverty. See Figure 7.

FIGURE 7.

Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Connecticut, Year-to-Date as of December 2020, compared to the 2019-20 School Year



*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020.

**Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

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Grant Opportunities from Albertsons Companies Foundation: Nourishing Neighbors Program to Support the Child Nutrition Programs (Due April 12, 2021)

FRAC serves on the advisory council for Nourishing Neighbors, a program of the Albertsons Companies Foundation, and encourages you to apply for grants that can help support your summer program or your work to link families to nutrition benefits. Nourishing Neighbors, an initiative of the Albertsons Companies Foundation, has established a fund to help local families impacted by the current crisis. This new opportunity includes two priority areas. For both opportunities, intermediary organizations, sponsors, and schools can apply for funding.

- **Summer Meals Grant:** Funds will be used to support organizations in their efforts to provide summer meals to children.
- **Connecting Families and Children to Federal Meal Programs:** Funds will be used to support organizations in their efforts to help enroll families to SNAP, WIC, and P-EBT, and connect schoolchildren to school meals.

Programs eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, the following: Outreach; Transportation; Staffing; Capacity (technical assistance, equipment, packaging); Innovations (new ideas/concept to connect families to federal benefits); and Advocacy.

Nourishing Neighbors Grant Information	
Deadline	April 12, 2021, by 11:59 Pacific Time
Time Terms	The Summer Meals Grant will cover June 2021 to December 2021. The grant period for Connecting Families and Children to Federal Programs is up to one year from the award date.
Geographic Restrictions	Applications will only be considered for organizations working in counties in states with Albertsons Companies stores. States with eligible counties include: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming.
Maximum Grant Amount	Summer Meals Grant: Up to \$100,000 Connecting Families to Federal programs: Up to \$100,000 <i>The funding will be allocated depending on the needs. Applicants are strongly encouraged to request only the specific amount needed to adequately fund their effort and proposed needs.</i>
Other Eligibility	Organizations must be a 501(c)(3)-designated charitable organization or a K-12 school.

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Application Process	Access the grant application invitation . Once you are logged in, select FRAC from the drop-down available in this section: “ <i>Please provide the name of the organization that nominated you for funding.</i> ” Use the code MEALS2021 . Interested organizations can apply for both opportunities but must complete separate applications.
Questions	Contact Christy.Duncan-Anderson@albertsons.com . For FAQs, see Nourishing Neighbors 2021 RFP FAQ's .

Grant Opportunities from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA): Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (Due May 4, 2021)

The USDA NIFA has current grant opportunities for two types of grants: Community Food Projects (CFP); and Planning Projects (PP). The purpose of the CFP is to support the development of projects with a one-time infusion of federal dollars to make such projects self-sustaining. CFPs are designed to create community-based food projects with objectives, activities and outcomes that align with Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) primary goals. The purpose of a Planning Project (PP) is to complete a plan toward the improvement of community food security in keeping with the primary goals of the CFPCGP. PPs are to focus on a defined community and describe in detail the activities and outcomes of the planning project.

Deadline: May 4, 2021

Funding: Up to \$400,000

Website: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=330459>

Eligibility: Applicants must:

1. Demonstrate experience in the area of: a) community food work, particularly concerning small and medium-size farms, including the provision of food to people in low-income communities and the development of new markets in low-income communities for agricultural producers; b) job training and business development activities for food-related activities in low-income communities; and c) efforts to reduce food insecurity in the community, including food distribution, improving access to services, or coordinating services and programs.
2. Demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation.
3. Demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results.
4. Collaborate with one or more local partner organizations to achieve at least one of the hunger-free communities' goal.

Resource Roundup: CEP Data Collection Guidance for School-level Eligibility

This week's Resource Roundup highlights the steps for uploading the required CEP school-level eligibility data in the CSDE Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Participation in the CEP is not mandatory, however, the submission of data to identify school-level eligibility is required for **all** LEAs participating in the NSLP and SBP. Join us for tomorrow's Table Talk (April 1, 2021, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.) as we review the CSDE's resource, [CEP Data Collection Guidance for School-level Eligibility](#), and identify the specific requirements and steps for uploading the CEP school-level eligibility data.

Registration for the April Table Talk series is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7940814127249762576>. 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_03-24_2021.pdf.

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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