

The School Lunch Tray: May 5, 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.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Webpage: Safely Distributing School Meals during COVID-19
- USDA Foods Delivery Schedules and Reminder to Submit Request to Donate USDA Foods Form
- Input Requested for American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) Education Funding
- Instructions for Submitting the 2021-22 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement: Due July 1, 2021
- New CSDE Webpage: Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks Webpage
- Resource Roundup: Navigating the CSDE's New Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks Webpage

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



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Webpage: Safely Distributing School Meals during COVID-19

The CDC's [Safely Distributing School Meals during COVID-19](#) webpage provides guidance and resources for school nutrition programs on school meal distribution models that follow core mitigation strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. School nutrition program operators can choose to use one model or a combination of models to safely distribute meals that best serve the students and families in their community. Program operators should determine and modify their distribution practices as needed, based on local, state, and federal policies (including the USDA Child Nutrition COVID-19 waivers) and the local level of spread in each community.

USDA Foods Delivery Schedules and Reminder to Submit Request to Donate USDA Foods Form

The USDA Direct Delivery and USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program will continue to make deliveries through June. As a reminder, you may submit a [Request to Donate USDA Foods form](#) any time in May if you are unable to use all of your remaining inventory of USDA Foods at the HPC warehouse. It is the CT FDP's responsibility to ensure that all USDA Foods are used appropriately, so any RA that has not ordered consistently this year, or submitted a Request to Donate USDA Foods Forms throughout the school year, should expect cases of food to be transferred out of their account. Once items are transferred out, they will not be available again this school year. For questions, please contact Allison Calhoun-White at allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov.

Input Requested for American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) Education Funding

As part of the recently enacted American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP), the CSDE secured education funding for the purposes of "identifying homeless children and youth, providing wraparound services in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and providing assistance needed to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities." While Connecticut awaits further instruction and the disbursement of these funds by the U.S. Department of Education, the CSDE is soliciting initial feedback from interested individuals through a short [survey](#). This survey is intended to spur initial conversations that will lead to more in-depth discussion in the near future. Please share this information with others, especially parents, youth, and other partners in your schools and community.

For more information on homeless education, visit the CSDE's [Homeless Education](#) webpage or contact the CSDE's Homeless Education Coordinator, Louis Tallarita, at louis.tallarita@ct.gov or 860-807-2058.

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Instructions for Submitting the 2021-22 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement: Due July 1, 2021

As indicated in [Operational Memorandum No. 03-21: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\) Statement for School Year 2020-21](#), all public school sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must complete the annual HFC Statement and upload the board of education's meeting minutes by **July 1, 2021**, using the CSDE's [Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CNP System). The HFC application module of the CNP System is **now open** for NSLP sponsors to complete their 2021-22 HFC Statement and upload their board minutes. **Please read the important information below before beginning this process.**

- Before accessing the CNP System, please **read the instructions**, [Submitting Connecticut's Healthy Food Certification Statement for School Year 2021-22](#). This document provides important information and specific steps for completing the 2021-22 HFC Statement in the CNP System.
- **There are two steps for completing the 2021-22 HFC Statement.**
 1. The sponsor's **claims preparer** first **enrolls** the district in the 2021-22 application process for school nutrition programs. **Sponsors cannot access the online HFC module until this step is complete.**
 2. After the claims preparer enrolls the sponsor, the sponsor's **authorized signer 1 or 2** must complete, certify, and submit the HFC Statement. **The claims preparer cannot complete this process.** The instructions in the first bullet above provide detailed information on this process.
- The HFC application requirements are summarized in the "[Apply](#)" section of the HFC webpage and [CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 03-21: Process for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\) Statement for School Year 2020-21](#). For additional guidance, review the CSDE's presentation, [Application Procedures for HFC](#).
- **Complete the HFC module only:** Do **not** begin the application process to participate in the USDA school nutrition programs for school year 2021-22. The CSDE will notify sponsors when it is time to start the online application process for school nutrition programs.

For questions about the HFC application process, please contact Susan Fiore at susan.fiore@ct.gov.

New CSDE Webpage: Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks Webpage

During the current COVID-19 public health emergency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has established nationwide waivers to support access to nutritious meals, while enforcing recommendations from public health experts with regard to social distancing measures. In addition, the USDA allows states to request waivers enabling sponsors to serve meals in more flexible ways during closures related to COVID-19.

Information on the CSDE's website about operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks has moved to its own **new** webpage, [Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks](#). This webpage provides guidance and resources on the nationwide waivers that Connecticut has opted in to, and the USDA's requirements for operating Child Nutrition Programs during the current COVID-19 public health emergency.

Bookmark this webpage for easy access. Links to this webpage are also available from the CSDE's [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and the Program Guidance webpages below.

- [Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Program Guidance for the Summer Food Service Program](#)

Resource Roundup: Navigating the CSDE's New Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks Webpage

This week's Resource Roundup highlights the CSDE's new webpage, [Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks](#). Join us for tomorrow's Table Talk (May 6, 2021, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.) as we navigate this webpage and highlight applicable resources for school nutrition programs.

If you registered for the April Table Talk webinars you will automatically be registered for the May Table Talk webinars. Registration for the May 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_05_05_2021.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;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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